



**SOUTHERN LEVANT REGIONAL GROUP**

**TEAM LEADER : PIERRE DE MIROSCHEJ**

## **ARCANE WORKSHOP OF THE SOUTH LEVANT REGIONAL GROUP (RG 01) Blaubeuren, 15-17 October 2007**

### **SUMMARY**

The Southern Levant (SL) Regional Group (RG) of the ARCANE Project held its first Workshop from 15 to 17 October 2007 at Blaubeuren (Germany). Participants arrived on Sunday the 14th and left on Thursday the 18th in the morning.

It was the first meeting that brought together all the Topic Coordinators of the SL RG and some guests scholars, altogether 14 participants (see below) representing ten countries. Twenty presentations were delivered during the three days of the meeting (see program below).

#### *Main topics discussed*

The goals of the meeting were threefold :

1) A presentation of the ARCANE project and its methodology. This was a necessity since most of the participants had not been involved in the previous ARCANE meetings. Thus the main objectives the ARCANE project and its philosophy, the definition of inventories and the functioning of the Data Base were fully detailed.

2) A presentation of the archaeological data selected by the Topic Coordinators and the analysis of the archaeological sequence established so far for the sites of the Southern Levant.

3) The planning of the work of the SL RG : harmonization of working procedures, modalities of feeding the data into the ARCANE Database, exchange of data; establishing the list of sites to be considered by the project; preparation of the second Workshop to be held in 2008, during which an overall archaeological sequence will eventually be worked out for the entire Southern Levant and chronological links with neighboring areas defined.

#### *Main results and directions for future work.*

This meeting achieved four major results :

1) The sharing between all topic coordinators of a common spirit and a common methodology ;

2) The main archaeological and chronological problems of the Southern Levant were discussed and delineated. The need to give up, at least provisionally, the traditional period designations (EB I, EB II, EB III and EB IV/Intermediate Bronze ) was recognized by the

participants because there is no consensus on the archaeological definition of these terms, while there is an overall agreement on the sequence of archaeological phases. This laid the ground for an provisional phasing to be formulated for practical purposes, covering a span of time between the last third of the fourth millennium and the beginning of the second millennium BC ;

3) A full list of data to be included in the project was agreed upon. This comprises a list of sites (see below) together with a provisional number of inventories to be included for each site. The modalities of input of the data into the « standalones » of the Database was also agreed between the participants.

4) Finally, the agenda of research for the forthcoming was agreed upon. The input of data corresponding to the inventories represents the first phase of the ARCANE project. It has already begun and should be completed by the end of March 2008 at the latest. A second Workshop of the RG01 is planed for the Fall of 2008 to finalize regional and subregional chronologies and for the definition of typologies.

## SCIENTIFIC REPORT

### **Presentation of the ARCANE Project, methodology and tools**

The first morning was devoted to a presentation of the goals and the methodology of the ARCANE Project.

A general presentation by *Pierre de Miroschedji* outlined the ultimate goal of the project : to produce a reliable relative and absolute chronology of the ancient Near East and eastern Mediterranean areas based on the synchronization of regional chronologies for the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. To achieve this goal, it aims to review all aspects of the material culture together with artistic manifestations, written and epigraphic record, as well as the various methods for dating.

*Marc Lebeau* reminded the audience of the three phases of the ARCANE project (regional, interregional and general synthesis) and summarized the guidelines for the ARCANE procedures of the regional phase: development of the database, access and communication of the files, file validation, nature and content of inventories and synopsis. He also reviewed the operational aspects of the project (formulation of a common terminology, selection of inventories).

*Jean-Paul Thalmann* detailed the functioning of the database system, in particular the various forms to be used for the data collecting. He insisted on the definition of inventories (primary, composite, artificial) and on the specific terminology to be used in order to avoid confusion with the current practice.

### **Selection of Data from Key-Sites**

The three following sessions of the meeting were devoted to the presentation and analysis of a selection of key-sites with potential primary or secondary inventories. The presentations were organized both geographically and chronologically, beginning with the territories located West of the Jordan Valley (Eliot Braun, Pierre de Miroschedji, Raphael Greenberg), continuing with the Jordan Valley (Graham Philip, Peter Fischer) and the

Jordanian Plateau (Timothy Harrison, Zeidan Kafafi) and concluding with the semi-arid territories to the South (Steve Rosen).

