



Northern Levant (RG 02)

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## ARCANE Meeting 1932 (Workshop on data base) – Scientific report

Meeting 1932 was held at the Certosa di Pontignano (University of Siena – Italy) from March 1st to March 3rd, 2008. All participants wish to warmly thank S. Anastasio for the perfect organization and the opportunity of fruitful exchanges and discussions in the exceptional settings of the Certosa.

Participants were :

S. Anastasio (covenor)	DB developer	Università di Siena / METRA
J.P. Thalmann (covenor)	ARCANE TL	Université de Paris 1
B. Helwing	ARCANE TL	DAI, Eurasien-Abteilung, Berlin
S. Mazzoni	ARCANE TL	Università di Firenze
E. Rova	ARCANE TL	Università Ca Foscari, Venezia
P. Fenù	DB developer	METRA
M. Lebeau	ARCANE TL	ECUMS, Bruxelles
P. de Miroshedji	ARCANE TL	CNRS, Paris / CRFJ, Jérusalem
A. Pruß	ARCANE TC	Universität München
F. Sakal	Webmaster	Universität Tübingen
F. Saliola	DB developer	METRA

The aim of the meeting was to review current issues concerning the use of the « Standalones » (released in 2007) during the present « data collecting » phase of the Project, to discuss further developments of the database and to reach a general agreement and issue guidelines for the processing of specific topics (especially pottery) and the final publication.

The strictly technical database details were discussed in separate sessions involving only METRA and J.P. Thalmann, while other participants were reviewing the editorial guidelines (see below). Plenary sessions allowed us to reach a general agreement on the necessary additions to the database and the principles for the synthetic processing of specific topics – mainly pottery.

### 1 – Current issues : the « Standalones »

The so-called « Standalones » are computer applications used by the different contributors to the Project for the input of data in a moderately normalized form, as was necessary to insure homogeneity of data from many, different contributing sources. They may be considered as the first step in the building up of the comprehensive, fully relational database which will allow the processing of data at the regional and inter-regional level for final syntheses.

Minor defects as reported by different users were fixed, a new version of the Standalones was released and made downloadable from the Website.

Many contributors however did not follow the (very simple) rules of the ARCANE numbering system as explained in the documentation. This problem could hardly be anticipated and has nevertheless become a major one. It was discussed but could not be fixed during the meeting, the only solution allowed by the present structure of the Standalones being to re-enter all defective data. Now (28/04/08), the general procedures for developing a specific tool for replacing entries non-compatible with the ARCANE system are available ; this tool should be shortly developed and will allow for all (unfortunately) necessary corrections.

## 2 – Further developments of the Database

In order to proceed to the fully relational step of the database, new tables must be added for specific categories of artefacts (*Additional Tables*) and for storing the results of the processing of the collected data (*Synthetic Tables*) : these tables will be used mainly – if not only – by the Topic Coordinators of the Project. The final status of the so-called « Synopsis » documents was fixed.

### *Additional Tables*

Some categories of artefacts (metal objects, lithics, figurines, « art »...) require a more detailed description than the one allowed by the « Object » table of the Standalone : such information will be stored in « additional » tables, which must therefore be considered as mere « extensions » of the « Object » table.

This means, *inter alia*, that any object described in any of the Additional Tables must have been registered beforehand in the « Object » table : the (automatically generated) Object\_ID\_Number provides the link between the main « Object » table and the additional one.

A number of Additional Tables (for *Stone Vases*, *Metal Objects*) have been developed in paper form only and have been available for some time on the Website. Although until now no comments were fed back by any of their potential users, they will be implemented as such in computer form.

Therefore, any new Additional Table as requested or proposed by the TCs will have to conform to the structure of the existing ones. The possibility of appending new Additional Tables as necessary until the completion of the Project will be implemented in the Relational DB. Topic Coordinators are kindly requested to contact J.P. Thalmann in case of any new required Additional Table.

### *Synthetic Tables*

These tables will store the output of the ARCANE project, i.e. the new typologies, terminologies, periodizations etc. as devised by the TCs of the different groups. For this reason, it is obvious that a high degree of homogeneity is necessary here – much higher than what has been achieved for the input of basic data through the use of the Standalones. The case of pottery was discussed at length.

