

Central Mesopotamia (RG 10)

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First Regional Workshop in Blaubeuren July 15 – 18, 2007

Scientific Report

I. Summary

Between July 15 – 18 the team of the Regional Group 10 met at the Heinrich Fabri Institute, a meeting center of the Eberhard-Karls-Universität of Tübingen. The meeting was rescheduled from April 23-26, when several invitees had to cancel due to unforeseeable circumstances. The following topic coordinators and excavators (including representatives of ongoing research and publication projects) attended the meeting:

Name	Institution	Country
Beuger, Claudia	DAI Berlin	D
Butterlin, Pascal	Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines	F
Evans, Jean	Metropolitan Museum of Arts, New York	U.S.A.
Finkbeiner, Uwe	Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen	D
Gibson, McGuire	Oriental Institute, University of Chicago	U.S.A.
McCarthy, Andy	University of Edinburgh	U.K.
Reichel, Clemens	Oriental Institute, University of Chicago	U.S.A.
Rumaydh, Salah	Department of Antiquities, Baghdad (currently Damascus, Syria)	Iraq
Tsouparopoulou, Christina	Cambridge University	U.K.
Vallet, Regis	CNRS, Paris	F

1. Topic Coordinators

Stratigraphy:	Butterlin
Pottery:	Beuger, Evans
Glyptic:	McCarthy, Tsouparopoulou
Sculpture:	Evans
City Planning:	Vallet

2. Excavators / Representatives of Publication Projects:

Northern Babylonia	Diyala Sites (Tell Agrab, Tell Asmar, Khafaje)	Evans, Gibson, Reichel, Rumaiydh
	Kish	Gibson
	Umm al-Hafriyat	Gibson
	Tell Jokha	Rumaiydh
Hamrin Basin	Üç Tepe	Gibson
	Tell Gubba	Gibson
	Tell Sleima	Rumaiydh
Northern Mesopotamia	Assur	Beuger
Euphrates Valley	Mari	Butterlin

3. Guest (local host / co-organizer of meeting):

Uwe Finkbeiner	Eberhard-Karls University Tübingen	D
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The following colleagues were invited but unable to attend:

Gasche, Herrmann	Ghent University	Tell Sabra, Tell ed-Der	Be
Hockmann, Daniel	University of Münster	Lithics, burials	D
Luciani, Marta	University of Vienna	Architecture	A

Objectives:

The principal objective of this meeting were:

- The creation of a conceptual framework on the integration of archaeological data from Central Mesopotamia and the establishment of a work schedule.
- The establishment of a realistic time frame and work schedule to enter data into the ARCANE database
- finding new collaborators to fill positions of topic coordinators (C14, small finds)

Challenges:

While generally representing a well-defined zone within the cultural ecology of the Ancient Near East, modern day constrains impose various challenges for the creation of a unified archaeological database and the establishment of comparative benchmarks for Central Mesopotamia:

- The area of Central Mesopotamia as defined for ARCANE comprises parts of two different countries (Central Iraq, Eastern Syria) with different archaeological traditions.
- Many of the key excavations for the establishment of a chronological framework are old excavations (e.g., Diyala sites, Kish, Assur, Mari). While often excavated systematically, comprehensively and carefully, data retrieval happened at a less refined scale, making it difficult to compare their results with more recent excavations. Most critical in this context is the absence of C14 data from these excavations.
- Most recent excavations in Central Mesopotamia (i.e., since the 1970s) were rescue projects (Hamrin and Haditha/Al Qadissiyah dam projects in Iraq). Though data recovery was more scientific, time and logistical constrains generally allowed only limited exposures on these sites. The completion of dams and subsequent flooding

of sites often resulted in arbitrary cut-off dates for excavations. More refined data recovery therefore can be counterbalanced by limitations in size of excavations and hence our understanding of these archaeological contexts.

