



# Archaeological Projects in the Kurdistan Region in Iraq

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# Archaeological Projects *in the* Kurdistan Region in Iraq



*Commissioned by*  
The Directorate of Antiquities of Kurdistan

*in Co-operation with*  
The Department of Antiquities of Erbil  
The Department of Antiquities of Sulaimaniyah  
The Department of Antiquities of Dohuk  
The Department of Antiquities of Garmiyan  
The Department of Antiquities of Soran

*Editors*  
Konstantinos Kopanias  
John MacGinnis  
Jason Ur

**January 2015**



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# **Foreward by the Director of Antiquities of Kurdistan**

I would like to start by expressing our deep gratitude and thanks to all three of our friends and colleagues - Prof. Konstantinos Kopanias, Dr. John MacGinnis and Prof. Jason Ur - for their initiative in collecting together information on the archaeological activities implemented in the Kurdistan Region during the past five years, and presenting an overview of these activities, which included excavations and surveys, site inspection, conservation and preservation, museum development and museum studies. Even though in a work of this size only an essential overview of each project can be given, it contains a great deal of information on the organisation and aims of archaeological activities in Kurdistan. It provides a starting point from which we hope we will be able to expand as activities in the region develop. The authors have performed a service to the field which will be a resource for anyone hoping to carry out research in the future.

This work could not have taken place without the encouragement and continuous support of all the institutions and archaeological bodies in Kurdistan. There is a genuine gap in literature in Kurdish dealing with archaeological research, a circumstance principally due to the fact that until very recently the Kurdish nation did not have its own country. Generating the necessary expertise and experience in the field is now a central priority. In this context, the collaboration of Kurdish and foreign historians and archaeologists has a genuine role to play in promoting scientific research projects systematically designed to investigate the relationship between the Kurdish nation and the people and civilisations of the Zagros Mountains and Mesopotamia. The new period of social and political calm in Kurdistan has been critical: without doubt such stability is essential for the conduct of archaeological work. Kurdistan is bordered on the one side by the Zagros Mountain and on the other by Mesopotamia. In the past Arab, Turkish and Persian archaeologists have tried to bias their archaeological research into the region's civilisations according to their own agendas, whether religiously or ideologically based. Kurdistan is rich in archaeological sites, but until now, due to the instability in the region, the continuous hostilities, and the fact that in the early twentieth century Kurdistan was joined to Iraq, the archaeological exploration of Kurdistan had been neglected and the region was not the subject of the intensive attention which it deserves. Now, however, the large number of foreign expeditions working in agreement with the archaeological authorities of the Kurdistan Region in all three governorates, hand in hand with the developing expertise of our own Kurdish archaeologists, has created a superb opportunity for the implementation of a scientifically based programme of archaeological research.

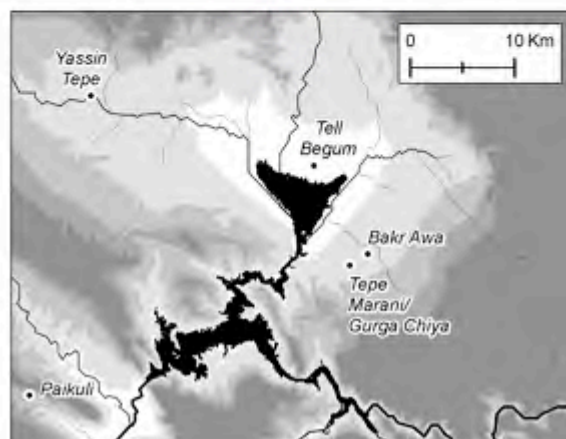
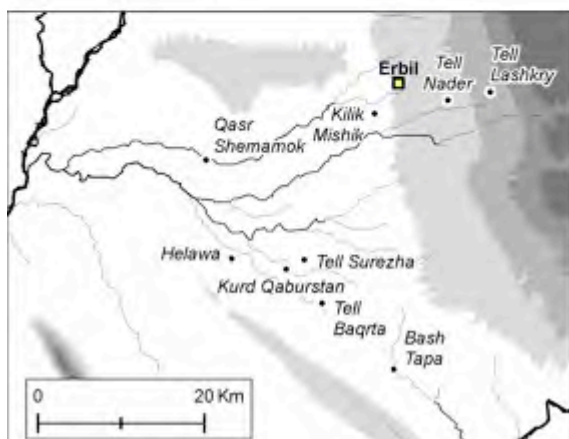
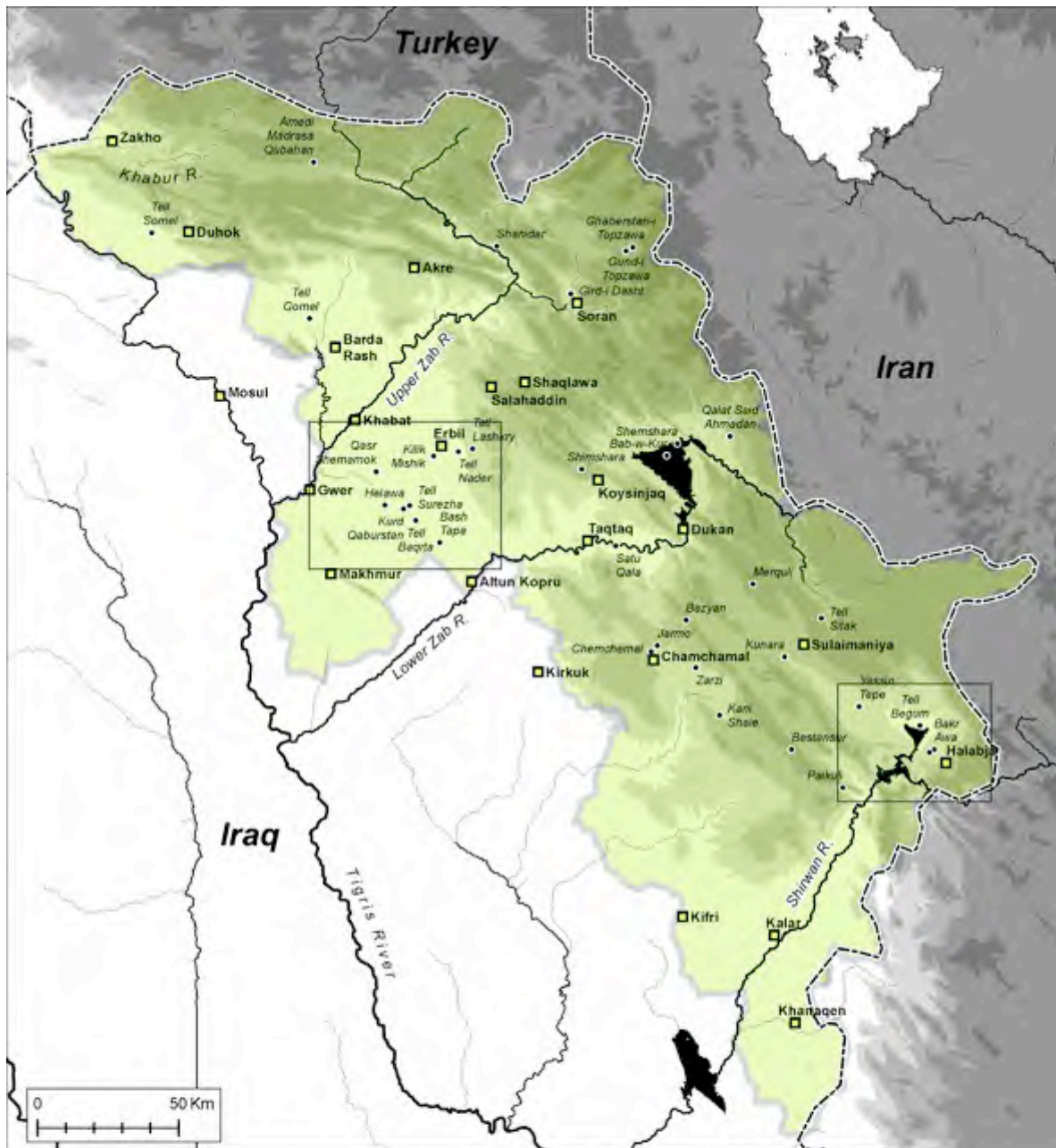
Kurdistan has become one of the most important areas of archaeological research in the world. In recognition of this, and as one way of taking this further, consideration is being given to creating an independent institute of archaeology able to provide information and data and archaeological expertise to both local and foreign investigators in support of their activities, whose value we fully appreciate, so that future research in Kurdistan will be able to set the record straight and help answer the many questions which continue to exercise the minds of archaeologists.

We announce the beginning of a new era in the field of archaeology and open the gate for all interested academic institutions to participate in the field, in accordance with global professional and ethical standards, in a framework which approaches the field of archaeology and heritage with the latest in scientific methodology. Without doubt this needs the full and collective support of all parties involved.

Once again, I convey my great gratitude and thanks for their hard work to everyone involved,

**Mala Awat**

**Director General of Antiquities  
Kurdistan Regional Government**



The Kurdistan Region of Iraq showing the location of sites mentioned in the Gazetteer

# Archaeological Activity in Kurdistan: An Overview

The Kurdish Region of Iraq is home to some of the most important archaeological sites in the world. Ranging from the Paleolithic to the most recent past, these include cave shelters, sites from the Neolithic which witnessed the domestication of plants and animal, cities and settlement of great empires of antiquity, canals and rock reliefs, castles and bridges, mosques and bazaars. Protecting, managing and exploring this heritage is the work of the Directorate of Antiquities of Kurdistan and the number of research projects co-ordinated by the Directorate is impressive. For many years political factors held back the exploration of this heritage. The last decade, however, has seen a resurgence of archaeological activity in Kurdistan to the extent that it has become one of the most important regions of near eastern archaeological research.

A major part in this process is played by regional survey projects which are for the first time documenting the archaeological inventory in order to produce a systematic and exhaustive record of the region - not only settlement sites but overland routes, canals and watercourses, rock reliefs and standing architecture. Projects already taken to the field include the Erbil Plain Archaeological Survey, the Land of Nineveh Archaeological Project, the Upper Greater Zab Archaeological Reconnaissance Project, the East Habur Archaeological Survey, the Suleimaniyah Governorate Survey, the Shahrizor Survey Project, the Northwestern Suleimaniyah Survey, the Rania Plain Survey, the Upper Tanjaro Survey Project and the Sirwan (Upper Diyala) Regional Project; the commencement of the Qara Dagh Regional Archaeological Project is anticipated. Characteristic of all these surveys is their combination of the utilisation of geo-referenced overhead imagery with on-site inspection and field-walking. The upgraded maps which are being generated will in their turn be able to serve as the basis both for heritage management and for the study of settlement history.

At the same time the region has seen a flourishing of excavation projects. The return to Shanidar Cave with an expedition bringing to bear a raft of specialist analyses will surely revolutionise our understanding of the paleolithic in Kurdistan. Very much the same applies to projects focusing on the early Neolithic, where the work of the Central Zagros Archaeological Project, together with a return to Jarmo and the new work at Qalat Said Ahmadian, promise again to transform our understanding of the emergence of agriculture and stock breeding. Later Neolithic and Chalcolithic research has been a very strong focus of research, with excavations at Bakr Awa, Tell Begum, Gurga Chiya, Kani Shaie, Tepe Marani, Tell Nader, Shemshara and Surezha all revealing the regional expression of the Halaf, Ubaid and Uruk cultures. These terms stem from the south, and while they serve for the moment as flags of convenience, it is entirely possible that a new understanding will lead not only to an enhanced knowledge of the material culture and better definition of the chronology, but also to new terminology for the late Neolithic and Chalcolithic in Kurdistan.

The third millennium BC - the Early Bronze Age - in Kurdistan is as yet poorly understood. In the south this corresponds to the Early Dynastic, Akkadian and Ur III periods, and once again it is not improbable that a new terminology may in due course emerge. As in the south, however, this was very likely also a time of multiple local kingdoms. But the archaeological documentation of this is in its infancy and epigraphic evidence is also meagre. In this context the results beginning to emerge from Bakr Awa, Tell Baqrta, Bardastee, Bash Tepe and Kunara will surely prove important. With the early second millennium the information from epigraphic sources is somewhat better and this gives new opportunities, including the possibility of looking for cities which we know to have existed. Two examples illustrate this. The first relates to Shemshara, a site already explored in the 1950s in the course of the salvage work carried out in advance of the Dokan Dam and which uncovered, among other things, a palace with archives written in Old Babylonian cuneiform: a return to this site has been made possible by a drop in the level of Lake Dokan. The other example concerns the quest to locate the site of ancient Qabra, a city state which rose to



power following the collapse of the Ur III empire and flourished for around two centuries before being brought to an end by a combined campaign of Shamshi-Adad of Assyria and Dadusha of Eshnunna. The site of the ancient city very likely lies between Erbil and the lower Zab, and surely it will soon be found. Later in the second millennium the greater part of Kurdistan came under the control of the Mittanni empire. On the cuneiform front, rich documentation of the period comes from the archives from Nuzi, southwest of Kirkuk, where extensive excavations were undertaken in the period between the First and Second World War. But in general the archaeology of the period has until now been very little explored and in this context the Mittanni levels being exposed at the site of Kurd Qaburstan are set to be of particular interest.

