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Tigridian Region (RG 09)  
Piotr Bielinski – Elena Rova  
Team Leaders

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## ARCANE PROJECT – II WORKSHOP REGIONAL GROUP RG09 Venice, January 15<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> 2009

### SCIENTIFIC REPORT

#### 1. Summary

The members of regional group RG09 (Tigridian Region) held their second meeting at Ca' Foscari University of Venice from January the 15<sup>th</sup> to January the 17<sup>th</sup> 2009. 18 participants from 9 European and extra-European countries took part in the workshop, whose aims were successfully fulfilled.

The aims of the meeting were the following:

- 1) To evaluate the results of the data collecting phase of the project for the Tigridian region in comparison with the results obtained by other regional groups: how was the reaction of the excavators; how many inventories have been filled into the ARCANE database; from how many sites, and how significant these inventories are for the third millennium chronology of the region.
- 2) To evaluate the work done until now by each topic coordinator (collection and study of published evidence and secondary literature) and to discuss questions and problems which arose in this phase.
- 3) To get additional evidence about the Tigridian region by means of presentations of excavation results by excavators who either could not attend the previous 2006 meeting in Warsaw, or attended the previous meeting but did not give a formal presentation of their sites, or who may have data from the most recent excavation seasons.
- 4) To compare the preliminary chronological scheme of the Tigridian region and the main diagnostic types proposed by the topic coordinators with those of the neighbouring regional groups
- 5) To present the final version of the data base program with integrated searching facilities
- 6) To discuss the next development of the research and to establish procedures, common terminology, editorial guidelines and deadlines for the publication of the Regional Chronology volume.

## 2. Description of the scientific content of and discussion at the event

Participants were the following:

### *Organizers and Topic Coordinators*

ROVA, Elena	Venice University	Organizer, TL
BIELINSKI, Piotr	Warsaw University	Organizer, TL
TONUSSI, Monica	Venice University	Organizer, Figurines and small finds TC
LAWECKA, Dorota	Warsaw University	Architecture TC
RUTKOWSKI, Lukasz	Warsaw University	Metal TC
TAYLOR, Helen	UCL London	Pottery TC

### *Guests*

ANASTASIO, Stefano	Metra, Florence	Database Team
BACHELOT, Luc	CNRS Paris	Tell Kutan
BALL, Warwick	Galashiels	al-Hawa, Abu Dhahir, Shelgiyya, etc.
GAVAGNIN, Katia	Venice University	Database contributor
KOZBE, Gulriz	Ege University Izmir	Kavuşan Höyük
MEIJER Diederick	Leiden University	Steering Committee
MILANO, Lucio	Venice University	Epigraphist
OZFIRAT, Aynur	Yüzüncü Yıl University Van	Üçtepe
PAULETTE, Tate	University of Chicago	Tell Hamoukar
SENYURT, S. Yücel	Gazi University	Asagi Salat
SALIOLA, Francesco	Metra, Florence	Database Team
SPANOS, Peter Z.	Munich University	Durdarra, Hamad Agha as-Saghir

The following Topic Coordinators had to cancel their participation and were excused:

BEUGER, Claudia	DAI Berlin	Pottery TC
GREEN, Anthony	Free University Berlin	Burials and funerary practices TC
ROAF, Michael	Munich University	Statigraphy TC
ZAMBELLO, Marta	Bruxelles University	Lithics, C14, Environment

Roger MATTHEWS (UCL London) had also to cancel his participation only a few days before the meeting.

A **preliminary meeting of the Topic Coordinators** was held on the morning of January the 15<sup>th</sup>. The new pottery coordinator (Helen Taylor) was introduced to the other members of the team. The question was raised of the presence in the Tigridian region of some 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium epigraphic documents (the Nuzi texts) which would be worth examining. It was decided to appoint Lucio Milano, who kindly accepted, for carrying out this task. Topic coordinators reported that their work on published evidence did not progress much since the Warsaw meeting, since no new evidence was published in the meanwhile. It was however decided that by the end of February those who haven't done this yet should fill the specific topic literature in the ARCANE database, as a preliminary step for future publication. After that, the group evaluated the number and quality inventories collected so far, and their value for the regional chronology. The impression was that some more inventories would be needed before starting the evaluation work. In order to cope with the general schedule of the project, it was decided to close the collecting phase with the end of February, so that the final version of the database could be ready before summer. In the meanwhile, the database managers will be asked to provide the topic coordinators with a preliminary version of the regional database. Finally, editorial guidelines and deadlines for the publication of the Regional Chronology volume were presented and discussed. It was decided to keep the deadline of December 2009 for at least a preliminary draft of the texts.