- Iraq, which represents the largest part of Central Mesopotamia, has been inaccessible to foreign missions since the 1991 Gulf War. Due to the subsequent economic embargo against Iraq work undertaken by Iraqi colleagues between 1991 and 2003 remains poorly known outside of Iraq and is largely unpublished. Resources available to these colleagues were limited, limiting the opportunities to collect and analyze data (notably C14 dates) scientifically. No fieldwork has been possible in Iraq since the 2003 war. Archaeological collections and datasets within Iraq remain unavailable for study.
- In recent years several projects were launched to comprehensively publish data from older excavations (Diyala Project, Assur Project). Some of this data has been entered into computer databases. The availability of these datasets to ARCANE needs to be investigated.

II. Description of the scientific content and discussion

The program consisted of two major parts:

- i. Presentations of the topic coordinators on the state of research in their respective fields of expertise as pertaining to the regions of Central Mesopotamia (see table above *s.v.* I 3. Topic Coordinators)
- ii. Presentations of excavators and representatives of ongoing publication and research projects on the state of key sites selected for inventories. Some excavations that were not represented by a member of the expeditions were discussed by attendees who are familiar with the material
- iii. Presentation of ARCANE database

Based on presentations by excavators and researchers a preliminary list of sites suitable for the selection of inventories was compiled. These sites include:

Tell Asmar (Diyala Region); Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (1930 - 1937); Iraqi Department of Antiquities (2000-01)	Evans	Metropolitan Museum of Art (researcher)	readjustments to site stratigraphy and chronology during the mid-third millennium B.C. (Early Dynastic I - III)
	Gibson	University of Chicago (former director of Diyala Project)	re-evaluation of Early Dynastic – Akkadian transition, material assemblages
	Reichel	University of Chicago (current director of Diyala Project)	late third millennium B.C. history and archaeology (Akkadian – Ur III)
	Rumaydh	Iraqi Department of Antiquities (director)	recent Iraqi excavations between 2000 and 2003

		of excavations)	
Khafaje (Diyala Region) Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (1930-37)	Evans	Metropolitan Museum of Art (researcher)	site chronology, reevaluation of stratigraphy, archaeological assemblages
	Vallet	CNRS	internal layout and city plan
Tell Jokha (Northern Babylonia); Iraqi Department of Antiquities (1990s)	Rumaiydh	Iraqi Department of Antiquities (director of excavations)	recent Iraqi excavations between 2000 and 2003
Üc Tepe (Hamrin Basin); University of Chicago and University of Copenhagen (1978-79)	Gibson	University of Chicago (American co-director of excavation)	summary of excavation
(4) Sleima (Hamrin Basin); Iraqi Department of Antiquities (1978-79)	Rumaiydh	Iraqi Department of Antiquities (director of excavations)	summary of excavations
Assur (northern Mesopotamia); Germany Oriental Society (1903-14)	Beuger	German Archaeological Institute (researcher, former member of Assur Project, Berlin)	summary of excavations, reanalysis of third millennium B.C. stratigraphic sequence, possible inventories
Mari (Syrian Lower Euphrates Valley); Mission Archéologique de Mari (1935 -)	Butterlin	Université de Versailles-Saint- Quentin-en-Yvelines (current director of excavations)	summary of excavations, chronological reevaluation, recent excavations, possible inventories
Umm al- Hafriyat (Northern Babylonia) University of Chicago (1974- 75)	Gibson	University of Chicago (director of excavation)	summary of excavations