In the late second millennium the petty kingdoms of the Zagros were brought face to face with the newly expansionist Assyria. The early indications from survey data are that archaeologically this period is richly attested, and this is being backed up by the results of excavations at sites such as Bash Tepe, Qasr Shemamok and Tell Baqrta. The following contraction of the Middle Assyria state left the way open for the emergence of new kingdoms in the Zagros. Our knowledge of this is again very limited but the evidence for an independent kingdom dating to the time of the Middle/Neo-Assyrian transition at Sato Qala demonstrates the unique contribution which archaeology can make.

The first millennium witnessed the re-expansion which led to the Neo-Assyrian empire, in its day the largest empire the world had seen. Evidence for this period can be found throughout Kurdistan. Surveys across the region attest to the intensified settlement occupation - surely the result of the implantation of deportee colonies - together with the remains of the massive canal projects carried out by the Assyrian kings. Excavations too are playing their part - a Neo-Assyrian tomb in the lower town of Erbil attests to the occupation of the city at this time while the site of Qasr Shemamok is beginning to yield the remains of an important provincial capital. Elsewhere work is documenting the Iron Age in areas outside of Assyrian control and also turning up remains dating to Achaemenid rule, a period for which evidence has so far been surprisingly limited.

Advances are being made in the documentation of the occupations of the Hellenistic and Parthian periods too. Excavations addressing remains of this period include Tell Baqrta, Kilik Mishik and Qasr Shemamok. Many other sites remain to be investigated and there is every possibility that in due course our knowledge of these time periods will be significantly enhanced. Very much the same applies to the Sassanian period. Here, excavations at Bazyan and Tell Sitak should be noted, as also should the study of the Paikuli monument. Turning to the Early Islamic and medieval periods, notable contributions come from Amedi, Bakr Awa, Chemchemal, Erbil, Kilik Mishik, Kurd Qaburstan and Tell Sitak. Lastly, the rich Ottoman period heritage of Kurdistan has been the focus of attention of researches in Amedi and Erbil as well as numerous restoration projects.

The above demonstrates the intensity and scope of archaeological research in Kurdistan. In the pages which follow key data on the individual projects may be found. But to summarise also geographically we give here an overview of the monuments and investigations in each of the Directorates of Antiquities of Erbil, Sulaimaniya, Dohuk, Soran and Garmiyan.

## **Erbil**

Antiquities in the area of the Erbil Directorate include the Citadel of Erbil with its eighteenth century baths and mosque and extensive Ottoman housing, the late nineteenth century Qaisariya (bazaar) at the foot of the citadel, the Ottoman period Qishla of Koya, the Chwar Taqan rest station for caravans travelling between Erbil, Koya and Kirkuk, and forts of the Soran Emirate such as those at Khanzad, Dairei and Dwin. Recent archaeological activity in the Erbil Directorate includes the following fieldwork projects: (a) excavation projects: excavations of Salahaddin University at Tell Qasra and Kilik Mishik, excavation at the Early Northern Ubaid to Early Gawra site of Tell Nader, excavation of the Halaf-Ubaid-Uruk levels at the site of Tell Surezha, excavation of early second millennium as well as Islamic remains at the site of Kurd Qaburstan, excavation of Middle Assyrian levels at the site of Bash Tepe, excavation

of Middle/Neo-Assyrian levels at the site of Sato Qala, excavation of Middle Assyrian, Neo-Assyrian, Hellenistic and Parthian levels at the site of Qasr Shemamok, excavations at the multi-period site of Tell Baqrta, and excavation of Ottoman period remains on the citadel of Erbil and of a Neo-Assyrian tomb and associated remains in the lower town; operations are also planned to investigate the pre-Halaf and Halaf remains at the site of Tell Lashkry and the Halaf to Late Chalcolithic and Middle Assyrian remains at Tell Helawa; (b) survey projects: the Erbil Plain Archaeological Survey and the Upper Zab Archaeological Reconnaissance. In addition to this the Erbil Civilization Museum has been completely renovated with further development currently in progress.

### **Sulaimaniya**

Antiquities in the area of the Sulaimaniya Directorate include the Achaemenid tomb at Qizqapan, Sartka citadel, the Paikuli monument and Chami Razan, Hazar Merd, Jasana, Palegawra and Zarzi caves. Recent archaeological activity in the Sulaimaniya Directorate includes the following fieldwork projects: (a) excavation projects: excavations at Gird-i Sitak and Gird-i Merquli; investigations at the site of Kalai Spi; excavation of the Late Antique/Early Islamic fort at Bazyan; excavations at the multi-period site of Bakr Awa; excavations at the Neolithic sites of Bestansur, Shemshara, Jarmo, Gird-i Bardastee and Marani Tepe; excavations at the Chalcolithic sites of Kani Shaie, Gurge Chiya and Bab-u-Kur; excavations of late third and early second millennium levels at the site of Shemshara; excavations at the sites of Kunara, Bingird and Kalespi; excavations at the multi-period site of Tell Begum; and recording, investigation and study of the Sassanian monument at Paikuli; (b) survey projects: the Sulaimaniya Governorate Survey, the Shahrizor Survey Project, the Northwestern Sulaimaniya Survey, the Rania Plain Archaeological Survey and the Upper Tanjaro Archaeological Survey; the commencement of the Qara Dagh Regional Archaeological Project survey is expected soon. In addition to this the Sulaimani Museum has been renovated, with further development currently in progress, and specialist research projects have focused on cataloguing and analysing the cuneiform tablets, Sassanian epigraphy and coin collections.

### **Dohuk**

Antiquities in the Dohuk Directorate include the sculptures at Maltai and Khinis, the aqueduct at Jerwan, the rock cut complex at Char Stin, the citadels of Akra and Amedi, Shosh castle, the Dalal and Saadoun bridges and the Anishki, Bero Basifra, Halamta and Youkha caves. Recent archaeological activity in the Dohuk Directorate includes the following fieldwork projects: (a) excavation projects: excavations at Tell Sumel, Shandokha, Kani Falla and Tell Kamuna; excavation at Tell Gomel; (b) survey projects: the Land of Nineveh Archaeological Project, the Upper Zab Archaeological Reconnaissance and the Eastern Habur Archaeological Survey; (c) recording, protection, and management project of the Assyrian hydraulic system and the monumental rock reliefs of Khinis, Shiru Maliktha, Faideh, and Maltai associated with it.

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### **Soran**

Antiquities in the area of the Soran Directorate include Qalat Lokan, Qalat Mudjesir and Shanidar Cave. Recent archaeological activity in the Soran Directorate includes the following fieldwork projects: (a) excavation projects: soundings carried out at Qalat Lokhan, a fortress situated just to the north of Rowanduz dating to the time of the Sorani Emirate (16th-19th centuries AD) and associated with the leader Mir Mohammed, established the depth of stratigraphy and allowed recommendations for

conservation to be made; at Gund-i Topzawa, an iron age site in the Sidekan sub-district of Soran on the northern slope of the Topzawa Çay, the 133 m long section exposed by road widening was recorded with subsequent excavation in two locations; at the nearby site of Ghaburstan-i Topzawa, a tomb dating to the late Achaemenid or early post-Achaemenid period which had also been exposed by road-widening was recorded and excavated; rescue excavations at the cave site of Gali Ali Bag, in the Khalifan sub-district of Soran, produced pottery and other remains tentatively dated to the Hassuna period; excavations conducted at Banahilk, in the Diyana sub-district of Soran, have verified the presence of Halaf period remains at this site which was briefly examined by Braidwood in the 1950s but which is now threatened by the growth of modern housing; and excavations at Shanidar Cave; (b) survey Projects: the Rowanduz Archaeological Program; the commencement of the Khalifan Archaeological Survey is expected soon.

### **Garmiyan**

Antiquities in the area of the Garmiyan Directorate include the Darband-i Gawra rock relief, Sherwana castle, the palace of Mahmud Pasha Jaf, the palace of Majeed Pasha Qadir Beg, the Kifri Qaisariya, the Qudar Mill north of Kifri, the Bawashaswar and Yak Mughara caves, the remains of Sassanian canals and tunnels around Kalar, and Ottoman military towers along the Diyala river. Recent archaeological activity in the Garmiyan Directorate has included: (a) excavation projects: excavation of Parthian underground burial chambers at Sar Qalah, investigations carried out in Kalar city centre in conjunction with municipal work, excavation of an Ubaid site close to Kalar, and excavation and restoration at Sherwana Castle; and (b) survey Projects: the Sirwan (Upper Diyala) Regional Project in the area between Darband-i Khan and Khanaqin. In addition to this the Garmiyan Museum is undergoing renovation.

These activities are complemented by epigraphic studies and historical researches. There is a new focus on the conservation and preservation of both sites and finds, spearheaded by the Erbil based Iraqi Institute for the Conservation on Antiquities and Heritage, while ongoing work is upgrading the museum capacity of Kurdistan, with both the refurbishment of existing museums and the creation of new institutions.

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq can be proud of the extraordinary wealth of its archaeology. Through the safe-keeping of this heritage and the ground-breaking research which it is conducting the Directorate of Antiquities of Kurdistan has won the gratitude and admiration of all the world.

# Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage

Director: Dr. Abdullah Khorsheed  
Affiliation: University of Salahaddin  
email: abduallahkhorsheed69

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Conservation of artifacts, sites and architecture  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage   |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | -  |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://iraqinstitute.com/en/">http://iraqinstitute.com/en/</a><br><a href="http://www.artcons.udel.edu/public-outreach/iraq-institute">http://www.artcons.udel.edu/public-outreach/iraq-institute</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2009   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | -  |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | -  |

The Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage is a collaboration between the Kurdistan Regional Government, the Iraqi Ministry of Tourism, the U.S. Department of State, Winterthur Museum and Gardens, University of Delaware, Walters Art Museum, Getty Conservation Institute, University of Pennsylvania, and University of Arizona. Beginning with a 2008 grant from the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, IICAH has established itself as the premier academic facility for cultural heritage management in Iraq. The mission of the Institute is to preserve the legacy of humanity contained in the unique cultural heritage of Iraq. It accomplishes this through educating people in conservation and preservation and by inviting professionals from around the world to share expertise.



