

The ARCANE project

Meeting of the TG02 Transversal Group „Glyptic and Art History“
Pilsen, April 22nd-24th 2009

Scientific Report of the meeting

1) Summary (up to 1 page)

In 2006, the ESF has decided to fund a project of archaeological exploration and interpretation entitled „ARCANE – Assorted Regional Chronologies of the Ancient Near East“ (2006-2011, www.arcane.uni-tuebingen.de). The purpose of this major project, on which 128 scholars from about 25 countries are working, is to put at the disposal of the academic community a viable chronological tool for classification of archaeological materials found in the Near East and dating to the third pre-Christian millennium, when such essential traits of the human civilization such as permanent administration and the state, writing, or verbal and visual arts emerged there.

The project team comprises twelve Regional and three Transversal groups. The meeting proposed was that of the TG02 Transversal Group „Glyptic and Art History“. While the Regional groups base their approach on studies of archaeological evidence with respect to the geographical coordinates of its findspots, the Transversal groups focus on materials occurring throughout the entire region. These may provide independent control sequences for the particular archaeological-material series of the singular regions. The foci of effort of the three Transversal groups are a) written materials, b) art-history objects and c) data obtained by means of natural sciences, especially the C-14 dating method. The coordinators of the TG02 Group are Petr Charvat (University of West Bohemia, Pilsen, Czech republic) and Holly Pittman (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, U. S. A.).

The meeting, which took place on the premises of the University of West Bohemia at Pilsen, Czech Republic, fulfilled a fourfold purpose.

First and foremost, its participants reviewed the state of the project, and assessed the range and quality of research work already done and the tasks with which the group will be confronted in the future.

Second, and no less important, they heard reports on work done by other transversal groups, on their methodologies and approaches to their particular problems. They dedicated special attention to areas where the work of the TG02 group will converge towards that of the other groups – of TG01, History and Epigraphy, and TG03, C-14 dating.

Third, and very significantly, they attended to presentations of the materials prepared by regional Coordinators of the Middle Euphrates-, Central- and Southern Mesopotamian groups. They examined the ways and means by which these fine pieces of research will relate to the essential strategy of the group – to put together a reliable chronological sequence of third-millennium art material, based on the spatiotemporal development of the period's art style(s).

Finally, the fourth point concerned the overall strategy of the group. Unlike the other TGs, TG02 depends fully on the Regional Groups for its output. The activity of TG02 will thus come to full swing after the input of the Regional-Group data in the database. The TG02 group will stream at the documentation, definition, and chronological seriation of the regional style sequences. Retaining its own special terminology, it will put all its efforts to provide a series of data that will be compatible with sequences provided by the Regional Groups, as well as by TG01 and TG03.

2) Description of the scientific content of and discussion at the event (up to 4 pages)

Wednesday, April 22nd 2009

Morning: Welcome address by Professor Ladislav Cabada, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of West Bohemia.

Pierre de Miroschedji next outlined the current developments within the ARCANE project. In spite of the various twists and turns of its fate, the project is working and the project teams have been overcoming the difficulties encountered *en route*. It is now clear that all members of the project team will work on its assignments with dedication and determination.

To this the participants reacted by asking supplementary questions with respect to the clarification of aspects of the project not entirely clear up to now, as well as sketching out the contributions they are about to make towards its goals.

Afternoon: The participants heard first the report of Elisabetta Boaretto for the work of the TG03 – C-14 dates. The process of data acquisition goes now ahead without problems. High-quality data will be supplied by authors of recent excavations since few materials retrieved by earlier excavators possess the properties meeting the requirements of current research. Essentially, there are also no difficulties with respect to compatibility of the various C-14 laboratories working in the field. The accumulated data show some remarkable particularities which may prove very fruitful in future research. Materials of plant character such as seeds may provide narrower data margins than pieces of wood or charcoal. Also, C-14 data may contribute to finer dating of artifacts retrieved from earlier or later contexts of the same archaeological phases.

Subsequently, Ingo Schrakamp presented the report of the TG01 group – History and Epigraphy, *in lieu* of Walther Sallaberger, Team Leader of the Group, who was unable to participate. The impressive work of this group involves the construction of a complete historical chronology of third-millennium Mesopotamia, leaning on rulers' inscriptions and cross-references among those known from coeval sources to have been contemporary. This comprehensive effort will take account of the most recent discoveries and research results, sometimes introducing adjustments and corrections of commonly held assumptions.

Thursday, April 23rd, 2009

This day was dedicated to hearing two extensive reports from Topic Coordinators of two Regional Groups most advanced in their efforts to assess the chronological impact of Glyptic and Art History: Middle Euphrates Group (Candida Felli, morning) and Central- and Southern Mesopotamian Group (Jean Evans, afternoon).

