

## A SAW Workshop at the

### Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale 61, Geneva and Bern, 2015

#### Math & Realia

#### Workshop on Mathematical Practices in Various Sectors of Mesopotamian Society

Organised by Cécile Michel and Christine Proust

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*Estimating volume: Methods for assessing volume exhibited and suggested in two Old Babylonian tabular administrative texts*

**Abstract** - his presentation attempts to examine methods used to assess volume in an Old Babylonian administrative environment. Texts like NBC 11509, an undated tabular administrative text, appear to estimate the volume of silt to be excavated from canals using a simple multiplication of length by width by depth produces volume. Each of the six canal sections listed on NBC 11509 bears this out. However, when we look at similar texts, such as NBC 6763 dated to Rīm-Sîn of Larsa's 38th year in power and possibly produced in a similar bureaucratic setting to NBC 11509, this is not the case. On NBC 6763, only one volume measurement value out of five appears to be the product of a multiplication of length by width by depth. Moreover, the total of volume measured is not the sum of volume measurement values stated on the text. This presentation asks "why do expected and stated measurement values on NBC 6763 differ so much?" and "What is the relationship between NBC 6763 and NBC 11509? In answering these questions, it will explore the calculation techniques used to produce each text as well as the administrative environments in which these texts were compiled.