## Amedi, Madrasa Qubahan

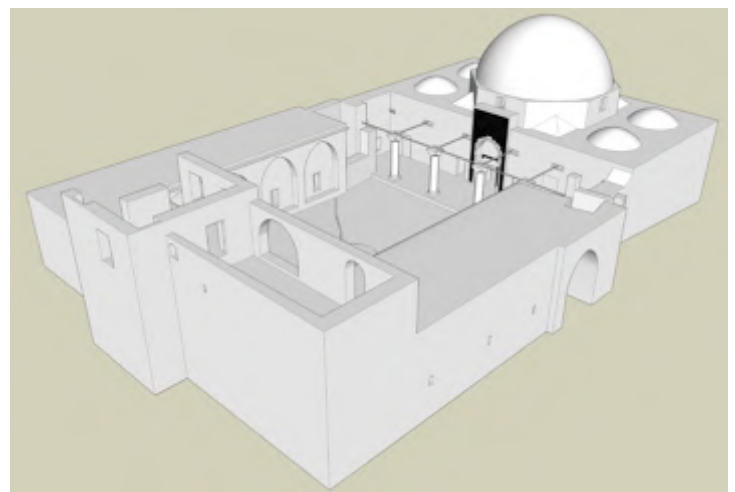
Director: Karel Nováček (1), Narmin Ali Muhammad Amin (2)  
University of West Bohemia Plzen (1), Salahaddin University Hawler (2)  
email: knovacek@kar.zcu.cz; narminaliamin@yahoo.fr

|                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Architectural survey and excavation |
| <b>Location</b>           | Amedi (al-Amadiya), Madrasa Qubahan |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 37°05'33"N 43°29'14"E               |
| <b>Website</b>            | -                                   |
| <b>Started in</b>         | October 2009                        |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | finished                            |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Middle and Late Islamic             |

The city of Amedi, or al-ʿImádiyya in its original form, was most probably founded by Mosul's atabeg ruler Imad ad-Din Zangí in AD 1143 in place of an early Medieval castle of the Hakkari Kurds in this mountainous area of the Kurdistan Region. Probably not until the close of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the town grew to considerable size and became a centre of the independent Bahdinan principality for more than 400 years. In the green valley stretching between the acropolis of the city and a 2200 m high mountain ridge is situated a remarkable architectural monument – the Madrasa Qubahan. Paradoxically the site, once the most prominent centre of literary culture in the region, is not reflected in the available historical sources. Furthermore the ruined complex is exposed to the extreme oscillations of the mountain climate and is decaying rapidly. The Czech–Kurdish team conducted a programme of architectural recording, surveys and limited excavation in the area, producing data for the reconstruction of the chronology of the *madrasa* and its architectural assessment. The erection of the oldest part of the complex – the south wing – the original purpose of which remains debatable, clearly dates to the period of Zangid dominance in the region. Its architectural appearance represents a remarkable synthesis of influences originating both in the architecture of Artuqid Diyarbakir or Mardin and in Zangid centres of power such as Mosul, Damascus and Aleppo. In the second phase, of the 12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries, the courtyard *madrasa* was annexed to the north side of the nucleus. Due to imperfect dating, the patronage and involvement of the Zangid atabegs in the building of the *madrasa* cannot be confirmed for now, although this act would correspond well to the Zangids well-known general support of this new type of religious institution in the context of the ideological struggles in Syria and North Mesopotamia. The *madrasa* complex was once complemented by a developed hinterland comprising distinctive production and settlement units; there are also traces of fortification and one cannot even exclude that an urban foundation was established in the surroundings.



The madrasa's courtyard, 2009



Axonometric reconstruction of the building, view of NW

# Bakr Awa Excavation Project

director: Peter A. Miglus

affiliation: University of Heidelberg

email: peter.miglus@uni-heidelberg.de / Tall.Bakr.Awa@gmail.com

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation   |
| <b>Location</b>           | Sulaimaniya Province, approximately 5 km NW of Halabja         |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 35°13'14"N 45°56'26"E  |
| <b>Website</b>            | www.assur.de   |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2010   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 6 years  |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Islamic Period, Iron Age, Bronze Age, Late Chalcolithic Period |

Tall Bakr Awa is the biggest mound in the southern part of the Plain of Shahrizor, with a nearly 40 m high citadel in the center of a c. 800 × 600 m wide lower city. The site was already dug by Ephraim Speiser for a few days in 1927, the first extended excavations were conducted by the Directorate General of Antiquities of Iraq in 1960-61. In 2010 a new research project was started by archaeologists from the University of Heidelberg with excavation campaigns in the years 2010, 2011 and 2013. According to the results of these investigations it can be stated that the city of Bakr Awa was settled for about five millennia. The Islamic horizon supplied material from the Ottoman to Abbasid period. The Iron Age horizon provides evidence of the Achaemenid and Assyrian presence at the site. The Late Bronze Age layers show connections with northern Mesopotamia as well as with the Kassite Babylonia. The Middle Bronze Age, especially the Isin-Larsa period, seems to have been a time of prosperity for the city of Bakr Awa. Its material culture is influenced by characteristics of northern and southern Mesopotamia. The layers of the late Early Bronze Age give evidence for the settlement being integrated into the middle and northern Mesopotamian cultural sphere, and the pottery shows strong Akkadian influences. In the eastern lower city the oldest horizon above virgin soil can be dated to the transition from Gamdat Nasr to Early Dynastic I period at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> mill. BC.



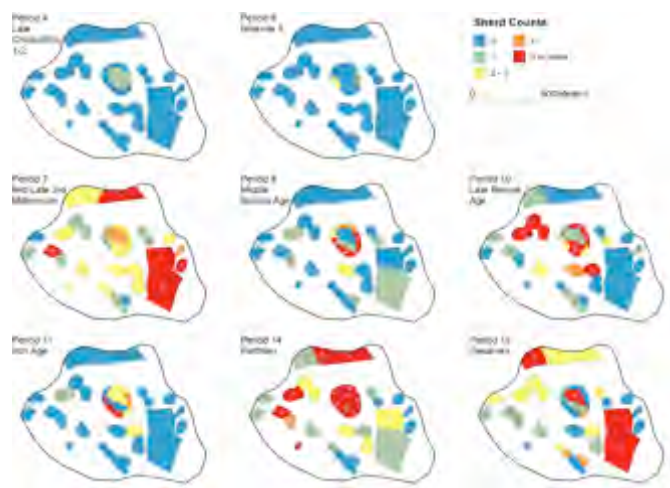
Tall Bakr Awa 2010, citadel and lower city, facing west.

# Tell Baqrta Project

Director: Konstantinos Kopanias  
 Affiliation: University of Athens  
 email: [kkopanias@arch.uoa.gr](mailto:kkopanias@arch.uoa.gr)

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation                                      |
| <b>Location</b>           | Near the Minara village (Erbil Province)        |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 35° 57.111'N 43° 54.578'E                       |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://arbela.gr">http://arbela.gr</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2014  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 20 years  |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Early Bronze Age, Parthian                      |

The University of Athens obtained the permission to excavate at Tell Baqrta in 2010. In 2011 a preparatory study of the available written sources was conducted by Dr. John MacGinnis which showed that this site could possibly be identified with the Neo-Assyrian city of Baqarru and possibly also with the city of Qabra of the early 2nd mill. B.C.E. In 2012 a non-intensive survey was conducted at Tell Baqrta by Dr. Jason Ur which showed that this site has a very extensive lower city, which reached a size of 90 hectares during the later part of the Early Bronze Age and also the Parthian period. In 2013 a topographic survey and also a short excavation was conducted in Tell Baqrta with the aim of obtaining more detailed information on the stratigraphy of the site. Two trenches were excavated in the western part of the mound. In Trench A, on the top of the western slope, the excavation reached a depth of 7 m. A total of four (1A-4A) stratigraphic layers were identified. Layers 1A, 2A and 3A contained mixed pottery and can be dated from the Parthian to the modern period. Layer 4A contained mainly Parthian and earlier pottery. Part of a 1.5m wide wall, which was constructed by compacted mud (pisé) was revealed. In Trench B the excavation revealed a layer dated to the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods.



Tell Baqrta Phasing (courtesy J. Ur)

## Bardastee (NINO Archaeological Project on the Rania Plain)

Director: Jesper Eidem

Affiliation: Netherlands Institute for the Near East (Leiden)/University of Amsterdam

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|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation   |
| <b>Location</b>           | Rania Plain  |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | N 36.2031, E 44.9345                                       |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://www.nino-leiden.nl">www.nino-leiden.nl</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2012   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 6 + years  |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Early 3. Mill. B.C. (ca. 3000-2900 B.C.)                   |

Gird-i Bardastee ("Mound of flints") is a small site located on the Rania Plain ca. 200 m west of the mounds of Tell Shemshara (see separate entry), and across the Wadi Boskin. Iraqi excavations in 1959 (directed by Abd al-Qadir al-Tikriti) exposed levels of Ninevite 5 date, but remain unpublished. In spring 2013 the NINO Archaeological Project on the Rania Plain conducted a first season of excavation at Gird Bardastee. A 2 m wide and 50 m long step trench on the east slope and a smaller operation on the west side showed that the site was exclusively occupied during the Early Ninevite 5 period (EJ 1, ca. 3000-2900 B.C.). Two building levels (III-II) could be defined, both cut to foundations, and since covered by a thick deposit of hard clayey soil (Level I). The oldest level features stone foundations of walled structures divided by pebbled streets or passages. The ceramics retrieved describe a homogenous horizon of the Early Ninevite 5 tradition, with a preponderance of painted ware, mostly bowls and beakers. Gird Bardastee is the eastern-most site of this period identified so far.



Step trench on east slope, Level III



Fragment of Ninevite 5 chalice



# Bash Tapa Excavations

Director: Lionel Marti

CNRS (UMR 7192 Proche-Orient - Caucase : Langues, archéologie, cultures)

email: [lionel.marti@college-de-france.fr](mailto:lionel.marti@college-de-france.fr)

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation  |
| <b>Location</b>           | 34.5 km South of Erbil citadel  |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 35,881041°, 44,006590°  |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://www.digitorient.com/?page_id=1968">http://www.digitorient.com/?page_id=1968</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2013  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Ninevite V to Neo-Assyrian  |

The site of Bash Tapa is located 34.5 km south of Erbil. The main tell is about 240 metres wide and 25 metres high. The first excavation season, which was conducted in September 2013, enabled the discovery of several occupation layers on the tell dating from the Ninevite V to the Assyrian period. A survey in the immediate surrounding also indicates later occupations of the Neo-Assyrian, Hellenistic and Parthian periods. These lower town occupations requires further study. During the first season, a stratigraphic trench was undertaken in the south-eastern slope of the tell. The earliest occupation is from Ninevite V period. It could be an agglomeration built on mud brick terraces perhaps surrounded by a pisé wall. Higher in the middle of the slope, maybe already during the ED III period, several huge mud brick walls were erected, possibly belonging to a fortification or terrace system. So far, the latest occupation identified in the excavation on the top of the tell has been a part of a middle Assyrian building (XIV<sup>th</sup> century B. C.) in which ceramic material was found *in situ* (storage jars, cups, plates etc.). The discovery of some cuneiform tablets among these ceramics confirm a date from the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I (end of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century B.C.). At that time, Bash Tapa was probably a regional administrative centre.



View of the north-eastern side of the tell

# Bazyan

Director: V. Déroche

Affiliation : CNRS Paris

email: vincent.deroche@college-de-france.fr

|                           |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation                     |
| <b>Location</b>           | Bazyan Derbendi, near Takiya   |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 35.6373740 N 44.9726310 E      |
| <b>Website</b>            | -                              |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2011                           |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | Till 2015                      |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Late Antiquity – Early Islamic |

This project investigates the site of a 36 x 36m square fort located just beyond the Bazyan pass, excavated by an Iraqi team in 1987-1991 but only partially published. The principal aims are to confirm the relative and absolute chronology and to study the church in detail. The assumption was a Christian Nestorian monastery protected by a fort during the Sassanian period, and the clearing of the church confirmed the expectations, especially with the discovery of rare liturgical features in the nave and around the sanctuary. The north wall of the fort was reinforced with a sloping concrete and rubble structure at the base, covering a former occupation level. The purpose was probably not military, since this lay out is absent on the other sides; its logical aim would have been to protect the building from water running down the mountain slope. The sealed layers gave some material for dating, especially decorative beads attested toward the end of the Sassanian period (end of the 6<sup>th</sup> c./beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup>), accordingly a terminus ante for the building. The first building seems to have been centered around a courtyard surrounded by strong pillars and rooms; a succession of floors were found, especially two white lime floors bound to the first phases. The presence of half-columns and the general proportions point to a high status building, but with no specific Christian use: the use as monastery is probably a later phase. Unfortunately, the rare sealed layers yielded very little material and no clear chronology; one can just guess that the Christian occupation could not have taken place before the 5<sup>th</sup> c. at the earliest and will have continued till the coming of Islam and beyond. The previous excavation disturbed the remains of this later occupation, but in the church were found jugs of the 9<sup>th</sup> c. at the earliest, and in the storage room oil lamps of the 11<sup>th</sup> c. at the earliest; continuation of the Christian cult during this period cannot be proved, but is probable.

