

## **The activities in the Old Babylonian school**

### **Inculcation of ideology through ritual behavior**

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The cuneiform script used in the Old Babylonian school, the *eduba'a*, was syllabic and contained logograms, which made it much more difficult to read and write than the alphabet script. Just as in pre-modern Europe, learning by heart and reading aloud was central in the *eduba'a*. How can we understand the practices in this school? I will argue that it can be interpreted as ritual behavior. This will be done through analyzing the practice in the *eduba'a* through the lens of ritual theories. The theories used emphasize that the function of ritual is to transmit social memory and ideology (Connerton; Whitehouse; Leach; cf. Veldhuis), that ritual is highly repetitive (Whitehouse; Grimes), and that punishments are part of constituting a new identity of the participant (Whitehouse; Turner). It will be shown that the function and outline of the activities in the *eduba'a* correspond well to these ritual theories.