III. Assessment of Results

- 3.1 In compiling a list of suitable sites for inventories from Central Mesopotamia a balance must be struck between comprehensive older excavation and recent rescue projects; availability of C14 data in the latter ones alone has to be supplemented with ceramic, artifactual and textual data from more comprehensive older excavations.
- 3.2 The availability of data from several important archaeological sites, notably Tell ed-Der, Sippar, and Tell Gubba, which fall into the region of Central Mesopotamia but were not represented in this meeting, remains to be addressed before compiling a final list of inventories. Contacts to this extent have been made.
- 3.3 Most participants agreed with the stratigraphic and chronological modifications to the conventional chronological sequences as proposed by Evans and Gibson, notably the use of the terms “Early Dynastic” and “Akkadian.” Though the purpose of the ARCANE project is to replace these terms with a more neutral terminology, consistency within the use of commonly used terms is vital for the cooperation and data exchange within the Central Mesopotamian group.
- 3.4 Topic coordinators: most significantly absent is a topic coordinator for C14 data. Several names were mentioned, some of them already associated with ARCANE. The prevalence of inscribed material, often from secure contexts. The large number of sculptured items (reliefs, statues) suggested the creation of a topic coordinator for “sculpture,” a role taken over by Evans.
- 3.5 The relative scarcity of C14 dates in Central Mesopotamia is somewhat counterbalanced by the large number of inscriptions (tablets, stone inscriptions), many of them from secure context, allowing archaeological contexts to be tied in with the absolute chronology (e.g., at Mari, Tell Asmar, Khafaje). While it is understood by attendees of the meeting that textual material should *not* be used in an interpretive way for data entry, the inclusion of inventories that are historically datable would be highly desirable on an intraregional as well as interregional level. Most members of the meeting wished the inclusion of or cooperation with a member of ARCANE’s History/ Epigraphy group.
- 3.6 A final list of sites and inventories for Central Mesopotamia is in preparation, its shape will depend on the availability of additional data from sites mentioned above s.v. (3.2).

IV. Final Program

Sunday (July 15, 2007)

- arrival in Blaubeuren (no official program)

Monday (July 16, 2007)

- 9:00 – 9:30 a.m.: Opening (Reichel, Finkbeiner)
- 9:30 – 10:00 a.m.: introduction to ARCANE (Reichel)

1. Archaeology: Mesopotamian Heartland / Diyala Region

- 10 - 11:00 a.m.: *Diyala sites 1*: Tell Asmar, Khafaje, (Evans)

(coffee break)

- 11 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.: *Diyala sites 2*: Tell Asmar, Khafaje (Gibson, Reichel)
- 12:00 – 12:45 p.m.: Umm al-Jir, Umm al-Hafriyat, Kish, Nippur (Gibson)
- 12:45 – 1:00 p.m.: discussion

(1:00 – 2:30 p.m.: lunch)

2. Archaeology: Mesopotamian Heartland (cont.) / Hamrin Basin (Upper Diyala)

- 2:30 – 3:00 p.m.: Tell Jokha (Rumaiydh)
- 3:00 – 3:30 p.m.: Üç Tepe, Tepe Al-Atiqah, Tell Gubba (Gibson)
- 3:30 – 4:00 p.m.: Sleimah (Rumaiydh)
- 4:00 – 4:30 p.m.: discussion

(coffee break)

3. Archaeology: Syrian Euphrates Valley / Northern Mesopotamia

- 5:00 – 5:40 p.m.: Mari (Butterlin)
- 5:40 – 6:00 p.m.: Assur (Beuger)

(6:00 – 8:00 p.m.: dinner)

- 8:00 – 9:00 p.m.: discussion

Tuesday (July 17, 2007)

5. Archaeology: chronology, stratigraphy, architecture

- 9:00 – 9:30: architecture, city planning (Vallet)

6. Material Culture

- 9:30 – 10:15 a.m.: pottery (Beuger, with contributions by Gibson, Evans *et al.*)
 - 10:15 – 11:00 a.m.: seals and sealings (McCarthy, Tsouparopoulou)
- (coffee break)*

- 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.: C¹⁴ data (plenary)
- 12:15 – 1 p.m.: discussion, suggestions

(1:00 – 2:30 p.m.: lunch)

Afternoon Session: Data Management

- 2:30 – 3:15 p.m.: Introduction to ARCANE database (Reichel)
- 3:15 – 4:00 p.m.: discussion (data input and management)

(coffee break)

- 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.: discussion (implementation strategies, outreach to colleagues)

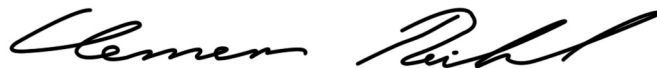
(6:00 – 8:00 p.m.: dinner)

- 8:00 – 10:00 p.m.: discussion

• **Wednesday (July 18, 2007)**

- 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.: final meeting (topic coordinators, schedule)
- 10:00 - : departure

Qamishli (Syria), September 15 2007



Clemens Reichel