

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

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June 26th, 2015

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Weighing Units, Standards and Weight Artefacts during the Old Assyrian Period

Abstract - The private archives of the Assyrian merchants found at Kaneš, in central Anatolia, highlight the use of the weight system, well adapted to quantify the metals they traded from East to West and back. An atypical progressive metrological list of weights gives an idea of the variety of weights used by the merchants. Account texts reveal the use of different weight standards and methods to correct weight deviations. A hundred and fifty stone weights found at Kaneš may be compared with the data provided by the texts. These weights, which show significant variations, witness the existence of many individual weight standards, and confirm the recurrent necessity to correct weight deviations.