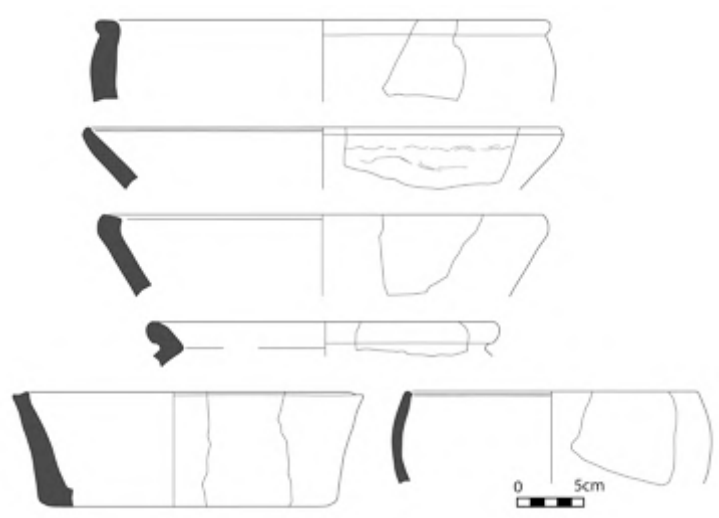


# Tell Begum

**Director:** Olivier Nieuwenhuyse (with Takahiro Odaka, Akemi Kaneda, Simone Mühl)  
**Affiliation:** Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University, The Netherlands  
**Email:** o.nieuwenhuyse@arch.leidenuniv.nl

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey   |
| <b>Location</b>           | Shahrizor Valley   |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 35°17'50.9"N, 45°53'05.3"E                                     |
| <b>Website</b>            | -  |
| <b>Facebook</b>           | -  |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2013   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | One year   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Late Halaf, Chalcolithic/Early-Middle Uruk, Iron Age, Medieval |

As part of the ongoing Shahrizor Survey Project, our team investigated the prehistoric site of Tell Begum, situated within the area covered by the Danbardikhan lake. Our research aims were to reconstruct the history of the site occupation and to collect stratified ceramics to inform the Shahrizor Survey Project. The site consists of a twenty-metre tall, conical 'Upper Mound' and an elongated 'Lower Mound' which together extend over an area of 5 ha. In 1960 a team from Baghdad had already investigated both the Upper Mound and the Lower Mound through excavation trenches (Hijara, 1997, *The Halaf Period in Northern Mesopotamia*, London: NABU, Appendix II). Building upon this earlier excavation data, this project has identified material that facilitates an initial reconstruction of the occupation history of Tell Begum. A systematic surface collection made in 2013 attests to the following periods: Late Halaf, Ubaid, Late Chalcolithic (Early-Middle Uruk), Late Bronze Age, Iron Age/Achaemenid and Medieval. The 2013 season also involved partially re-excavating and cleaning sections of the 1960's soundings in order to gain stratified materials. These materials identified the original occupation layer of the mound as beginning in the Late Halaf period (Halaf-Ubaid-Transitional). Following the Halaf period, the Lower Mound remained uninhabited for an extensive period, but Ubaid levels are almost certainly buried deep inside the Upper Mound as we find characteristic Ubaid sherds on its slopes. Tell Begum was resettled in the Late Chalcolithic period. The pottery includes coarse chaff-faced types, with bevelled rim bowls present in the uppermost Late Chalcolithic strata. Subsequently, the entire mound was mostly abandoned, with only nominal ceramic traces on the Upper Mound from the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age. A shallow Medieval stratum forms the uppermost archaeological evidence of inhabitation. Twentieth century military ditches and foxholes across the top of the mound attest to the dramatic recent history of the valley.



1. Tell Begum. Polychrome Halaf Fine Ware sherds (photograph Olivier Nieuwenhuyse).

2. Tell Begum. Late Chalcolithic coarse chaff-faced pottery types (drawings Shahrizor Survey Project).

# Central Zagros Archaeological Project

Director: Roger Matthews, Wendy Matthews, Kamal Rasheed Raheem

Affiliation: University of Reading, Sulaimaniyah Antiquities Directorate

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|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation and Survey   |
| <b>Location</b>           | Sulaimaniyah province: Bestansur, Shimshara, Zarzi                                    |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | Bestansur: 35.2237, 45.3844<br>Shimshara: 36.1201, 44.5617<br>Zarzi: 35.4859, 45.0119 |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://www.czap.org/">http://www.czap.org/</a>                               |
| <b>Started in</b>         | Spring 2012   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | Current phase: 5 years  |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Early Neolithic, Iron Age (Assyrian)  |

The Central Zagros Archaeological Project is investigating the early development of animal and plant domestication and the sedentarisation of human communities in the Early Neolithic, 10,000-6500 cal BC, of the eastern Fertile Crescent. Following earlier work in the high Zagros in Iran at the sites of Sheikh-e Abad and Jani, recent work has focused on the Early Neolithic levels of Shimshara on the Rania Plain and, especially on the Early Neolithic site of Bestansur on the Shahrizor Plain. Regional survey has also been conducted in the Zarzi region, with an emphasis on early prehistory. At Bestansur, several buildings of mud-brick and pisé have been explored as well as extensive open areas. The lower buildings have multiple plasters and there are indications of paint on the plaster. There are also several human burials, of adults and children of the Early Neolithic period. There is no Neolithic pottery. The lithics are in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B tradition, with a range of tools of chert and obsidian, which is mainly from eastern Anatolian sources. Both wild and early domesticated animals appear to be exploited, including goat, sheep, cattle, pig and a range of wild species, as well as fish and birds. Edible land snail is prominent in the diet. Assyrian levels at the site have also been briefly excavated by Dr Lisa Cooper, UBC. At Shimshara we have explored levels of Early Neolithic date at the base of the Bronze Age mound, finding burnt layers, floors and artefacts such as marble bracelets and stone bowl fragments, typical of Pre-Pottery Neolithic B.



View of excavated pisé building at Bestansur, Early Neolithic

# Chemchemical

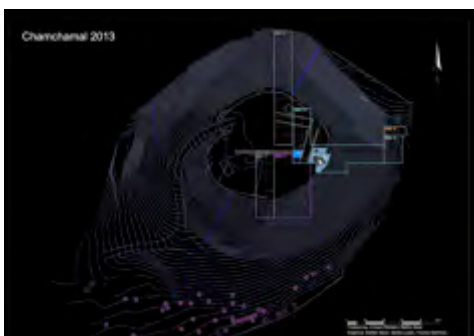
Directors: Margarete van Ess – Marta Luciani – Saber A. Saber

Affiliations: German Archaeological Institute – University of Vienna – Sulaimaniyah Directorate of Antiquities

email: margarete.vaness@dainst.de – marta.luciani@univie.ac.at – jwtyara@yahoo.com

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Chemchemical Qala' (Spy Hasar), Sulaimaniyah  |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | UTM Zone 38 S 485020 m E 3932592 m N<br>35°32'12.61'' N 44°50'04.92'' E                             |
| <b>Website</b>            | -   |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2012  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | Five years  |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Hassuna/Samarra – Samarra – Obeid – Uruk – Kassite – Neo-Assyrian – Achaemenid – Seleucid – Islamic |

The site of Chemchemical Qala' (Spy Hasar) is an at least 5 ha large and 20 m high mound located at the centre of the modern town of Chemchemical and topped by a military post active until the 1980s. Archaeological investigations were started with a surface survey in spring 2012 as an outcome of the Northwestern Sulaimaniyah Survey, for which it was chosen as reference-site. In summer of the same year a team of the Sulaimaniyah Directorate of Antiquities started excavation in Area A. In autumn 2012 the German-Austrian team opened Areas B and D, working as invited cooperation partner to the Sulaimaniyah directorate of Antiquities. In 2013 work was continued by both teams in all Areas and extended to Areas E and F. Main results of the two campaigns: Area D (blue on the plan): a section at the foot of the eastern flank of the mound has allowed identifying Hassuna/Samarra, painted and incised Samarra, Obeid and Uruk layers and material culture, especially pottery. These are the earliest periods attested so far at the site. Area B (red): in the East-West step-trench, 21 levels of use have been documented in the first two campaigns. The earliest are to be dated to the Late Bronze Age, with mainly Kassite material. Besides pottery it includes an eye-stone with the inscription of the Kassite king Kurigalzu. The Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid periods are attested as outer, plastered floors with *tannurs*. Pottery includes Palace Ware and glazed specimens. Seleucid remains feature incised pottery, terracotta and glazed figurines. Early and middle Islamic layers and finds as well as the remains of an Ottoman fort (?) close the sequence. Area A (green): the North-South step-trench has brought to light extensive monumental Late Bronze Age architecture with mainly Kassite pottery. The overlying kilns and workshop areas are to be dated to the Iron Age. As in the adjoining Area B the sequence is covered by early and middle Islamic as well as Ottoman layers and architecture. Areas E and F (grey): the extensive but shallow square trenches were opened to clarify the modern military installations on the mound top. Extensive parts of the Ottoman fort (?) as well as a Hellenistic coin constitute the main results.



Plan of Chemchemical (A. Rashid Raheem, S. Baier, Y. Helmholz)



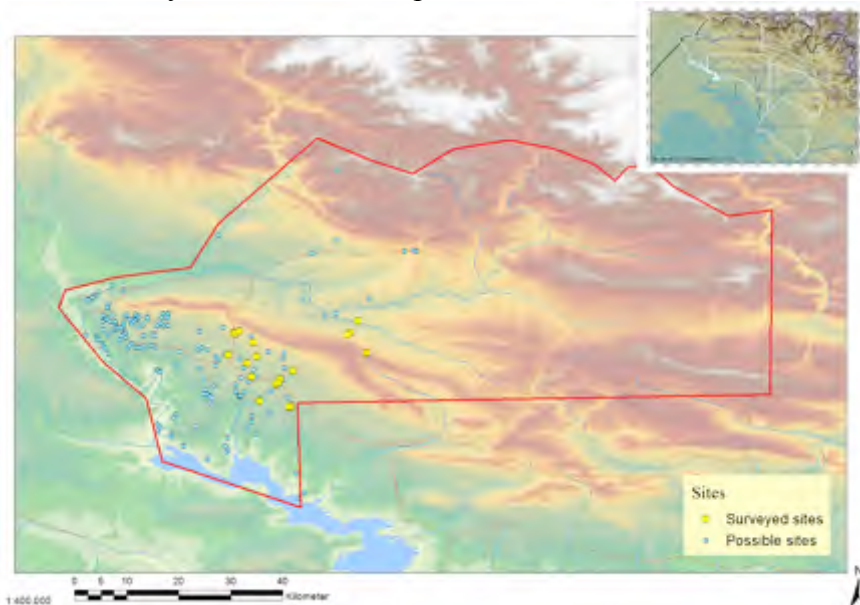
Photo of the Mound Chemchemical from SW (Photo M. Luciani)

# Eastern Ḫabur Archaeological Survey

Director: Prof. Dr. P. Pfälzner – Field-director: Dr. Paola Sconzo  
Institute for Ancient Near Eastern Studies (IANES), Tübingen  
email: peter.pfaelzner@uni-tuebingen.de/paola.sconzo@uni-tuebingen.de

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Zakho - Dohuk provinces   |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | -   |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/forschung/forschungsschwerpunkte/sonderforschungsbereiche/sfb-1070/teilprojekte.html">http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/forschung/forschungsschwerpunkte/sonderforschungsbereiche/sfb-1070/teilprojekte.html</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | September 2013  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Paleolithic to recent times   |

The Eastern Ḫabur survey project is a four-year reconnaissance programme undertaken by a team of the University of Tübingen in the northernmost province of Iraqi Kurdistan. This land, covering an area of about one hundred sq. km, extends from the eastern bank of Tigris to the west to the city of Amedi to the east, from the Turkish frontier to the north to an approximately east-west line across Zawita in the south. Geographically it is characterized by a heterogeneous landscape, which includes river valleys and wadis, hills and plains, and even mountainous rocky slopes and caves. Funded by the DFG in the frame of the *Sonderforschungsbereich* (collaborative research centre) 1070 – *Teilprojekt B07*, the survey aims to investigate the landscape evolution and settlement patterns of this mostly unexplored region from the Neolithic to medieval and modern times, with special attention to the relations between the Mesopotamian territorial states (Akkadian and Neo-Assyrian) and the almost inaccessible mountainous districts in the northernmost periphery during the 3rd and 1st millennia B.C. The study of the development of such periphery as a settlement- and resource basin would doubtless give an important contribution to the culture history of northern Mesopotamia as a whole.