#### • *Pottery issues* :

Pottery will represent the bulk of data submitted to the project – and it will be given a prominent place in the publications (see below). As is well known, a wide range of methods and approaches to this topic are followed by different scholars in the Middle East – and elsewhere. It especially appeared during the discussions that there was until now no general agreement between participants to the Project on such basic questions as : « *What is a ware ? How are pottery types defined?* ». There is therefore a need for common definitions to be followed by all Pottery Coordinators in the Project – and hopefully to be adopted afterwards by many other scholars.

After detailed and lengthy discussions, and following the analytical structure of the data in the « Pottery » table of the Standalone, it was agreed that, for ARCANE purposes :

- a « ware » will be defined as a combination of (1) fabric, (2) type of surface treatment and (3) type of decoration,

- a pottery « type » will be defined as a combination of (0) shape, (1) fabric, (2) type of surface treatment and (3) type of decoration (= shape + ware).

All elements in these definitions must conform to the system already implemented in the « Pottery » table, for the sake of compatibility ; but it is probable that a number of keywords (or a system for combining different existing keywords) will have to be added – this raises no special problems. It will be possible in this way to define pottery wares and types with a series of respectively three and four (two- or three-digit) codes, fully compatible with the information already entered through the Standalones. Of course such codes will not be easily memorizable, and Pottery TCs will be asked to devise new terminologies, in order to replace the existing « nicknames » which are currently used in an unsystematic and often confusing way in different regions or even within one and the same region. The structure of the Synthetic Tables for « Ware » and « Pottery Type », according to the above general principles, has been agreed upon, and they will be implemented in computer form with only the minor additions or modifications necessary for purely technical reasons.

All other synthetic tables will be implemented following a similar structure. Since unpredictable errors occurred with the use of the simple system of the ARCANE ID\_numbers (see above), and since the proposed system for ware and type codes is fairly more complex, it will probably be necessary that a meeting of all Pottery TCs be held before the end of 2009, in order to insure that problems similar to the one we are confronted with now will not occur again.

### *Synopsis*

« Synopsis » documents include semi-processed information provided mainly in graphic and tabular form, such as chronological or typological charts etc. Their integration into the Relational Database is straightforward : they will be linked to the « Site » Table.

Some such documents have already been submitted, but most of them apparently incomplete – i.e. without the properly filled-in Indexation Form which has been available on the Website since the beginning of 2007. It must be reminded once again that without their appended Indexation Form, such documents cannot be searched or retrieved by the DB system. An « incomplete » synopsis is therefore virtually useless to the Project.

### *« Technical » conclusions and recommendations*

While all principles necessary to the further development of the DB have been satisfactorily agreed upon, it is obvious that shifting to the fully relational Database will involve in the next months the development of procedures much more complex than the ones already existing in the Standalones.

The DB conceiver and developers urgently ask all TLs to remind all their regional TCs and contributors that the rules and guidelines released with every item of the DB must be strictly followed : these « rules » are neither complicated nor arbitrary, they just derive from the logics of the DB system.

In case of any difficulty, all persons working with the DB are kindly requested to ask METRA and/or J.P. Thalmann for additional information : preferably *before* entering « wrong » data than *after*...

## **3 - ARCANE Editorial Guidelines**

### *Language of publication*

The language of publication will be *English*.

However, since English is not the mother language of most of the contributors, the Project will cover the cost of editorial revisions of their English text. The Project can cover the expenses of translation in English from the original language only exceptionally.

## *Structure of each volume*

### Preliminary remarks :

- Each volume is evaluated at *c. 300 pages + bibliography*. Note that each page follows the format of the *Subartu* series, *which is of c. 5000 characters, including spaces*.
- Order of discussed items follows that of the database
- The maximum numbers of pages indicated below include plates, tables and maps

### *Title page*

Will feature the name of the editor(s) — i.e. the team leader(s) — and those of the associated editors (i.e. the topic coordinators)

### *Foreword (1-2 pages)*

Will list :

- the team leader(s)
- the topic coordinators
- the contributors (i.e. the data providers = excavators or their delegates)

### *Introduction (17 to 24 pages)*

The introduction should include four parts :

- Geography (*c. 1 page*) : the boundaries of the region and their justifications (i.e. how is the region defined and why so ? Are there subregions ?).
- Methodology (*c. 1 page*) : working methodology followed by the group.
- Periodizations (*5-10 pages*) : former periodizations and their problems (i.e., former knowledge and why it is no longer adequate).
- The data available (*10-12 pages*) :
  - The excavated sites in the region (total number, nature, etc.).
  - Key sites retained for our study : how many were retained ? why ?