#### *Sites West of the Jordan Valley*

*Eliot Braun* presented the key sites of the earlier part of the period (the « Early Bronze I ») arranged in sequence for the northern and the southern region of Israel. In both areas, he distinguished five phases, not necessarily contemporary ; the fifth phase, however, may actually belong to the beginning of the second part of the period.

*Pierre de Miroschedji* discussed the data from Tell el-Fâr'ah in order to stress the archaeological characteristics of the earliest urban phase of this site (called by the original excavator « Ancien Bronze I »), which is also found on several sites in and West of the Jordan valley and labeled either « Final EB IB » or « early EB II ». This stressed the need for renouncing these ambiguous terminologies and for formulating instead a sequence of phases, in which this phase would be Phase 4.

*Raphael Greenberg* offered a review of the key sites ascribed to the second part of the period (the « Early Bronze II »), distinguishing between primary, secondary and tertiary inventories. The main sites with primary inventories are Beth Yerah (whose sequence was presented in detail), Tell el-Fâr'ah, Tel Bareqet and Tel Arad. Important secondary inventories are found at Tel Dan, Qiryat 'Ata, Tel Qashish, Ai and Tel Dalit.

*Pierre de Miroschedji* presented the key sites for the third part of the period (the « Early Bronze III »), laying emphasis on Tel Yarmuth, a site which has yielded a large number of primary inventories, and detailing the inner chronology of this phase.

#### *Sites in the Jordan Valley*

*Graham Philip* gave an overview of the data available for the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea Basin, a small region extensively excavated : no less than 14 sites have yielded more or less extensive remains dating to the 3rd millennium. Few, however, have primary inventories. Most important are Tell Abu Kharaz and Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, with rich primary inventories covering the traditional Late EB I and EB II. Jericho, Bâb edh-Dhra', Numeira and Iktanu may also provide inventories for the EB III and the EB IV.

*Peter Fischer* analyzed the data from Tell Abu Kharaz, a major site in the Jordan Valley which has yielded a large number of primary inventories. Their sequence cover the latter part of traditional EB I and the entire duration of traditional EB II. Eighteen inventories were presented, among which a difficult selection will have to be made. Phase Abu Kharaz IB, which corresponds to the earliest urban phase of Tell el-Fâr'ah, is especially well represented on this site, where it is also contemporary with the earliest fortification.

#### *Sites on the Jordanian Plateau*

*Timothy Harrison* highlighted the specific problems of the Jordanian EB : a highly regionalized settlement pattern, a lack of well-developed local sequences at important settlements sites and, consequently, periodization schemes based on Cisjordanian relations. He presented the key sites for southern Jordan (mainly Tell el-Umeiri et Khirbet Iskander, which have both yielded primary inventories), while *Zeidan Kafafi* dealt with the sites in

the northern half of Jordan (mainly Khirbet ez-Zeraqun) and presented a summary of all the surveys undertaken in Jordan in the past three decades.

#### *Sites in the southern arid periphery*

To conclude this part of the Workshop, Steve Rosen presented the data concerning the sites in the southern arid periphery of the Negev and the Sinai. He emphasized the peculiarities of these settlements which have very shallow deposits. Nevertheless, some sites do provide usable inventories : the Camel Site for the “EB II-III” of the Negev, Sheikh Nebi Saleh for the “EB II” of the Sinai, Be’er Resisim and Yeruham for the “EB IV/Intermediate Bronze” of the Negev.

### **Topic Reports**

Part of the afternoon session on Tuesday and the two sessions on Wednesday were devoted to reports on specific topics.

*Hermann Genz* discussed metals, glyptics and small objects. In the SL, the repertoire is quite limited and it is often difficult to pinpoint typological changes for objects which are functional. Most of the metal objects, the glyptic finds and the figurine derive either from tombs, surface finds or disturbed contexts and few are well stratified.

