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**Eleanor Robson\***, The Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, Pusey Lane, OX1 2LE Oxford, England. *Neither Sherlock Holmes nor Babylon: A reassessment of Plimpton 322.*

Plimpton 322 is probably the world's most famous and most analysed ancient mathematical artefact, yet it is still very badly understood. In the 55 years since its first publication its purpose has been identified variously as trigonometric, number theoretical, and algebraic. In this paper I use a combination of historical, linguistic, and mathematical techniques to reassess its original function, and attempt to get a little closer to how practitioners conceptualised mathematics in the Middle East some 4000 years ago. (Received July 05, 2000)