### *Stratigraphy (25 pages with tables)*

- Presentation of the stratigraphic sequence of the selected sites.
- This chapter should stress the stratigraphic hiatuses, the major articulations of the local stratigraphic sequences, etc., i.e., this chapter should underline the bases for chronological divisions which will be, so to speak, tested by the following analysis of the different categories of material.

### *Pottery (max. 80 pages)*

- Introduction.
- Presentation and discussion : the order of variables follows that of the database.

Note the following recommendations :

- Discussion should be based not on idealized types, but on excavated specimens.
- Each pottery plates should have a catalogue description with *columns* giving : no. of drawing on plate ; site ; area ; stratum ; locus ; catalogue no. ; period as proposed by the excavator ; period as proposed in this ARCANÉ publication ; brief standardized description of the ware, including the traditional nickname[s]) \*. This catalogue descriptions should appear *in small print on the left hand page, while the plate will appear on the right hand page*.

\* Models of standardized description were not discussed at these meetings and will be provided later.

- Scales not too large, bottom right.
- The *c. 80 pages* maximum ascribed to this chapter include : between 20 and 40 pages of text + *max. 30 plates* + tables + distribution maps.

*Architecture* (20-25 pages)

- Includes fortifications, buildings and also ovens, silos and various installations.
- The items selected should be discussed and presented by type, context, and phase.
- The illustrations of this chapter should be *schematic plans only, at a scale of 1:200 or smaller*.

*Metal* (15-20 pages)

*Figurines & small finds* (15-20 pages)

*Lithics & stone industry* (10-15 pages)

*Burials & funerary customs* (20-25 pages)

*Glyptic & Art* (15-25 pages)

*C14* (5-10 pages)

*Epigraphic finds* (5-10 pages)

*Conclusions* (c. 15 pages)

This final chapter summarizes all the data presented above and offers a cultural interpretation of the various stratigraphies in order to reach a comprehensive periodization, with periods and subperiods. The conclusions should be summarized in a standardized\* tabular form. The table(s) should present the stratigraphies of the major reference sites ; the old periodizations : and the ARCANE periodization, *which is the conclusion of the volume*.

\* Models of standardized tables were not discussed and will be provided later

*Credits* (max. 5 pages)

Names of people who entered the data in the DB.

*Bibliography*

Each regional publication will end with a regional bibliography mentioning all the references used in the volume *and all references quoted in the DB*.

*Index*

Index of site names only.

**Presentation of manuscripts**

*Text*

Manuscripts will be typed in WORD Times New Roman 12 pts.

*Editorial rules*

- The editorial rules to be followed are those of the so-called « Harvard system » as detailed in the *BASOR Instructions to Contributors* (see *BASOR* 262 [1986],1-8 or

<http://www.asor.org/pubs/basor/basor.html>).

However, it was decided to adapt this system for the presentation of references : instead of appearing in brackets within the text, references should be given as footnotes.

- *The extent of footnotes should be as limited as possible* (comments worth a footnote are usually also worth appearing in the text...)
- Concerning the presentation of the bibliography, the Harvard system as detailed in the BASOR instructions should be strictly followed.

Note that the final formatting will be done by Mrs Polly Butowsky who is an independent graphist engaged by Brepols Publisher and using the In-Design program.

### *Transcriptions of toponyms*

Toponyms should be transcribed according to the archaeological usage as represented by their official publications and by their appearance in the Database.

### *Illustrations*

- *Size of available page for illustrations* : 22,5 cm (max. 23 cm) x 15 cm.
- All illustrations should be provided in ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR.
- *Editors must check uniformity and illustrations will have to be redrawn or retouched accordingly.* J.-P. Thalmann will soon propose rules for the presentation of the drawings as much standardized as possible. It was however agreed that no thorough standardization will be possible because this would imply that everything should be redrawn – a gigantic task, difficult to undertake because of the amount of material and because (in the case of pottery drawings) archaeologists working in different areas of the Near East are used to different rules of graphic representations.
- *Scale* : Pottery drawings should be at 1/4 (or 1/8 for very large vessels) *Note that these scales are different from the ones proposed for the DB – final scaling will be made by the publisher.*