The general meeting started on Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> at 3.00 p.m. On behalf of the ARCANE steering committee, **Diederick Mejer** informed the participants about the present stage of development of the project. There has been a considerable delay in the general schedule of the project, due to the fact that the preliminary stages (database planning and its implementation) lasted more time than expected, and that the answer of the excavators was rather slow; however now this stage has been

successfully closed and work is proceeding more quickly. From the methodological point of view, the effort in reaching a common terminology has been a great accomplishment. The Jezirah group has already reached the foreseen number of inventories, and others will hopefully reach it in the next months. At the end of his talk, possible solutions to the delay were discussed: would it be better to complete the first (regional phase) properly, waiting for more inventories, or to close it with an incomplete documentation and proceed to the general synthesis? Diederick Meijer announced that the Steering Committee plans to ask for a one year prolongation (without additional funding) of the project.

**Piotr Bielinski** reported the results of the topic coordinator meeting: there has been no significant changes since the Warsaw meeting about the study of published evidence, since this has not changed and announced the decided deadlines.

**Elena Rova** informed the audience about the present stage of advancement of the regional database: 56 inventories from 11 different sites have been collected; some 25 have been already started and will be completed soon, while there are reasonable hopes to collect at least 20-30 additional ones from the excavators attending the meeting; therefore we will probably reach ca 100 inventories by the end of the collecting phase. Among the inventories provided there is important unpublished material from Tell Taya (excavated in the late 1960ies and never fully published); this is to be considered a success of the Tigridian group. Most of the sites which yielded inventories so far are located in the central area of the region, with a significant concentration in the Eski Mosul salvage project area; there is however some interesting material from the Ilisu Dam area in Turkey as well (the important site of Assur in the South is still missing). As expected, due to the type of excavations carried out in the region, the quality of the collected inventories is however not very high (many artificial inventories, many sherds and few entire vessels). On the one hand this created some difficulties in accommodating the documentation into the database, on the other one will have to be taken into account in the evaluation phase.

**Aynur Özfirat** presented the situation of the Eastern Anatolia Regional group: due to the retirement of the previous team leaders, the group started working late, and is therefore less advanced in its work than the other groups. During the first meeting held in Van in November 2007, five key sites were selected: no data were inserted so far in the database, but it was agreed that this will be done in the course of the next group meeting in 2009.

The rest of the afternoon was devoted to technical discussion about the database.

**Stefano Anastasio** and **Francesco Saliola** presented the final version of the database program with integrated searching facilities, by using a prototype of the Tigridian region database which included ca 45 completed inventories. They communicated that ca. 3 months will be needed to have a final version, once all data will be collected. The prototype was distributed to the participants who were interested in it. During the following discussion, it was discovered that some excavators had serious difficulties in dealing with the database. It was therefore decided to dedicate part of the following morning to a practical demonstration.

The first half of the morning of January the 16<sup>th</sup> was dedicated to the database practical demonstration: two Venice doctorands, **Katia Gavagnin** and **Cristina Baccarin**, who had filled in some of the inventories, inserted some data and, together with **Stefano Anastasio** and **Francesco Saliola**, answered doubts and questions of the future contributors, who all agreed on the utility of this session.

After the coffee break, topic coordinators presented the chronological problems connected with their specific topics: **Piotr Bielinski** about glyptic finds, **Dorota Lawecka** about architecture, **Lukasz Rutkowski** about metal finds, and **Monica Tonussi** about figurines and other small finds. As a whole, there is not much new on all these topics in comparison with what was said at the Warsaw meeting; in general, for most of these categories of finds, available material is too scanty, fragmentary and/all too badly stratified to be able to contribute to an independent chronology of the region. It may however be more interesting in connection with similar material from the other

regions, i.e. for the trans-regional phase of the project. As for pottery, since **Helen Taylor** just assumed the role of topic coordinator and Claudia Beuger was not present, **Elena Rova** presented a summary of the proposed Regional Periodization, on the basis of the work previously done by Renate Gut and herself, with illustration of the most typical ceramic types and correspondence with the EJ periodization:

- EGT 1: "Terminal Uruk" assemblage
- ETG 2a: "Transitional Ninevite 5" assemblage
- ETG 2b: "Intermediate Ninevite 5" assemblage
- ETG 3: "Painted + incised Ninevite 5" assemblage
- ETG 4a "Incised + Excised Ninevite 5" assemblage
- ETG 4b: "Late Excised Ninevite 5" assemblage
- ETG 5: Post-Ninevite 5/ED III a
- ETG 6: ED IIIb to Early Akkadian
- ETG 7: Akkadian
- ETG 8: late Akkadian or Post-Akkadian
- ETG 9: Ur III/Isin-Larsa.

