

## A SAW Workshop at the

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#### Math & Realia

Workshop on Mathematical Practices in Various Sectors of Mesopotamian Society

Organised by Cécile Michel and Christine Proust

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*Text and Architecture: YBC 5022 and BM 15285 as “Manuals of an Architect”*

**Abstract** - Šitimgallu, a Sumerian loan word for the Akkadian “architect,” “chief” or “master builder” first appears and is used in the common language in fact only in the Old Babylonian period. In all periods of human history, the profession of an architect demanded wide range of knowledge and abilities: inspired vision of an artist and an expertise in various materials, advanced knowledge of mathematics and organisational skills. Are there cuneiform texts that can be associated with this group of experts? Analysing the list of coefficients YBC 5022 and the famous tablet of geometrical problems BM 15285 against the background of archaeological and pictorial evidence, I will claim that these texts served as an “architect’s manual.”

It had been already suggested, based on textual and mathematical grounds, that the origins of Babylonian mathematics go back to the Ur III period. I will argue that the profession of an architect, which involves proficiency in exact science and other expert knowledge, also emerged in this time.