
THE OLD BABYLONIAN DIYALA: RESEARCH SINCE THE 1930s AND PROSPECTS COLLOQUIUM AT THE INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES OF PARIS

PARIS, 25-26 JUNE 2018

The region around the river Diyala, which runs approximately 500 km, from the mountains between Iraq and Iran, down to the south of Baghdad where it joins the Tigris, was the home of dozens of cities, villages and communities during the long history of ancient Mesopotamia. In the first centuries of the second millennium BCE, the strategic position of the region turned it into a point of articulation, dispute and mediation of the Babylonian area in the south and the Assyrian area in the north. Added to the growing power of the city of Eshnunna, this led the region to play a significant role in the international politics of those times.

The lack of syntheses dealing with the valley of the Diyala and the kingdom of Eshnunna is astonishing when compared with the rich legacy of in-depth and comprehensive scholarly works on the history of Larsa, Mari, Babylon and Assyria during the first centuries of the second millennium.

The main goal of the conference is to produce an updated view of the history and archaeology of the region, specifically dealing with the following issues:

- buildings, cities, landscapes and their relation with politics;
- cultural and economic exchanges with other regions;
- administration of the institutions: temple, palace and domestic units;
- history of the research itself and issues concerning the preservation of the material heritage of the ancient Diyala.

In relation to the chronological range, the colloquium will privilege the first centuries of the second millennium, but contributions dealing with all periods of the Diyala will be welcome.

Colloquium The Old Babylonian Diyala – Research Since the 1930s and Prospects

Organising committee:

Carlos Gonçalves, fellow at IEA-Paris 2016-2017, Univ. São Paulo
Cécile Michel, ArScAn (CNRS/Univ. Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne/Univ. Paris Nanterre/MC.))
Cheikhmous Ali, fellow at IEA-Paris 2016-2017, Univ. Strasbourg, fellow at The Gerda Henkel Foundation



Programme

Monday 25 June

9:00-9:15 Opening session

- Gretty Mirdal, for the Institut d'études avancées de Paris
- Ghislaine Glasson-Deschaumes, for the LabEx Past in the Present
- Carlos Gonçalves, for the organising committee

9:15-10:15 Opening talk – Dominique Charpin, Collège de France, Paris
Ešnunna: An historiographical case

10:15-10:30 Pause

10:30-11:15 – Ariane Thomas, Musée du Louvre, Paris
Diyala at the Louvre

11:15-12:00 – Basima J. Abed, College of Arts, Baghdad
Ešnunna under The Influence of Elam

12:00-13:00 Lunch

13:30-14:15 – Philippe Quenet, Université de Strasbourg
Reconstructing the Oval Temple of Khafajeh: Insight into the Emergence of Multi-Stepped Terraces

14:15-15:00 – Elisa Rossberger, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
From Things to Practice. Reconstructing Spheres of Action from the Archaeological Inventories of the Old Babylonian Temples in Ishchali

15:00-15:30 Pause

15:30-16:15 – Ahmed Kh. Mohammed, Former Director of the National Museum of Iraq, Baghdad
A New Text from Tell Sulayma - Diyala Region

16:15-17:00 – Hervé Reculeau, University of Chicago
The Diyala Valley in the Early Old Babylonian Period: New Evidence from Tell Muqdadiya

Tuesday 26 June

9:30-10:15 – Laith Hussein, College of Arts, Baghdad
The Texts from Šaduppûm “Tall Ḥarmal”

10:15-10h30 Pause

10:30-11:15 – Francesca Nebiolo, Proche-Orient Caucase, EPHE, UMR 7192
Between past and future: The “Onomastica della Diyala” Project

11:15-12:00 – Carlos Gonçalves, Universidade de São Paulo, IEA de Paris 2016-2017
Homonyms, Aliases and Measurements in an Old Babylonian Community – the Archive of Nūr-Šamaš

12:00-13:00 Lunch

13:30-14:15 – Cheikhmous Ali, Université de Strasbourg, IEA de Paris 2016-2017,
chercheur à la Fondation Gerda Henkel
La glyptique de la Diyala au III^e millénaire av. n. ère : état de question

14:15-15:00 – Sophie Cluzan, Musée du Louvre, Paris
From Diyala to Ur, Passing by Mari, Kish and the Jezireh: Interregional connections in the first historical kingdoms

15:00-15:30 Pause

15:30-16:15 – Rients De Boer, Universiteit van Amsterdam
The Diyala Region as a Linchpin in Old Babylonian Trade Networks

16:15-17:00 – Cécile Michel, ArScAn, CNRS UMR 7041, Nanterre & Universität Hamburg
Conclusion and general discussion

Abstracts

Ešnunna under The Influence of Elam

Abed, Basima J.
University of Baghdad
College of Arts
Archaeology Department

Ešnunna enjoyed independence during its rule of its king Šilli-Sîn, who was defeated by Hammurabi the king of Babylon, Ešnunna then experienced a state of political unrest and its kings ruled not only Babylon but also Elam. This is what we will explain in this research through two unpublished letters to one of the kings of Ešnunna, which shows that it is not only for Babylon, but also for Elam. Not in the rule of its king Šilli-Sîn, as some sources indicate, but during the rule of the king who came after him.