The following discussion focused on the second part of the sequence, which is still extremely tentative, and on the methodological issue whether in this phase one should take into account or not the results achieved by the neighbouring regional group (especially the Jezirah).

The afternoon session was dedicated to the presentation of the collected inventories and of additional proposed inventories.

**Luc Bachelot** presented the Ninevite 5 material from Tell Kutan. In spite of the fact that the site was damaged by erosion and that part of the documentation was lost, there were some houses with floors with in situ material (pottery, seal impressions and lithics) which can provide very interesting inventories.

**Lukasz Rutkowski** presented the Eski Mosul sites excavated by the Japanese team (Jikan, Fisna, Thuwajj, Jessary), which he is working on the basis of the published evidence. A number of graves from Tell Jikan will provide excellent inventories for the second half of the millennium; in addition, from several of these sites there are stratified sequences of sherds which could contribute to the period's chronology.

**Peter Spanos** gave a presentation of the site of Hamad Agha as-Saghir, which mainly contains 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium material. During the following discussion, additional 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium contexts from this site and from Tell Durdarra were mentioned, and it was agreed that some inventories will be selected from these for the aims of the ARCANE project.

**Warwick Ball** informed about the work on the British team in the Zummar and Iraqi North Jazirah region. Work is still in progress, and its main result will be to provide a quantified sequence of ceramic diagnostics on the basis of stratified material from different sites. On some of these sites there were, however, some good contexts which will provide interesting ARCANE inventories, including some belonging to the "Terminal Uruk" period.

**Helen Taylor** presented the inventories from Nineveh, collected by herself on the basis of published material (mostly artificial inventories, but containing important material) and those from Tell Taya (mostly primary inventories) provided by the excavator Julian Reade and processed by herself. The latter, which mainly consisted of unpublished material, raised a lively discussion about the Taya chronology: on the basis of comparisons mainly from the Jezirah region, the Taya levels seem to be later than previously supposed.

**Elena Rova** presented the inventories from Tell Karrana 3 as an example of how to accommodate into the ARCANE database, through a careful choice of inventories, complexes and units, the maximum amount of information available from a site.

The presentation of the collected inventories and of additional proposed inventories continued during the first half of the morning of January the 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Tate Paulette** presented the site of Tell Hamoukar. This yielded very important in situ material from contexts of the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, which will represent excellent ARCANE primary inventories, and some stratified early third millennium material (mainly sherds), which are also worth being included in some form in the ARCANE database.

**Katia Gavagnin** presented the inventories of Telul eth-Thalathat she produced on the basis of the publications of the Japanese excavations. Difficulties and problems of working with second-hand documentation (lack of published data concerning aspects which are crucial for the ARCANE aims) were discussed on this occasion.

The last presentations concerned the sites located in the Ilisu Dam area in Turkey. **Yücel Senyurt** presented the site of Asagi Salat, from which 1 inventory had been produced. The site (in particular its cemetery) yielded very interesting material for the early 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C.; it was therefore agreed to feed additional information from it into the ARCANE database

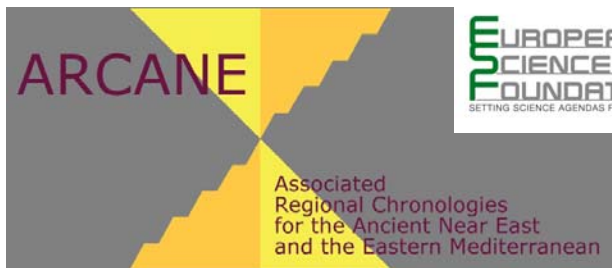
**Gulriz Kozbe** described the inventories from Kavuşan Höyük, which belong to the last centuries of the third millennium B.C., **Aynur Özfirat** those from Üçtepe, of the same periods. The following discussion focused on the relations of this material with that of the Upper Tigris and of the Jezirah, on the definition and chronological distribution of some special wares in this area (DROB, RBWW, Jezirah Grey Ware).

A general discussion followed after the coffee break. Specific problematic issues were: how to integrate the Ilisu Dam area material, which appears to be more similar to the material from the Jezirah region than to that from the Tigris sites, but also to have some specific features of its own, into the regional periodization, and how to evaluate the Tell Taya material. More in general, all participants had the impression that the unpublished material presented during the workshop is, on the whole, of a much better quality than the material collected so far, and could contribute to a significant advance to the regional chronology. On the other hand, the utility of the work already done was also acknowledged (we already managed to collect a sufficiently representative sample of third millennium material culture in the region), so that even those excavators who were rather skeptical in the beginning were convinced of the potentials of the project, and promised to try to provide their inventories by the proposed deadline. It was also acknowledged, however, that for some phases at least the material from the region is too scanty to provide a reliable chronology if not in connection with data from the neighboring regions. The value of material from less well stratified contexts was also re-discussed (these are very abundant in our region, and sometimes provide a less biased view of the ceramic assemblages of each period than a few selected inventories, which may be numerically too limited).