*Steve Rosen* presented the data concerning the lithics, which can hardly serve as precise chronological indicators since they changed very slowly through time and the tool kit was much impoverished in the 3rd millennium. However, it emerged from the discussions that the observations made in the SL have a general bearing on those made in other areas of the ANE, and that a confrontation of the data of all regions considered by the ARCANE project would be profitable. In the light of these comments, it was decided to encourage the organization of a workshop on lithics which would bring together the lithics coordinators of the various ARCANE RGs.

*Karen Sowada* reviewed the available data for the relative chronology between Egypt and the Levant. Historically, there are no solid fixed points. There is however a general correspondence for each period, although the margin of chronological incertitude is rather wide.

*Eliot Braun* brought together the archaeological data of the SL to propose a relative chronology between Egypt and the SL at the time of the Erani C and of the « Late E BIB » horizons.

*Elisabetta Boaretto* presented the state-of-the-art in C14 dating in the SL, where the dates tend to be too high (in conventional wisdom) for the 3rd millennium, while the sequence of dates is correct. She stressed the necessity to use only dates coming from short-lived samples and highly secured provenience, both in terms of stratigraphy and context. The dates should be arranged according to the stratigraphy of the site, ignoring the conventional dates for the archaeological periods.

In connection with the previous exposé, *Karen Sowada* emphasized the specific problems concerning the C14 dates in Egypt : on the one hand, they are few and from unsatisfactory contexts ; on the other hand, they tend to be older than the conventional historical and archaeological dates.

## ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

### Results of the meeting

As stated above, this meeting achieved major results :

1) Perhaps most important was the meeting of all Topic Coordinators in order to forge a same approach to the project and a common methodology. Thanks to the detailed presentations of Jean-Paul Thalmann, the modalities of input of the data into the « standalones » of the Database was also agreed between the participants.

2) The main archaeological and chronological problems of the Southern Levant were discussed and delineated. A clear perception of the limits of our knowledge was gained: it appears that, at different phases during the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, large areas of the SL remain virtual *terrae incognitae*. The discussion made clear the need to give up, at least provisionally, the traditional period designations (EB I, EB II, EB III and EB IV/Intermediate Bronze) because there is no consensus on the archaeological definition of these terms, while there is an overall agreement on the sequence of archaeological phases. This laid the ground for an provisional phasing to be formulated for practical purposes, covering a span of time between the last third of the fourth millennium and the beginning of the second millennium BC ; the phases would be labeled ESL [Early Southern Levant] 1, 2, 3... The need for close cooperation with the C14 TC (E. Boaretto) was also stressed, especially to build up a complete list of C14 datings.

3) A full list of data to be incorporated into the project was agreed upon. This comprises a list of sites and a provisional number of inventories to be included for each site. The list numbers 49 sites out of a total 126 compiled for the SL. The number of inventories (between 128 and 169) remains theoretical and it is doubtful that more than 100-110 inventories will be collected for the DB :

ARCANE No.	Name of site	Period(s) for the ARCANE Project				No. of inventories (estimate)
		“EB IB”	“EB II”	“EB III”	“EB IV”	
SL001	T. Abu Kharaz	x	x			10-16
SL002	Ai			x		1-3
SL003	T. Afeq		x			1?
SL004	T. Arad		x			10-15
SL005	Asawir	x	x			1
SL006	Bab edh-Dhra‘		x	x		1?
SL007	T. Bareqet		x			5-10
SL008	Beer Resisim				x	3
SL009	Beth Shean	x		x		4
SL010	Beth Yerah	x	x	x		8-12
SL011	Biqat ‘Uvda		x			1
SL012	Carmel site		x			1
SL013	T. Dalit	x	x			1
SL014	T. Dan		x	x		2
SL015	En Besor	x				1
SL016	En Shadud	x				1
SL017	En Ziq				x	2
SL018	T. Erani	x				/
SL019	T. el-Fâr‘ah		x			3
SL020	Gat Hefer		x	x		1-2