In both cases the Topic Coordinators presented exceptionally fine contributions. In-depth treatment of the issues in question included systematic collection of the material at hand, as well as its assessments both from the viewpoint of regional stylistic sequences and in relation to the overall development of art style within third-millennium Near East. Both the presentations, and the ensuing discussion, elucidated a number of interrelated questions, including evaluations of other works of art, especially sculpture, and relations towards the output of related Transversal groups, especially the TG01 group, History and Epigraphy.

Friday, April 24th, 2009

During the final day of the session, the participants discussed, and worked out, a strategy by means of which the TG02 group is determined to fulfil its task.

The mandate of this transversal group is to use glyptic and other arts to establish interregional chronological relationships through the stratigraphic and spatial distribution of this data. Given this mandate, it is obvious that TG2 is completely dependent on the regional groups for its data. We anticipate that TG2 will on occasion be able to offer internal subdivisions within the individual regional sequences, as well as to provide an independent line of evidence both for regional sequences and for the interregional chronological coordination. The other primary goal of TG2 is to establish spatial relations within, and between, regional groups as reflected by the synchronic distribution of glyptic and other arts. Finally, it is a primary goal of this group to establish to the degree possible the nature of the bell-shaped curve for the arts that is typical of all artifact types. This depends on the frequency of the appearance of different attributes within the data set of glyptic and other arts.

The types of data that the groups requests from the regional groups in order of priority are all types of **glyptic art, works of sculpture in the round or in relief, as well as figurines of clay and metal.**

We anticipate that the publication of TG2 volume will be among the very last to appear in the ARCANE project. We envision that the Glyptic and art topic coordinator for each regional group will write an extensive presentation of their material for the regional volume. In the final publication, which will be jointly authored by both the team leaders and the regional topic coordinators, we foresee short summaries of the regional evidence, with longer chapters presenting interregional chronologies based on the distribution of the glyptic art. Finally there will be chapters on both sculpture and figurines, treating both their regional and their chronological dimensions.

3) Assessment of the results and impact of the event on the future direction of the field (up to 2 pages)

This was a meeting of major importance for the activities of the TG02 group – „Glyptic and Art History“. Armed with all the necessary informations from the Steering Committee, the participants first heard about the progress made by other Transversal Groups, and then assisted a most fruitful and through presentation of two Group Coordinators whose work has first explored the ground on which the TG02 group will be moving. Finally, the TG02 representatives proceeded to formulate a strategy of their approach to the chronology of the third-millennium Near East, crucial for their contribution to the successful carrying out of the ARCANE project. The results of this meeting will be of major importance for the future progress of the work of the ARCANE project.

4) Final programme of the meeting

Wednesday, April 22nd 2009

9.00- 9.30 – Welcome address by Professor Ladislav Cabada, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of West Bohemia.

9.30 – 12.00 Introducing the current developments within the ARCANE project, by Pierre de Miroschedji;

14.00 – 17.00 The current state of research of the ARCANE Transversal Groups: TG03 – C-14 dating, by Elisabetta Boaretto, and TG01, History and Epigraphy, by Ingo Schrakamp.

Thursday, April 23rd 2009

9.00 – 12.00: Presentation of the glyptic and art-history materials of the Middle Euphrates Group, by the Topic Coordinator, Candida Felli;

14.00 – 17.00: Presentation of the glyptic and art-history materials of the Central/ and Southern Mesopotamia Group, by their Topic Coordinator, Jean Evans.

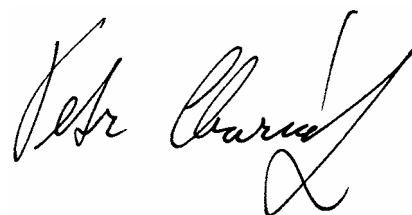
Friday, April 24th 2009

9.00 – 12.00: Proposal of an overall research strategy for the TG02 – Glyptic and Art History Group of the ARCANE project, and summation of the debate on the meeting's issues, by Holly Pittman, Petr Charvát, and the rest of the participants.

Participants:

1. Pierre de Miroschedji (CNRS, Paris, France),
2. Elisabetta Boaretto (Bar Ilan University and Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel),
3. Petr Charvat (University of West Bohemia, Pilsen, Czech Republic),
4. Jean Evans (University of Chicago, USA),
5. Candida Felli (Università degli Studi, Pisa, Italy),
6. Jana Mynarova (Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic),
7. Holly Pittman (University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia, USA),
8. Ingo Schrakamp (Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität München, Germany).

Pilsen, June 1st, 2009.



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