La glyptique de la Diyala au III^e millénaire av. n. ère : état de question

Ali, Cheikhmous
Université de Strasbourg
Chercheur à la Fondation Gerda Henkel
Institut d'études avancées de Paris 2016-2017

Les fouilles menées par l'Institut Oriental de Chicago entre 1930 et 1938 dans la vallée de la Diyala (à Khafadje, Tell Agrab et Tell Asmar) ont permis d'étudier le développement de l'urbanisation (entre 3100 - 2350 av. n. ère) au sein d'une culture proprement régionale (architecture, céramique, documents sigillographiques...) qui s'est ensuite fondue dans la culture sumérienne du Sud. Ces sites ont livré un abondant corpus de sceaux permettant de suivre l'évolution de l'art de la glyptique de l'époque de l'Uruk final à celle des Dynasties Archaïques dans cette région. On y voit se développer un style particulier, proprement régional, qui pose question, tant par les matières employées que par les techniques de gravure et les motifs composant les scènes. De plus, quantité de sceaux représentent des scènes assez semblables. L'absence d'empreintes pour ces derniers invite tout naturellement à s'interroger sur leur fonction : sceaux ou plutôt amulettes ?

Ešnunna: An historiographical case

Charpin, Dominique
Collège de France / Proche-Orient Caucase

The archaeological researches in the Diyala valley have been intensive since the 1930s, but the place of Ešnunna in the Old Babylonian historiography has been very limited for a long time. We will try to understand this situation, and to explain why it is fortunately changing in the recent years.

From Diyala to Ur, Passing by Mari, Kish and the Jezireh: Interregional connections in the first historical kingdoms

Cluzan, Sophie
Musée du Louvre

During the time of Early Historical Kingdoms, glyptic offers a complex and rich field of research, noteworthy for the recognition of existing links between the different centers of civilization. Henri Frankfort's publication of the Diyala seals demonstrated how cautious one must be in using the context of discovery for dating such objects, but it also showed how considering the seals from an iconographical perspective can be relevant for reconstructing a network of intercultural relationships. Together with the vast amount of seals found at the Diyala sites for the Third millennium, discoveries made at other main centers of urbanization and power, such as Ur, Kish, Mari and the Djezireh, constructed what can be looked at as the major "database of images" for the Ancient Near East. Besides the complexity of any attempt made for dating and classifying these productions, these images are of major impact for any territorial approach of cultures.

Focusing on some special cases, this presentation will try to discuss how the Diyala region was or was not included in the growing network of kingdoms and cultures at the beginning of written history.

The Diyala Region as a Linchpin in Old Babylonian Trade Networks

De Boer, Rients
Universiteit van Amsterdam

The Diyala region with its most important city Ešnunna controlled the flow of goods between Mesopotamia and the Iranian plateau through the "Zagros gates". Through this mountainous corridor, tin, timber, and precious stones were traded with Mesopotamian cities. Unfortunately, we have little textual information from the Diyala region itself concerning this trade. Nonetheless, it must have played a pivotal role in the further distribution of goods to Mesopotamian emporia like Assur and Sippar. The plentiful Old Assyrian documents found at Kanesh give very little information on the Diyala region and Ešnunna is not even mentioned once. Luckily, an archive from Sippar is more informative. This partly published archive (the so-called TIM 7 archive, dated to ca. 1885-1840 BCE) was excavated by the Iraqis in the 1940s and yields significant new information on trade between Sippar, the Diyala region, Assur and Mari. This contribution will discuss the role that the Diyala region had in the Old Babylonian trade from the viewpoint of this Sippar archive. In addition, other, later Old Babylonian sources regarding the Diyala-Babylonia trade will be evaluated.