# Erbil Plain Archaeological Survey

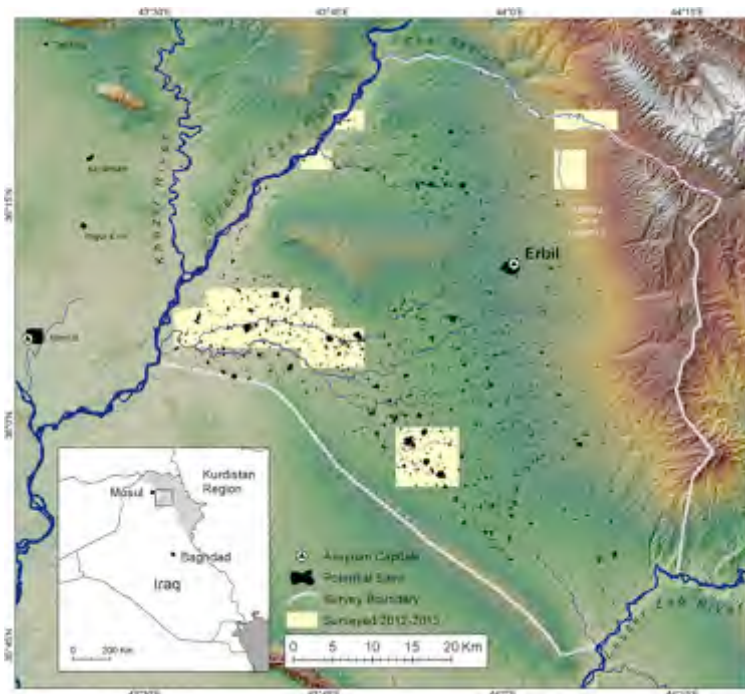
Director: Jason Ur  
 Harvard University  
 email: jasonur@fas.harvard.edu

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey  |
| <b>Location</b>           | 3,200 sq km region around city of Erbil, in Erbil Governorate   |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | UTM 38 410920 E, 40056001 N   |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://scholar.harvard.edu/jasonur/pages/erbil">http://scholar.harvard.edu/jasonur/pages/erbil</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2012  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 10 years  |
| <b>Main period(s)</b>     | Neolithic to Present  |

The Erbil Plain Archaeological Survey (EPAS) maps archaeological sites and landscape features over the past 10,000 years. Its geographical focus is the plain around the city of Erbil, the capital of Erbil governorate and of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Although rich in history and archaeology, the plain has remained largely unresearched until recently. EPAS investigates the history of settlement and land use from the Neolithic to the Present. The project counts as its general goals:

- The identification, mapping, and dating of all premodern habitation sites
- Mapping of ancient irrigation systems, both on the surface and subterranean (karez/qanat)
- Mapping of ancient roads and tracks
- Creation of a spatial inventory (geospatial database) of sites and features for use by the Directorate of Antiquities for the Kurdistan Region and by the State Board of Antiquities & Heritage in Baghdad
- Training of Western and Iraqi students in the techniques of archaeological survey, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and remote sensing

EPAS covers 3,200 square kilometres between the Upper and Lower Zab rivers, with the city of Erbil at its center. The project makes extensive use of satellite imagery for site and feature identification, especially declassified intelligence photographs from the CORONA program. A preliminary assessment recovered almost 1,200 sites. These places will be visited, their site status confirmed, then mapped and artifacts collected from their surfaces.



# Erbil Citadel Archaeological Investigations

Director of HCECR: Dara Al-Yaqobi

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Director of Excavations: Abdullah Khorsheed

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Archaeological Committee: Abdullah Khorsheed, Saber Hassan, Sangar Mohammed, Ibrahim Khalil

Archaeological Advisor: John MacGinnis

email: jm111@cam.ac.uk

|                           |                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Geophysical mapping and Excavation |
| <b>Location</b>           | Erbil citadel                      |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 36°11'28.08"N 44° 0'33.06"E        |
| <b>Website</b>            | -                                  |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2013                               |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years                            |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | All periods                        |

The citadel of Erbil is a key site. Its size, location and length of occupation mark it out as one of the most important sites in Mesopotamia: it has the potential to contribute fundamentally to the archaeological understanding of the area. Ceramics recovered from the surface demonstrate that the mound has remains going back at least 6,000 years and the likelihood is that they will in fact be older than that, while recent work on the ancient cuneiform texts has highlighted the exceptional status of the city in the region's history. In short, the citadel mound contains an unparalleled sequence of occupational layers from early pre-history to the present accessible at no other site; it is expected that archaeological investigations could lead to discoveries of fundamental importance. There is, moreover, a powerful argument that the time to conduct such investigations is now, while the revitalisation of the citadel is in progress and the access and opportunity are there. In recognition of this, in 2011 the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalisation (HCECR), in consultation with the Directorate of Antiquities of Kurdistan, the Directorate of Antiquities, developed a strategy for the archaeological investigation of the citadel which envisages a comprehensive approach embracing prospection by geophysical remote sensing in conjunction with excavations conducted in multiple carefully selected areas; the requirements of conservation are also built into the plan. Actual excavation have commenced in Area E, on the perimeter west of the Amedi gate, with the aim of locating remains of the fortification walls. This work will continue and other operations will be instigated in due course. The final vision is for the citadel to be a live museum, combining the conservation and rehabilitation in a successful pairing of the recent architectural heritage with the remains of previous historical periods.



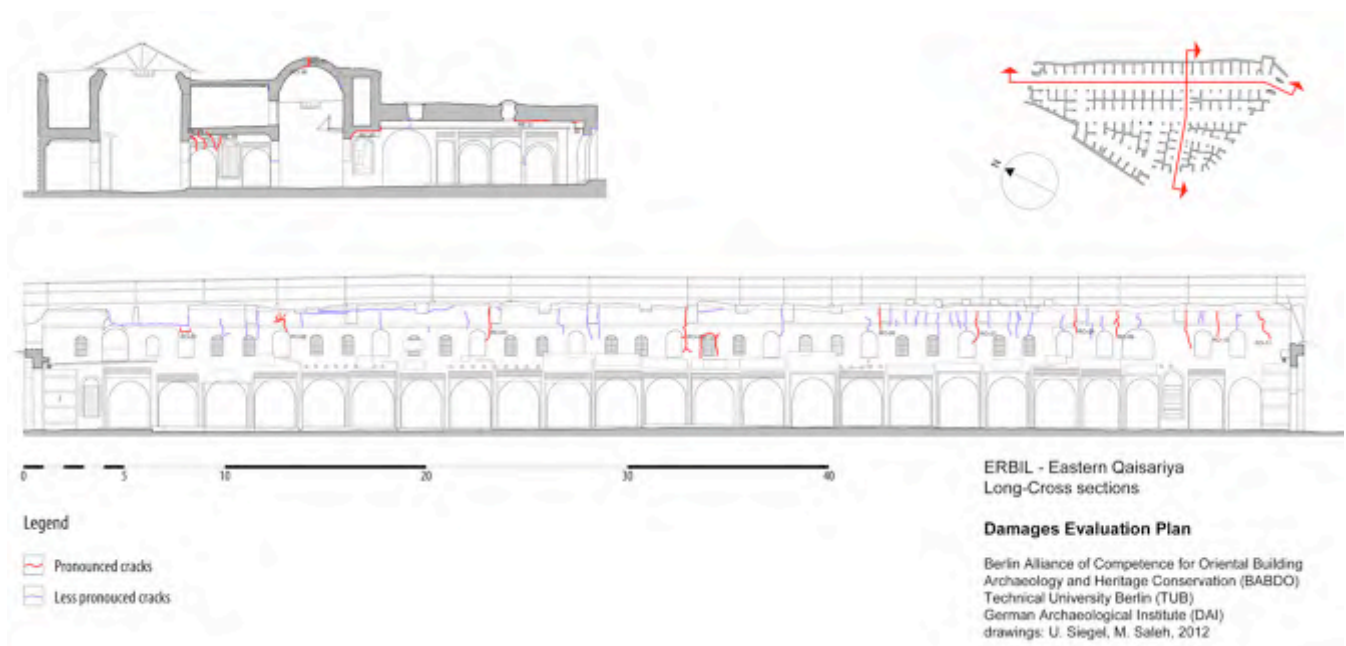


# Erbil: Historical commercial buildings in the bazaar

Directors: Martina Müller-Wiener, Anne Mollenhauer, Dietmar Kurapkat  
 Technical University Berlin, German Archaeological Institute  
 martina.mueller-wiener@tu-berlin.de  
 annemollenhauer@yahoo.com  
 dietmar.kurapkat@dainst.de

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Architectural Survey, Heritage Conservation, Revitalization   |
| <b>Location</b>           | Erbil, bazaar area southwest of the citadel   |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 36.188403°, 44.008844°  |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/KulturDialog/Kulturerhalt/130606-Erbil_node.html">http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/KulturDialog/Kulturerhalt/130606-Erbil_node.html</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2012  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 2 years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Ottoman, 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> century  |

The project comprises the documentation, architectural survey, historical research and proposal for a heritage conservation plan for two Late Ottoman trade buildings in the bazaar of Erbil, dating to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Cultural Preservation Programme of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany and the German Archaeological Institute funded the work. The project is part of a larger research work focussing on trade buildings and administrative buildings from the Late Ottoman and Mandatory period in Northern Iraq. In their original condition the buildings were self-contained, two-storeyed structures consisting of several barrel-vaulted hallways connected through shorter passages. The alleys were lined on both sides with rows of small shops opening towards the lane with an arch and covered by flat domes. Whereas the rooms in the ground floor served as shops and workshops, the rooms in the upper floor were mainly used for storage. Wooden galleries gave access to the upper-floor rooms. The buildings are still in use, but they suffer from lack of maintenance. This refers particularly of the roofs and the upper-floor rooms, which are partly destroyed. Therefore the development of a heritage conservation plan is a constituent part of the project.

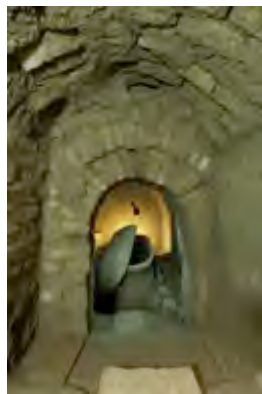


## Erbil: Assyrian Tomb

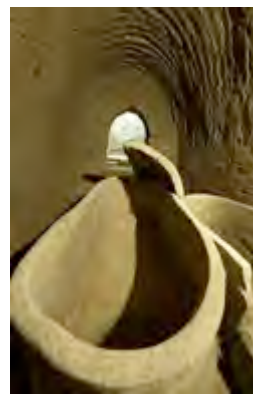
Directors: Margarete van Ess, Arnulf Hausleiter  
Affiliation: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut  
email: mve@orient.dainst.de, arh@dainst.de

|                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation                |
| <b>Location</b>           | lower town of Erbil       |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 36.193675, 44.003894      |
| <b>Website</b>            | www.dainst.org            |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2008                      |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | completed                 |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Neo-Assyrian to Sassanian |

Following the discovery in 2008 of a baked brick Neo-Assyrian vaulted tomb in the lower town of Erbil some 500 m northwest of the citadel, between 2008 and 2011 excavations were carried out by the Directorate of Antiquities of Erbil and the German Archaeological Institute. The tomb consisted of two rectangular chambers with an arched entrance on the southwest side. Multiple inhumations had taken place in the tomb, including in bathtub coffins. The ceramics recovered indicate that the tomb was in use from the 8th to the 6th century BC. Other grave goods included gold and silver jewelry, cowrie shells and a bronze bowl. In addition to the tomb itself, the excavations revealed a sequence of Neo-Assyrian to Post-Assyrian domestic architecture and two inhumation cemeteries of the Achaemenid to Seleuco-Parthian to Sassanian periods. In the context of these discoveries it is interesting to note that the continuity of material culture, especially the pottery tradition, has been observed elsewhere in the Eastern Tigris area over the period of transition from imperial rule to the post-Assyrian period.



The vaulted chamber



Bathtub coffin



Ceramic vessels recovered from the tomb

# Erbil: Archaeology of the Urban Centre in Northern Mesopotamia

Director: Karel Nováček  
University of West Bohemia Plzen  
email: knovacek@kar.zcu.cz

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Surveys, remote sensing, small-scale excavations |
| <b>Location</b>           | Arbīl citadel, lower town, hinterland            |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 36°11'28"N 44°0'33"E                             |
| <b>Website</b>            | -  |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2006–2010  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | finished   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Neo-Assyrian, Hellenistic, Sasanian, Islamic     |

The aim of this project was to outline the urbanization process of the important northern Mesopotamian city of Urbilum (Arbail, Erbil, Hawler), a city which until very recently had been neglected by scholarship[ due to its dense modern settlement. Complementary use of textual evidence and aerial and satellite imagery, combined with archaeological fieldwork, mediated a view into the topography of ancient and Islamic Arbīl, the layout of which now appears comparable with other Assyrian royal cities and Middle Islamic town foundations. While the famous mound of Erbil, an impressive, 10-hectare, entirely anthropogenic tell, created a focal point of agglomeration at least from Late Chalcolithic period onwards, it was the extent and pattern of the lower town which really provides the key for the understanding of the urban dynamics over the millennia. Fortification systems enveloping an area of more than 300 ha, numerous presumed gates, settlement quarters and tells, roads systems and cemeteries were identified in the plain under the citadel, now almost totally disappeared due to the expansion of the city in the last four decades. After the fall of the Assyrian Empire, Erbil retained the status of a regional capital and the huge Assyrian ramparts continued to form a major element in the spatial configuration of the town. The Islamic re-structuration of the town appears to be a gradual, two-stage process which occurred in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. In a limited scope, attention was paid also to the closer hinterland of the city, with the survey of Tell Baxčan, a western suburb of the city.



