Justifications

Postdoc and MA/Doctoral students:

In order to keep to the schedule, we will require the assistance of one postdoctoral fellow (Dr. Peter Zilberg) and two MA/Doctoral students (to be named). Dr. Peter Zilberg is an experienced and outstanding Assyriologist, who has already published extensively in the field. Dr. Zilberg will devote 100% of his time to the project, taking a leading part in preparing the editions and the other studies under the guidance of the PIs. The two research assistants, who will be MA or Doctoral students, will participate in the deciphering and editing process, while also assisting with technical needs, photography, preparing studies for publication, developing the bibliography, etc.

Consultation:

We intend to invite Prof. Kathleen Abraham from KU Leuven to serve as a consultant for the initial stages of the project. Prof. Abraham is a top-tier Assyriologist and an expert in the photography of cuneiform tablets using RTI dome equipment. She has provided consultation for numerous collections and museums worldwide on the specific RTI equipment we intend to purchase, which is expressly designed to photograph cuneiform tablets. Prof. Abraham will guide us in using the photographic equipment. Out of the mentioned sum, 10,000 NIS will cover consultation fees, and an additional 8,000 NIS will fund Prof. Abraham’s flights and accommodation in Israel.

In addition, we intend to use the consulting services of Elisheva Yardeni, a conservation and restoration expert from the Israel Museum. Ms. Yardeni will advise us in the initial stages of preparing the appropriate equipment for storing the collection and in establishing the infrastructure for its long-term preservation.

Schedule:

1. Photographing the tablets using the RTI dome device and creating a definitive catalog.
2. Deciphering and preparing full editions for ca. 60 Ur III tablets. Simultaneously (sharing work among staff members) preparing extensive background studies related to the relevant tablets.
3. Preparing ca. 60 editions and relevant studies for publication.

The first two months of the project will be dedicated to photographing the tablets using the specialized RTI dome equipment, and to creating a complete and definitive catalog based on the initial catalog included in the current proposal. The cataloging process will also include assigning a definitive collection number to each tablet.

Immediately afterward, we will commence the process of deciphering and studying the tablets. The project includes creating complete editions for all 230 tablets. Between 25 and 60 tablet editions will be prepared annually, depending on the size of the tablets, the length of the texts, the state of preservation, and the special challenges involved in decipherment.

Years 1-3 will be devoted to deciphering and preparing full editions of the 180 Ur III tablets from the corpus, approximately 60 tablets per year. Years 4-5 will be dedicated to creating editions for the remaining 50 tablets, including 20 Early Dynastic texts, 17 Old Akkadian texts, 6 Old Babylonian texts, 4 Neo-Babylonian texts, and 3 Late Babylonian/Achaemenid texts.

The last two months of each research year will be dedicated to preparing the materials for publication in a dedicated monographic volume.

Extensive background research will be conducted concurrently with the preparation of editions, with the workload divided between the two PIs and the postdoctoral fellow, assisted by other team members.

Professional literature:

As Bar-Ilan University lacks many of the necessary materials, especially those regarding Ur III texts and earlier periods, we will need to acquire professional literature.

Conferences:

The postdoctoral fellow will be encouraged to present the project’s findings and consult with experts and colleagues at overseas conferences.

Computers:

(a) Computers: Three PC laptops for the PIs and the postdoctoral fellow, equipped with special programs, are required to carry out all necessary tasks outlined in the schedule (such as data entry, making hand copies, translation, transliteration, etc.).

(b) Software: Adobe products for each PC, including Photoshop, Acrobat Pro and Illustrator, are required to create enhanced hand copies of the tablets. Based on the hand-copy-like images provided by the software of the RTI dome device, the research team will prepare improved hand copies using graphic software tools.

(c) Peripherals: For ongoing research needs, the team will require a printer, printer consumables (such as toner cartridges and paper), and two large stationary high-resolution monitors.

Miscellaneous:

(a) Publication charges: The project will need to cover publication charges, including English language editing of papers and special monographs.

(b) Membership in scientific associations: For the purposes of presenting the project’s findings at international conferences, membership in scientific associations will be required for the PIs, the postdoctoral fellow, and the research assistants.

(c) Photocopies and office supplies: The research will be conducted at the Kramer Institute at Bar-Ilan University, where the tablets will be stored, photographed, deciphered, and studied. Necessary office supplies will be required for routine work.