Homonyms, Aliases and Measurements in an Old Babylonian Community – the Archive of Nūr-Šamaš

Gonçalves, Carlos
Universidade de São Paulo
Institut d'études avancées de Paris 2016-2017

The object of the present study is the community of circa 400 people involved in the documents of the archive of Nūr-Šamaš, an Old Babylonian archive of loan contracts that comes from the Diyala and that was edited by J. Van Dijk and Fauzi Reschid in the 1960s. The presence of measurement values in loan contracts makes this archive a valuable object for the study of the relations between mathematical-metrological practices and society in Mesopotamia.

By employing computer-intensive methods, it is possible to partition the whole community into sub-communities, formally known as modularity classes. Each sub-community is a set of people that tend to establish relationships among themselves rather than with people from outside the sub-community.

In this talk, I will present the fundamentals of the concept of sub-community and I will apply it to detect possible homonyms and aliases in the archive of Nūr-Šamaš. If, on the one hand, the procedure may produce a finer-grained image of this community, on the other hand, the results may also be relevant for an understanding of measuring as a constitutive element of social relations.

The Texts from Šaduppûm “Tall Ḥarmal”

Hussein, Laith
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Department of Archaeology
University of Baghdad

The texts found in Šaduppûm provide an extensive picture of the economy and society of this region. The whole collection of texts includes about 3,000 inscribed objects from the Old Babylonian period and consists of administrative documents, letters, school exercises, lexical texts, incantations, legal documents, and literary texts as well as law codes, geographical and mathematical texts. These texts represent the greater majority of all the known legal documents from the Old Babylonian period in the Diyala region. The most common texts are concerned with the purchase of land and with loans of silver and grain, but also include several adoption documents, division of inheritance, etc.

Since the provenance of the tablets was usually recorded during excavations, it is possible today to reconstruct the find-spot of each tablet from the excavation records. There are also, unfortunately, many exceptions, so that relevant information is missing for many tablets. In particular, since many of them were found as complete archives and often stored in pottery jars, the ability to place an individual tablet alongside other documents with which it was archived would greatly assist in the correct understanding of each administrative and legal document. Though many of the texts were published in M.A. and Ph.D. theses, a few more subsequently in scattered articles, it can be emphatically noted that, with two exceptions, no scholars have so far studied this entire group as an archive.

Today, the careful reconstruction of the different archives will greatly correct earlier suggestions. The tablets from Šaduppûm are classified into the following archives known so far:

1. Archive of Mudadum
2. Archive of Ili-imitti
3. Archive of Manum-Ki-Sîn
4. Archive of Šuḥarum
5. Archive of Sîn-iqišam
6. Archive of Iakun-ašari

Archive of Mudadum: In room 520, level II, the excavators discovered 43 texts which most likely belong to a family archive. To judge from this small sample, the archive was at least partly the record of the real estate activities of Mudadum, son of Mašum, who is mentioned as a purchaser of slaves, land, and fields in 7 texts. He was also well-known as a creditor. Mudadum seems to be an important person in the city, possibly a leading merchant.

Archive Room 252: The largest group of texts found outside the "Serai" administrative building (with 298 tablets) comes from room 252 (263 tablets). The texts record a variety of items, including administrative as well as mathematical and literary texts. Currently, ca. 45 tablets from this group have been fully published.

Archive Room 133: The collection includes 103 texts, many of which are letters belong to the archive of Tutub-māgir.

Archive of Ili-imitti: 26 texts were found in Room 527, level IV. Only six tablets belonging to this person have been published so far. Three of these deals with the purchase of fields, two tablets deal with the purchase of two houses, and one with the purchase of slaves. All six tablets do not mention his father's name. A tablet is dated to the otherwise unknown local ruler: “mu Šu-ma-ḫu-um e₂ ʾutu i-pu-šu”. Ḫammi-dašur, a well-known ruler of the period, appears in an oath together with the god Šîn.

Unfortunately, only few of the 3000 texts from Šaduppûm have been published so far. These published texts can be divided into several groups: about 135 letters, 345 contracts, 23 literary texts, 107 lenticular school texts, and many texts of various types, notes, memoranda, etc. While it is not possible to treat all of the known archives at length within the confines of this article, we will focus on a selection of the best attested groups of tablets from the city of Šaduppûm.

A New Text from Tell Sulayma - Diyala Region

Mohammed, Ahmed K.

Former Director of the National Museum of Iraq

During the excavations that took place within the Hamrin Dam project in the 1970s, the Iraqi mission found eight cuneiform texts in the Old Babylonian layer of the site of Tell Sulayma, that have not yet been published, with Date Formulae mentioning some of the kings of Ešnunna but one of them contained a short date formula in which only the name of one of the ancient cities of Mesopotamia was mentioned.