### **3. Assessment of the results and impact of the event on the future direction of the field**

The second meeting of the Tigridian regional group RG09 has been considered by all attendants as very successful. Due to its difficult situation (almost no active excavations, many old excavations not conforming to the methodological standards required by the projects, most recent excavations still unpublished and/or consisting of small scale soundings) the Upper Tigris region had been considered as one of the less promising for the ARCANE project. In spite of this, we already managed to collect a sufficiently representative sample of third millennium material culture in the region in the project's database, and to attract the excavators' attention enough to convince them to provide unpublished material of great interest. A final evaluation of the value of these data for a reliable independent regional chronology will be possible only after the missing inventories will be delivered and the final database will be provided to the topic coordinators; their interest for the interregional phase of the project (i.e. for comparison with better investigated areas) is however already quite clear.

#### 4. Annex: Final Programme of the meeting



**Tigridian Region (RG 09)**  
Piotr Bielinski – Elena Roa  
Team Leaders

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## II WORKSHOP REGIONAL GROUP RG09 - Venice, January 15<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> 2009

### PROGRAMME OF THE MEETING

*Thursday, January 15th 2009*

Arrival of the participants in Venice

Università Ca' Foscari Venezia – Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità e del Vicino Oriente  
Palazzo Malcanton- Marcorà Dorsoduro 3484/d

11.00 Preliminary Meeting of the Topic Coordinators

15.00-19.00 Afternoon Session:

Generalities

- Welcome by prof. Filippo Maria Carinci (Dean of the Humanities Faculty – Ca' Foscari University)
- General introduction to the present stage of development of the ARCANE Project (D. Meijer)
- Presentation of the results of the collecting data phase for the Tigridian region (P. Bielinski, E. Roa)
- Presentation of the results of the collecting data phase for the neighbouring regional groups - Eastern Anatolia (A. Özfiat)
- Presentation of the final version of the data base program with integrated searching facilities (F. Saliola/S. Anastasio)

*19.30 Night visit to St. Mark's Basilica*

*Dinner*

*Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup> 2009*

Università Ca' Foscari Venezia – Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità e del Vicino Oriente  
Palazzo Malcanton- Marcorà Dorsoduro 3484/d

9.30 – 13.00 Morning Session:

Simulation of the data inserting procedure and discussion of related problems - (F. Saliola/S. Anastasio with the help of Venice students)

*10.30 – 10.50 Coffee Break*

- Presentation of the Tigridian region preliminary periodization (E. Roa)

- Presentations by the topic coordinators: present state of the work, problems and perspectives

Architecture - (D. Ławecka)

Ceramics – (H. Taylor)

Glyptics - (P. Bielinski)

Figurines and small finds - (M. Tonussi)

Metal - (Ł. Rutkowski)

Discussion

*13.00 – 15.00 Lunch Break*

15.00 – 19.00 Afternoon Session:

Presentations of sites with proposed inventories

Tell Kutan - (L. Bachelot)

Fisna, Jikan, Thuwajj, Jessary – (L. Rutkowski)

Hamad Agha as-Saghir – (P. Spanos)

*17.20 – 17.40 Coffee Break*

al-Hawa, Abu Dhahir, Shelgiyya, Gir Matbakh, Siyana - (W. Ball)

Tell Taya, Nineveh – (H. Taylor)

Tell Karrana 3 – (E. Rova)

*Dinner*

***Saturday, January 17th 2009***

Università Ca' Foscari Venezia – Biblioteca del Servizio Didattico

Zattere - Dorsoduro 1392

9.00 – 13.00 Morning Session:

Continuation of sites and inventories presentations

Tell Hamoukar - (T. Paulette)

Kavuşan Höyük - (G. Kozbe)

Üçtepe - (A. Özfirat)

*10.45 – 11.00 Coffee Break*

Asagi Salat – (Y. Senyurt)

Telul eth-Thalathat – (K. Gavagnin)

Concluding meeting - General discussion about the Upper Tigris regional Chronology

*13.00 – 14.00 Lunch Break*

*14.00-15.00 Visit to the Cini Foundation on the island of St. George*

*Free afternoon*

*Dinner*

***Sunday, January 18th 2009***

Departure of the participants from Venice.