Remains of the Assyrian (red) and medieval (green) fortifications of Arbīl in the context of the modern building (QuickBird satellite image, 2005). Tells are highlighted yellow, medieval and modern cemeteries by hatched areas.

# Gurga Chiya

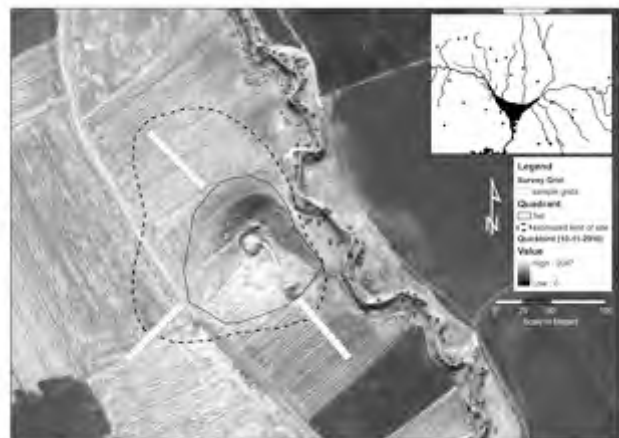
Co-Directors: Prof. David Wengrow and Dr. Robert Carter  
 Affiliation: Institute of Archaeology, UCL; and UCL Qatar  
 email: d.wengrow@ucl.ac.uk robert.carter@ucl.ac.uk

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Gurga Chiya   |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 35°12'48"N, 45°55'16"E  |
| <b>Website</b>            | in progress   |
| <b>Started in</b>         | May, 2013   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 seasons   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Chalcolithic (5 <sup>th</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> millennium BC) |

Gurga Chiya is a steep-sided multi-period *tell* covering *c.* 1 hectare and rising *c.* 12m above surrounding field systems in the southern part of the Shahrizor Plain. The mound's profile has been substantially modified in recent decades by ploughing, military installations, and wadi erosion on its east face. In former times (an estimated century ago) a waterwheel and mill—of which no trace is now visible—were located on Gurga Chiya, together with a number of houses, the foundations of which were long ago cleared for farming. The modern village of Gurga Chiya lies a short distance to the northwest, along a road leading to the archaeological mound of Tell Qortas, on the margins of the Darband-i Khan Lake. Prior to the dam's construction the region is said to have provided rich fishing yields, and during the period of British Administration (1920-1932) a bridge had crossed the Sirwan where it flows downstream past the lower reaches of the Qara Dagh mountain range. The current investigation of Gurga Chiya forms part of the Shahrizor Prehistory Project, which comprises excavation, survey, and environmental sampling of two previously uninvestigated mounds: Gurga Chiya and also neighbouring Tepe Marani. The long-term goal is to contribute to the archaeological record of human settlement and activity in the Shahrizor Plain and neighbouring highlands during later prehistory, with a focus on the period between *c.* 7000 and 4000 BC, corresponding broadly to the Halaf and 'Ubaid periods in conventional Mesopotamian chronology, and extending into earlier (Hassuna-Samarra) and later (Uruk) phases. Gurga Chiya was also inhabited during the second millennium BC, but traces of Middle and Bronze Age activity are so far attested through ceramic remains only. The site was initially identified as SSP-011 in the Shahrizor Survey Project.



Bevelled-rim bowls from a refuse layer on the west slope of Gurga Chiya (Credit: Dr. G. Brereton)



Gurga Chiya and extent of area covered by the Shahrizor Survey Project (Credit: Dr. S. Mühl)

## Italian MAE-Sapienza Cooperation Project

### Safeguard and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage in Iraqi Kurdistan - Training and Cataloguing at the Museums of Erbil, Sulaimaniyah and Duhok

Director: Prof. Carlo G. Cereti;

Coordinator: Angela Bizzarro

Affiliation: Department of Classics, Sapienza – University of Rome

email: [iraq@routes-assn.org](mailto:iraq@routes-assn.org)

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Inventory and cataloguing   |
| <b>Location</b>           | Museums of Erbil, Sulaimaniyah and Duhok                                      |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | -   |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://iraq.routes-assn.org/en/">http://iraq.routes-assn.org/en/</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2011  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 2 years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Achaemenid to Islamic   |

The Italian Cooperation project “Safeguard and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage in Iraqi Kurdistan” is rooted in an enduring experience which, since 2006, involves both Italian and Kurdish institutions and has been devised as a response to the capacity building request in the fields of cultural heritage management. Within this project the Italian team cooperated with the General Directorate of Antiquities of the KRG and with the Directorate of Antiquities and Museums of Erbil, Sulaimaniyah and Duhok on the implementation of some training courses. The activities included training courses in (1) Numismatics, supervised by Simona Artusi and Samuele Ranucci (Sapienza University), focusing on the cataloguing of the numismatic collections of the three museums; (2) in Sasanian epigraphy, supervised by Gianfilippo Terribili (Sapienza University), for the staff of the Slemani museum, focusing on the study of the Sasanian monument of Pāikūlī and on the inventory of the inscribed blocks of the Pāikūlī bilingual inscription in Middle-Persian and Parthian; and (3) in topography, in collaboration with the Studio 3R, aimed at training the staff of the Directorate of Antiquities of Sulaimaniyah and of the Slemani museum to the surveying and photogrammetry techniques. In the Slemani Museum, the Erbil Civilization Museum and the Duhok Museum, a cross-cataloguing work of the numismatic collection has been carried out. A general introduction of the discipline and of the monetary history of the territory has been conceived in order to provide skills and a more confident approach to the artefacts. Effort has been put in to the re-organization and arrangement of the coins collection of the three museums. The Italian team, together with the local staffs, has in fact been able to carry out a preliminary cataloguing work of part of the Slemani Museum collection, of the whole collection of the Erbil Museum and of almost the whole collection of Duhok Museum. At the moment, a total of 12,000 coins have been catalogued. Each specimen has been inventoried and the acquired data recorded into digital databases.



Coin Cataloguing activities in the Kurdish Museums.

# Jarmo

Director: Dorian Q Fuller

Affiliation: University College London, Institute of Archaeology

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|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation                                       |
| <b>Location</b>           | Sulaimaniyah Province, Chamchamal area           |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 35°33'20.87"N 44°55'49.05"E                      |
| <b>Website</b>            | -  |
| <b>Started in</b>         | September 2012                                   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years  |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Pre-Pottery Neolithic B, Early Pottery Neolithic |

For most archaeologists, the site of Jarmo is synonymous with the study of early agriculture and with multidisciplinary archaeology, since previous work there, directed by Robert Braidwood (University Chicago) in the 1950s, attempted to be explicitly scientific and to address these issues. Nevertheless, those previous excavations (which finished in 1956) took place prior to major methodological advances in both field archaeology sampling, especially for the recovery of plant and animal remains, and in post-excavation laboratory analyses of plant and animal remains (Braidwood et al. 1983). It remains the case that we know very little about the subsistence at Jarmo, and the limited evidence that was collected in the 1950s is not readily comparable to data currently available from regions to west, including the Levant and Anatolia, where many excavations have had systematic sampling programs in more recent years. Indeed, Jarmo is representative of the eastern Fertile Crescent in general, as the wider region has scarce systematic data from archaeobotany and archaeozoology due in large part to political circumstances in recent decades which made archaeological research difficult. The primary aim of the current project is to carry out small-scale excavations adjacent to previous excavations by Braidwood with fine-scale sampling for archaeobotanical, archaeozoological, and micro-archaeological evidence from a full sequence of this site. More specifically, this will involve excavation and recording through a single context system with trowels, sampling of all contexts for sediments for phytolith samples, large-scale flotation (to 250 microns) and wet-sieving (to 0.5 mm) for plant macro-remains, microfauna, the smallest artefacts (e.g. lithic debitage), and on-site dry screening of the remaining sediment. One advantage of targeting Jarmo is that the work by the Braidwood team in the 1950s provided a rich body of material culture including lithics, figurines, and ceramics from the later levels (Braidwood et al 1983), which will allow smaller targeted sampling, focused on subsistence and environmental data to be placed within a wider cultural dataset.



Aerial view of the 1950s excavations.

# Kani Shaie Archaeological Excavations

Director: André Tomé / Ricardo Cabral / Steve Renette  
 University of Coimbra & University of Pennsylvania  
 email: andgtome@uc.pt / rdfcabral@uc.pt / srenette@sas.upenn.edu

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Bazyan Valley, approximately 23 km W of Sulaimaniya |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 35.332850°, 45.103484°                              |
| <b>Website</b>            | Will be launched during the course of 2014.         |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2013  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Late Chalcolithic to Early Third Millennium         |

Kani Shaie is a small site, measuring ca. 1.5ha, and consists of a high mound (ca. 10m high) and a lower extension to the northwest. The site is located at the confluence of several springs and creeks in the Bazyan valley, close to the Tasluja pass that connects the valley with the Sulaimaniya plain. Following a brief survey in March 2012, excavations were started at Kani Shaie in September 2013. Two step trenches were laid out on the northern and southern slopes, further complemented with a small test sounding in the low northwestern extension of the site. These preliminary inquiries allow us to suggest two major phases of occupation of the site during the late fourth millennium and early third millennium BCE. Although Ubaid period material was recognized in the surface material, the oldest levels reached in this first season date to the Late Uruk period. These levels consist of almost two meters of collapse on top of large mudbrick walls. Also dating to this period, despite not in context, was a numerical tablet marked with one circular impression and sealed with a cylinder seal across the top and on its sides. On top of this level follows a new sequence of occupation characterized by small-scale mudbrick architecture on a stone base, with the pottery assemblage consisting of large amounts of painted pottery belonging to various ceramic traditions. Among this material, few examples of painted Ninevite V ware can be recognized, providing a post-Uruk period date. Two other seal impressions, one a seal-impressed jar, were found in this level. The material suggests close contact with regions to the west in Mesopotamia and to the east in the Zagros region during the early third millennium BCE. The uppermost levels at the site remain poorly understood. Pits and Islamic period graves disturb the occupation levels that cover the early third millennium settlement making it difficult to ascertain for now whether Kani Shaie continued to be occupied in the late third millennium. Nevertheless, preliminary evidence suggests a brief early second millennium occupation. In the test trench in the lower mound, evidence for a small late Parthian and/or early Islamic settlement has been attested.



Kani Shaie (high and low mound) from the East



View to trench 1000 (Northern Step trench)

# Kilik Mishik

Excavation Committee: Noman Jumaah Ibrahim, Zidan Bradosty, Abdullah Khorsheed, Mahdi Jalal, Yousif Khalaf,

Affiliation: Salahaddin University, Erbil

email: nader\_babakr@yahoo.com; namanjumha@yahoo.com; bradosty82@gmail.com; abdullahkhorsheed69@gmail.com

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation  |
| <b>Location</b>           | within the city of Erbil                            |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 36° 9'27.68"N, 43°58'38.66"E                        |
| <b>Website</b>            | -   |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2010  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | -   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Third Millennium to Neo-Assyrian, Parthian, Islamic |

Tell Kilik Mishik is an archaeological site situated within the city limits of Erbil. The name means "mouse's tail" and the tell measures 290 m from north to south and 240 m from east to west and stands 15 m high. The indications from surface ceramics are that third millennium, early second millennium, Mittanni, Middle Assyrian, Neo-Assyrian, Parthian and Islamic occupations are represented at the site. Excavations were initiated at the site by Salahaddin University in 2010 in conjunction with the Directorate of Antiquities of Erbil. To date three major phases have been investigated, Islamic, Assyrian and Mittanni. Excavation of the Assyrian levels yielded a courtyarded building with infant jar burials, one of which was furnished with a white cylindrical alabaster pendant; the walls are built of mud bricks measuring 42 x 42 x 42 cm and 26 x 14 x 8 cm and a large quantity of Assyrian pottery dating from the 15th to the 9th centuries BC was recovered. A find of particular importance is a Neo-Assyrian vaulted tomb built of bricks measuring 40 x 40 x 12 cm and 18 x 18 x 6 cm; four jars found immediately outside the entrance to this tomb may be the remains of funerary offerings. Below this was a phase characterised by Nuzi Ware and bricks measuring 38 x 38 x 10 cm; there were a number of adult burials in this phase, one of which contained a necklace made of beads of red agate and rock crystal, as well as oyster shell rings and copper bracelets.