Despite hundreds of dated texts which were found in different sites of the kingdom of Ešnunna, our information is not yet complete about the sequence of events that happened during the reign of the rulers of that kingdom, or the length of their reign, some of which are still unknown.

And because date formulae are considered to be an important source in the study of historical events that took place during a certain time, so any new date formula that appears will contribute to adding previously unknown information.

The research objective focused on the following main points:

1. Trying to return this formula to one of the kings of Ešnunna based on the information contained in the sources as well as one of unpublished texts from Iraq Museum.
2. An attempt to match the name of the city, which was mentioned in the date formula of Tell Sulayma with one of the archaeological sites of Iraq based on other texts (published or unpublished).
3. Based on the information currently available in the texts from the Diyala region itself, the hypothesis that this site of Tell Sulayma could be identified with the old town of Awal has to be reconsidered, and in case this does not match anymore, we must search for the city of Awal elsewhere.

Between past and future: The “Onomastica della Diyala” Project

Nebiolo, Francesca

Proche-Orient Caucase

(EPHE / UMR 7192)

The rich archaeological and epigraphic discoveries that were made during the 20th century's excavations in the Diyala, has given rise to several projects aimed to reconstruct

historically and ethnographically the past of a region and a kingdom that played a central political role at the beginning of the second millennium B.C.

In Italy, Prof. Claudio Saporetti has long studied epigraphic and archaeological sources from Diyala, focusing on the onomastic of different Old Babylonian sites.

The researches carried out in this area have further underlined the heterogeneous nature of the population installed in the region. The material collected over the years, especially by master or PhD students at the Università di Pisa who did not publish their results, is the basis of the project of a "Onomastica della Diyala" launched by Prof. Claudio Saporetti in collaboration with students from Paris (UMR 7192) and the Università "La Sapienza" di Roma. The project aims to bring together, in a single and updated study, the data collected and processed for each city, making them accessible to the scientific community.

Reconstructing the Oval Temple of Khafajeh: Insight into the Emergence of Multi-Stepped Terraces

Quenet, Philippe
Université de Strassbourg

As soon as exposed, the Oval Temple has been tentatively reconstructed. Beyond the in-depth analysis of the architectural remains produced by the excavators, the most visible result of this study work was an artist view of 1934 published as an ex libris in the OIP 53 (published 1940) and reproduced hundreds of times since then. After almost a century, many new data have been made available, related to ancient Near East architecture in general and high terraces in particular, and allow for the reconsideration of the original reconstruction of the building, very acute yet improvable.

The Diyala Valley in the Early Old Babylonian Period: New Evidence from Tell Muqdadīya

Reculeau, Hervé
University of Chicago

Tell Muqdadīya is a small archaeological mound located in the valley of the Diyala River, where salvage excavations were conducted by Iraqi archaeologists in the late 1970's-early 1980's. Twelve cuneiform tablets were recovered in early Old Babylonian private houses situated on the northeastern part of the tell. In ancient times, these tablets would have been part of three or four separate household archives. Orthography, language and epigraphy link these tablets to the "early Old Babylonian" stage of Akkadian known at Ešnunna and elsewhere — and more precisely to the second quarter of the 19th c. BCE. Two mentions of the rare goddess Humat (including one in the only attested yearname) suggest ties with the kingdom of Kazallu-and-Marad, and could help settle a long debated issue in early Old Babylonian history: They favor the hypothesis of a short-lived control of parts of the Diyala by Sumu-numḥim, king of Kazallu-and-Marad, and reinforce the theory according to which he was in fact the same person as the homonymous king of Šadlaš who engaged in a peace treaty with another Diyala city, Nērebtum (Ishchali).

From Things to Practice. Reconstructing Spheres of Action from the Archaeological Inventories of the Old Babylonian Temples in Ishchali

Rossberger, Elisa
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

The two Old Babylonian temples excavated in Ishchali during the 1930s by the Diyala expedition from the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago can still be counted among the best-preserved and best-documented examples of religious architecture for this period. Their final publication (Jacobsen/Hill 1990) focuses on architectural and stratigraphic issues but pays little attention to the rich inventories of objects that survived destruction and decay. I argue that a synthetic analysis of the typology and distribution of finds, combined with information from related visual and textual sources, enables us to gain better insights into the spheres of ritual and social action characterizing these locales.

Diyala at the Louvre

Thomas, Ariane
Musée du Louvre

The Louvre Museum holds various pieces from the region located around the Diyala river, through which one can find information not only about the history of this region but also concerning the more recent archaeological history of the region. The paper will thus discuss the history of the archaeology, art market and research in this area. It will focus mainly on the first centuries of the second millennium B.C. but older objects will also be discussed.