SL021	T. Halif			x		1
SL022	T. Halif Terr./N. Tillah	x				1
SL023	T. el-Hammam		x			2
SL024	T. el-Handaquq South		x			1
SL025	Har Yeruham				x	2
SL026	Hasor			x		1-2
SL027	T. Iktanu				x	2
SL028	H. Illin	x				6
SL029	Kh. Iskander			x	x	1
SL030	Jericho			x		2
SL031	T. Kitan	x				1
SL032	Lod	x				1-2
SL033	Megiddo	x		x		4-6
SL034	Nahal Rephaïm				x	4
SL035	Numeira				x	2-3
SL036	Pella		x			3-4
SL037	T. Poran			x		1?
SL038	Palmahim	x				1
SL039	Petora	x				1
SL040	T. Qashish	x	x			2
SL041	Qiryat Ata	x	x			3
SL042	T. es-Saidiyeh		x			2-3
SL043	T. es-Sakan	x				2-3
SL044	Sha'ar HaGolan				x	2
SL045	Sheikh Nebi Saleh		x			3
SL046	T. el-'Umeiri			x		6
SL047	T. Yaqush	x	x	x		2-4
SL048	T. Yarmuth			x		6-10
SL049	Kh. ez-Zeraqun			x		6-10

### Directions and agenda for future research

Finally, the agenda of research for the forthcoming year was agreed upon. The input of data corresponding to the inventories represents the first phase of the ARCANE project. It has already begun and should be completed by the end of March 2008 at the latest. A second Workshop of the RG01 is planned for the Fall of 2008 to finalize regional and subregional chronologies and for the definition of typologies. Hence, the following agenda is planned :

- Fall 2007-Winter 2007-2008 : Collect of information : contact with excavators, selection of the inventories. Data are be entered into the Database.
- Fall 2008 : Second Workshop. Confrontation of the chronological conclusions reached by all topic coordinators. Planning of the publication.
- End of March 2009 : Individual manuscripts should be handed over to the Group Leader and circulated between the Topic Coordinators.
- End of June 2009 : Final completion of the manuscript.

## APPENDIX : PROGRAM OF THE MEETING

### **Sunday, October 14, 2007**

Arrival

### **Monday, October 15, 2007**

*Morning*

Pierre de MIROSCHEJJI : Introduction to the Workshop

Marc LEBEAU : The ARCANE *modus operandi* and schedules of operations.

Jean-Paul THALMANN : The functioning of the ARCANE Database.

*Afternoon*

Eliot BRAUN : EB I Stratigraphy West of the Jordan Valley :

- Early Bronze I, A Cisjordan Perspective
- The Chronology of EB I, the End of the Late 4th, and the Beginning of the 3rd Millennia BCE.
- Late Southern EB I, the Case for Arad III

Pierre DE MIROSCHEJJI : The Tell el-Fâr'ah Sequence and the Question of the EB I-II Transition

Raphael GREENBERG : EB II Stratigraphy West of the Jordan Valley

### **Tuesday, October 16, 2007**

*Morning*

Pierre DE MIROSCHEJJI : EB III Stratigraphy West of the Jordan Valley

Graham PHILIP : EB I-IV Stratigraphy in the Jordan Valley

Peter FISCHER : EB I-II Stratigraphy in the Jordan Valley as Seen from Tell Abu Kharaz

*Afternoon*

Timothy HARRISON / Zeidan KAFABI : EB I-IV Stratigraphy on the Jordanian Plateau

Steve ROSEN : EB Chronology in the Semi-Arid Southern Peripheries (Southern Transjordan, the Arava Valley, the Negev and the Sinai)

Hermann GENZ : Metals, Glyptic and Small Objects

### **Wednesday, October 17, 2007**

*Morning*

Steve ROSEN : EBA Lithics and Chronology

Karen SOWADA : Relative Chronology of Egypt and the Southern Levant in the EBA :

- Fixed points in Chronological Synchronisms between Egypt and the Near East during the Third Millennium BC
- Material bearing on the Relative Chronology between Egypt and the Near East during the Third Millennium BC

Eliot BRAUN : Early Bronze I : the Egyptian Connection

*Afternoon*

Elisabetta BOARETTO : C14 Chronology vs Archaeological Chronology in the Southern Levant

Karen SOWADA : Some Remarks on Egyptian Radiocarbon Dates

GENERAL DISCUSSION : Summary of the meeting and agenda of further procedures.

### **Thursday, October 18, 2007**

Departure