# Kurd Qaburstan Project

Director: Glenn M. Schwartz  
Johns Hopkins University  
email: schwartz@jhu.edu

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation  |
| <b>Location</b>           | 20 km southwest of Erbil  |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 35.988333°, 43.861666°  |
| <b>Website</b>            | under construction  |
| <b>Started in</b>         | June 2013   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Middle and Late Bronze (2 <sup>nd</sup> millennium BC), Islamic |

At 118 hectares, Kurd Qaburstan is one of the largest Bronze Age sites in the region of Erbil. It consists of an 11 hectare high mound surrounded by a 107 hectare walled lower town. In the EPAS survey directed by Jason Ur of Harvard University, the lower town of Kurd Qaburstan (site 31) was dominated by early second millennium BC surface materials, while the high mound had early third millennium BC to first millennium AD occupational evidence. The size, location, and occupation history led to the proposition that Kurd Qaburstan was ancient Qabra, the main city of the Erbil plain in the Old Babylonian period. Excavations in June-July 2013 revealed that occupation of the Mittani period was accessible immediately below the surface of the high tell, with several phases of mudbrick and baked brick architecture exposed in three trenches. Pottery included Nuzi Ware and related painted sherds, painted “younger” Khabur Ware, and other Mittani diagnostics. On the central and western lower town, two trenches produced remains of the Islamic period, in one case stratified above second millennium BC layers. Two trenches adjacent to the city wall yielded second millennium strata, both Mittani and Old Babylonian, providing a date for the wall. In the magnetometry survey conducted by Andrew Creekmore (University of Northern Colorado), long stretches of the city wall were documented, with towers at 20 meter intervals. The excavation and magnetometry results confirm, therefore, that Kurd Qaburstan was a very large walled settlement in the early and later second millennium BC. Future excavations aim to reveal more of the history and character of this major city of the second millennium BC on the Erbil plain.



Mittani period baked brick feature with drain, high mound east.

# Land of Nineveh Archaeological Project (LoNAP)

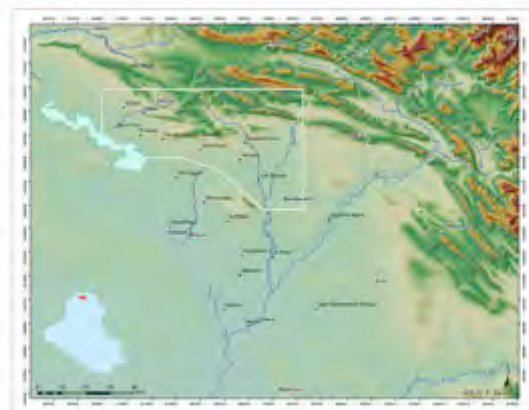
Director: Daniele Morandi Bonacossi

Affiliation: University of Udine

email: daniele.morandi@uniud.it

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey, as from 2014 also excavation at Tell Gomel |
| <b>Location</b>           | Dohuk Governorate                                  |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | -  |
| <b>Website</b>            | under construction                                 |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2012   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | Five years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | see below  |

The LoNRP project is a wide-ranging interdisciplinary research project aimed at understanding the formation and evolution of the cultural and natural landscape of a most important region of northern Mesopotamia (the “Land behind Nineveh”), that bridges the provinces of Ninawa and Dohuk (N Iraq), from the Palaeolithic until the Islamic period and enabling its valorization and protection using innovative strategies. This region of northern Iraqi Kurdistan (area 2900 km<sup>2</sup>) has never been systematically explored by an archaeological mission using modern scientific methods and has an extremely high potential for an integrated territorial study such as that used by LoNRP. The project is based on a regional archaeological field survey, combined with archaeological excavation of the site of Tell Gomel (from 2014; Northern Ubaid – Islamic period) and aims to investigate settlement and land use and management patterns, especially in relation to fundamental resources: water and agricultural soil. This will be accompanied by the study of settlement dynamics, demographic change and research into the region’s material culture and its development. These objectives are closely interlinked with a geo- and bioarchaeological reconstruction of the ancient natural landscape, its evolution as a result of global climatic fluctuations and human impact and interaction with cultural dynamics. One of the most important objectives of LoNRP is the geoarchaeological and topographical restitution of the as yet little-known canal system built in the 8th-7th centuries BC by the Assyrian king Sennacherib to bring water to Nineveh and irrigate its countryside. This branching irrigation network was linked to outstanding monuments erected by Sennacherib: the first monumental aqueduct in history (Jerwan) and a series of rock carvings in relief depicting the king and the principal Assyrian gods (Khinis, Shiru Maliktha, Faida and Maltai). These monuments, currently exposed to the destructive action of weathering and human activity, will be studied from geoarchaeological, art-historical, historical and topographical perspectives, in order to ensure also their conservation and management. The creation of an archaeological and natural park will provide the basis for an important programme of enhancement and creation of public awareness, aimed at future tourism both national and international.



Location of the Land of Nineveh Regional Project (LoNRP) survey area in Northern Iraq and the core territory of the Assyrian Empire with major sites.

## Tell Lashkry: Late Prehistory in the Erbil Region

Director: Miquel Molist Montaña

Affiliation: Department of Prehistory. Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain)

email: Miquel.molist@uab.cat

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | (Excavation, Survey etc) Excavation   |
| <b>Location</b>           | Erbil   |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 36° 10' 54.4542" , 44° 7' 56.9022"  |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/sappo/">http://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/sappo/</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2014  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Pre-Halaf, Halaf, Bronze age  |

This project aims to characterize and understand prehistoric settlements in the plain of Erbil in Late Prehistory. An interdisciplinary research programme carried out in collaboration with the University of Salahaddin is designed to carry out an extensive excavation at the site of Tell Lashkry, a small mound located 30 km northeast of Erbil between Bnslawa and Kasnazan. A preliminary survey carried out at the site allowed us to recover a collection of surface ceramics consisting of Neolithic (Pre-Halaf and Halaf) pottery. The expectation is that the site has the potential to contribute to the understanding of small Late Neolithic settlements in a complex basin area and that this can be compared with the processes taking place in the Euphrates and Khabur valleys at the same time. The research will also provide information about the appearance of the first ceramic production and its evolution towards the classical archaeological cultures (Proto Hassuna, Samarra, Halaf etc), as well as helping to define the historical horizons in which settlements were occupied and their economic and social strategies.



The site of Tell Lashkry.



General view from the south-east with the fence.

# MAIPE (Helawa)

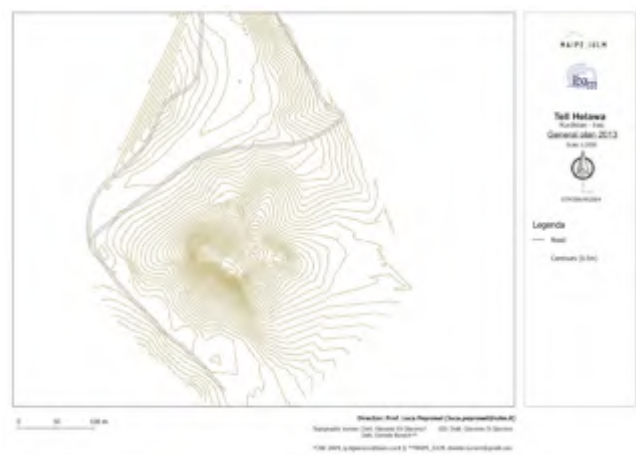
Director: Luca Peyronel

Affiliation: University IULM Milan

email: luca.peyronel@iulm.it

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | survey, excavation                     |
| <b>Location</b>           | Erbil plain                            |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | see topographic plan below             |
| <b>Website</b>            | -                                      |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2013                                   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years                                |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Halaf, Late Ubaid, LC, Middle Assyrian |

The project of the Italian Archaeological Expedition in the Erbil Plain (MAIPE) focuses on a small part of the south-western Erbil plain, namely the area of Helawa/Aliawa, located c. 28 km south-west of Erbil. During the first short campaign (2013) work was carried out at Helawa, a site which rises 22 m high from a minimal elevation of 310 m. The site has an irregular shape with a high mound to the south, a secondary small mound to the south-east and low extensions to the north and east; the area of archaeological interest is slightly larger than 6.5 ha. Topographic work: Differential GPS was used to take a large number of Ground Control Points (GCP), useful for a first calibration of the satellite image acquired in 2013, taken from WorldView2 satellite on March, 12, 2011. All data taken by GPS (including the collection units of the intensive survey) were organized in a GIS system based on Quantum GIS; metadata are stored in Sqlite database. Survey and chronology of the site: Collection of diagnostic materials coming from the lower part of the site on the southern, eastern and northern sides; systematic collection of surface materials through a topographic grid extended over an area of 0.5 ha. divided into five Collection Areas and subdivided into 44 Collection Units. More than 3000 pottery sherds have been collected and filed. Diagnostic pottery and small finds show that Helawa was an important settlement during the Halaf, Ubaid and Late Chalcolithic periods. The site was also occupied probably by a fortified settlement during the II Mill. BC (Mittani and Middle Assyrian periods). Sporadic sherds attest a squatter occupation during the first millennium BC (Assyrian and Post-Assyrian) and the Islamic Period. The distinction of several fabrics has been possible for the materials dating to the LU and LC periods and several pottery sherds have been sampled and analyzed in Italy (RAMAN, XRF, XRD, Thick and Thin Sections, SEM). More than 600 small finds mainly consisting of chert and obsidian blades and tools (150), chert debitage (c. 400), but also clay nails, clay ring scrapers, polishing and percussion tools, grinding slabs and grindstones, pottery whorls, stone vessels fragments and beads have been found. Obsidian blade and micro-blades and flint tools and debitage are scattered on the surface of the whole site, although the intensive survey demonstrates a concentration of finds on the southern slope and in particular in its central part.



# Tepe Marani

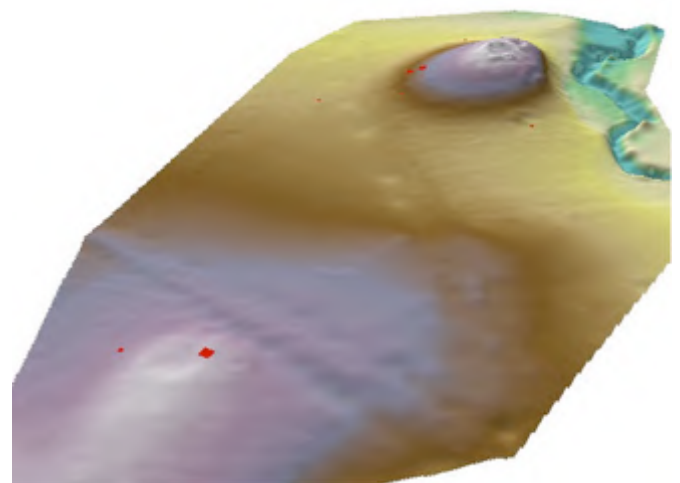
Director: Prof. David Wengrow and Dr. Robert Carter  
Affiliation: Institute of Archaeology, UCL; and UCL Qatar  
email: d.wengrow@ucl.ac.uk robert.carter@ucl.ac.uk

|                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation             |
| <b>Location</b>           | Tepe Marani            |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 35°12'39"N, 45°55'17"E |
| <b>Website</b>            | in progress            |
| <b>Started in</b>         | May, 2013              |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 seasons              |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Late Neolithic         |

Tepe Marani is a low mound lying less than 0.5km to the south of Gurga Chiya, in the southern part of the Shahrizor Plain. Its shallow profile and location on a natural rise make it almost imperceptible to the naked eye. The contours of the site, as revealed by DGPS survey, cover an area of c. 0.7 hectares. It has been extensively ploughed in recent decades, and Late Neolithic (Halaf-related) painted pottery is abundant on the surface. Preliminary results indicate the presence of a Late Neolithic settlement at Tepe Marani, with stone architectural foundations preserved approximately 0.5m below the topsoil, and extensive areas of midden accumulation close to the centre of the mound. The investigation of this early settlement forms part of the Shahrizor Prehistory Project, which comprises excavation, survey, and environmental sampling of two previously uninvestigated mounds: Tepe Marani and also the neighbouring site of Gurga Chiya, which has occupation levels spanning the Chalcolithic period (5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC). The long-term goal of this fieldwork is to contribute to the archaeological record of human settlement and activity in the Shahrizor Plain and adjacent highlands during later prehistory, with a focus on the period between c.7000 and 4000 BC, corresponding broadly to the Halaf and 'Ubaid periods in conventional Mesopotamian chronology, and extending into earlier (Hassuna-Samarra) and later (Uruk) phases.



Late Neolithic bichrome pottery from Tepe Marani  
(Credit: Dr. G. Brereton)



DGPS survey of Tepe Marani (foreground) and Gurga Chiya (background) showing location of 2013 trenches  
(Credit: Dr. A. Bevan)

# Medieval Urban Landscape in Northeastern Mesopotamia (MULINEM)

Director: Karel Nováček

Affiliation: University of West Bohemia Plzen

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|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Surveys   |
| <b>Location</b>           | Historical province of Adiabene (Hazza), between Tigris, Little Zab and Great Zab |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | -   |
| <b>Website</b>            | in preparation  |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2013  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | three years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Sasanian, Islamic   |

The research of the hierarchical urban network in a defined area belongs to approaches rarely used in the study of the Islamic urbanism. This project focuses on the cluster of urban sites of the 6th–17th centuries A.D. in Adiabene, northeastern Mesopotamia. The urban landscape, once a constituent of a prosperous Sasanian province and later becoming part of the hinterland of the 'Abbasid megalopolis of Samarra, eventually collapsed during the Ottoman era. The archaeological substance of the cities (eighteen of them have been identified) is largely in a very good state of preservation. The interpretation coming from historical analysis, remote sensing and archaeological survey will concentrate on the issues of the continuity of the Islamic urban network, its dynamism and resilience to the political and economic changes. We will also focus on the social structure reflected in the built environment of individual cities. The project aims to reconsider some widely accepted models of the Islamic town development based on the comparative material coming mostly from Syropalestine.



Map of the urban sites of the Sasanian and Islamic periods in the province of Adiabene



Makhmur al-Qadima, a view of an Early Islamic *qasr* in an urban site, which has not been identified in sources so far.

# Tell Nader Project

Director: Konstantinos Kopanias  
Affiliation: University of Athens  
email: [kkopanias@arch.uoa.gr](mailto:kkopanias@arch.uoa.gr)

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation                                      |
| <b>Location</b>           | Erbil (Hasarok 5 Area)                          |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 36.173148°, 44.075490°                          |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://arbela.gr">http://arbela.gr</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2011  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 10 years  |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Early Northern Ubaid to Early Gawra             |

Tell Nader covers an area of one hectare and its tell is ca. 5 meters high. It was first located by Mr. Nader Muhammad. The first two excavation seasons (2011, 2012) thus far revealed no buildings, although several well-baked bricks have been found, which indicate the existence of architectural remains in the area. A number of circular clay constructions were probably used as ovens or kilns and belong to a single layer, with pottery from the Early Northern Ubaid, as well as from the Transitional period. After their abandonment in the same period, one of these kilns was used as an improvised grave for an adult woman whose skull had been subjected to circumferential headshaping in infancy. The excavation produced approximately 4,000 lithics and 4,000 ceramic sherds. There are finds from the Middle Assyrian period and the earlier stages of the second millennium BC, as well as from the Ninevite 5 and Middle Uruk, Halaf, Samarra, and Hassuna periods. But the greatest amount of the excavated pottery represents the Early Northern Ubaid to Early Gawra horizons.



# Northwestern Sulaimaniyah Survey

Directors: Margarete van Ess – Marta Luciani

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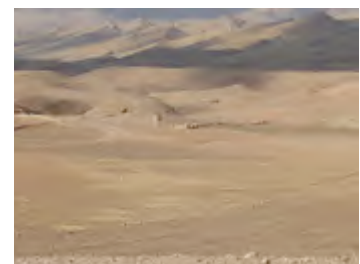
|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Area Northwest of Sulaimaniyah - South of Lower Zab |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | Cf. map below                                       |
| <b>Website</b>            | -   |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2011  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | Five years  |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | All   |

The Northwestern Sulaimaniyah Survey is the interdisciplinary archaeological and geo-morphological survey of the different intermontane valleys East (Surdash and Aqjalar) and West of the Bazian Pass (the region around Chemchemical) up to the southern bank of the Lower Zab. Its goal is to map the local development of the natural and cultural palimpsest and attain a first reconstruction of the landscape, the settlement patterns in the region and address their development during all main historical epochs.

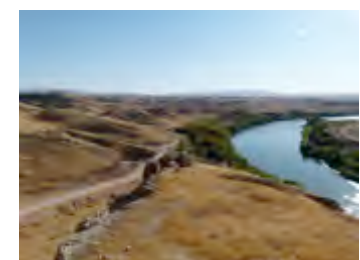
Our research has started in spring 2011 with a first visit to the region (including Serchenar) and in autumn 2011 with the focus of our investigations on the intermontane valleys of Surdash, Bazian, Aqjalar and finally the area around Chemchemical. The survey area covers a region of ca. 2000 km<sup>2</sup>. In the course of an extensive survey conducted by car we have identified and mapped over 50 sites. We proceeded according to the maps on the Iraqi Atlas of Archaeological Sites (Sheets 82-84 and 97-98) integrated by declassified overhead imagery, local knowledge and personal observations. The sites were localised by means of a handheld GPS. The collection policy adapted to local situations. The valleys north of the road between Sulaimaniyah and Chemchemical in direction of the Kirkuk corridor all feature rather small sites with plenty of local material cultural traits. In order to establish a reliable sequence of the material culture to classify and understand the local culture in this border region we have chosen for excavations as reference-site a mound located at the south-western end of Aqjalar, Chemchemical Qala‘ (Spy Hasar) in the Chemchemical Merkez district. The survey will be continued in spring 2013.



1. Map of the Northwestern Sulaimaniyah Survey Area (map H. Ehrig)



2. Upper Aqjalar district with the site of Gird Zillah and typical „flat irons“ geological formations (photo M. Luciani)



3. The Lower Zab from the Qalanja fortress (photo M. Luciani)



# Pāikūlī Project

Directors: Maria Vittoria Fontana & Luca Colliva

Affiliation: Department of Classics, Sapienza – University of Rome

email: maiki@routes-assn.org; luca.colliva@gmail.com

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey and Philological and Archaeological Studies  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Pāikūlī and neighbouring areas  |
| <b>Coordinates UTM</b>    | 553143 m E; 3884372 m N   |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://iraq.routes-assn.org/en/maiki.all">http://iraq.routes-assn.org/en/maiki.all</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2012  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Sasanian  |

From 2006 onwards Italian teams from IsIAO and Sapienza have been investigating the Sasanid monument of Pāikūlī, leading surveys in the valley and studying the materials now kept in the Sulaimaniya Museum. In 2012 MAIKI (Missione Archeologica Italiana nel Kurdistan Iracheno/Italian Archaeological Mission in Iraqi Kurdistan) signed an agreement for a five years project for: (1) the study of the archaeological site of Pāikūlī and related environs and of the historical and geographic context of the monument; (2) the study of the Pāikūlī bilingual inscription; and (3) the creation of an Archaeological Map of the area around the main road from Chamchamal to Darbandikhan, between Basra and Diyala rivers. The study of the Pāikūlī monument, which lies some 10 km WSW of Darbandikhan, represents one of the main goals of the project. This monument was built by the Sasanian King Narseh to celebrate his victory after a dynastic struggle and the bilingual inscription, in Parthian and Middle Persian, carved on its walls is still today one of the primary sources on the early Sasanian period. The creation of the archaeological map of the area between Basra and Diyala rivers (ca. 835 km<sup>2</sup>) includes a survey of the area, a preliminary study of all the identified archaeological sites and of their distribution, a detailed study of the archaeological finds and a census of the modern villages with a limited ethno-anthropological study of the collected data. The activities of the Pāikūlī Project are carried out in collaboration with the MAE-Sapienza Cooperation Project “Safeguard and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage in Iraqi Kurdistan”, led by Prof. Carlo G. Cereti and with the Epigraphic section of the project, supervised by Dr. Gianfilippo Terribili. All these activities are carried out in collaboration with the Director of Antiquities of Sulaimaniya (KRG) and the Sulaimaniya Museum.



Remains of the Sasanid monument of Pāikūlī  
(photo MAIKI)



Area of the MAIKI archaeological map  
(image from Google earth, elaboration MAIKI)

# French Archaeological Expedition at Peramagron

Director: Christine KEPINSKI

Affiliation C.N.R.S. (French National Centre for Scientific Research)  
and University of Paris I

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|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey, Sounding and Excavation          |
| <b>Location</b>           | 5 km south-west of Sulaimania            |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | Kunara UTM Nord 0532444, UTM Est 3930693 |
| <b>Website</b>            | -  |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2011                                     |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 10 years                                 |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Early and Middle Bronze                  |

Following a first survey of the upper Tanjaro, three complementary sites, Kunara, Bingird and Kalespi, were chosen in order to deliver an assessment of the ancient settlements in this valley associated with clear pottery sequences and radiocarbon dates. With a surface of 7 hectares, Kunara includes an upper and a lower town; a geophysical survey has revealed a monumental building on top of the lower town. Four areas have yielded the remains of mostly three periods from 2350 till 1800 B.C. while the end of Early Bronze period is the best attested. The lower town yields a concentration of imposing buildings surrounded by domestic dwellings and crafts areas. On the upper town another, fortified, monumental building was built on top of a huge 5 m high platform. The access to this edifice was effected by two main ramps and landings. The construction techniques, and particularly the use of cob and *pisé*, are unusual and impressive. It is argued that Kunara would be a main town of the Land of Lullubum.



General view of Kunara and the Baranand range

# Qalat Said Ahmadan: A Study of Neolithization and Social Complexity in Prehistoric Kurdistan

Director: Akira Tsuneki

Affiliation: University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Japan

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|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavations   |
| <b>Location</b>           | Qalat Said Ahmadan, Qaladizah, Pshdar Plain   |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | N 36°13'30.32", E45°08'48.75", altitude: 719m (top)   |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://rcwasia.hass.tsukuba.ac.jp/kaken/index.html">http://rcwasia.hass.tsukuba.ac.jp/kaken/index.html</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2014  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | Three years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Iron Age   |

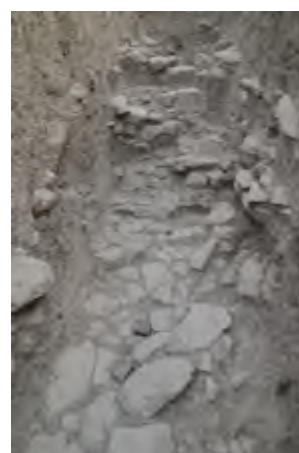
The site of Qalat Said Ahmadan is located just south of Said Ahmadan village, about 3.5 km north of Qaladizah in the Pshdar Plain. The tell has an oval plan, measuring 160 × 170 m and has a height of 22 m above the surrounding plain. The primary aims of our archaeological investigations at Qalat Said Ahmadan are: (a) study of the process of Neolithization and the development of social complexity; and (b) establishing the local chronology after the Neolithic periods. The first excavation season was undertaken between August 19 and September 30, 2014 with the permission and support of the Director General of Antiquities of the Kurdistan Regional Government. In order to carry out a sounding we laid out a 2m wide trench along the north-south axis on the southern slope of the tell. The main results of our excavations from the first season are as follows. (1) We recovered a good cultural sequence from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic to the Pottery Neolithic. On the middle terrace, we discovered a series of pisé walls and ovens: these remnants belong to various Neolithic periods from the late phase of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic through the Proto-Hassuna and Hassuna and on into the Samarra periods. This sequence seems to be continuous and shows evidence of material related to the emergence of early farming societies and the development of social complexities; (2) one of the unexpected findings during the excavation is a large-scale stone structure at the foot of the southern slope of the tell. The section exposed is at least 9 m long and with walls and steps approximately 2 m high. Geophysical survey results indicate that this structure extends over the southern slopes. It is clear that the structure was built in the Iron Age and we suggest that it relates to the military conflicts between Media and Assyria; (3) recovery of material for establishing the local chronology from the Neolithic to the Iron Age. The sounding trench operations provided a large quantity of material, especially potsherds, useful for establishing the long-term local chronology from the PPN through the Pottery Neolithic, Late Early Bronze - Early Middle Bronze and on into the Iron Age in the Rania-Pshdar region.



Topographic and magnetic map of



Pisé wall building of



Major stone structure

# Qara Dagh Regional Archaeological Project

Directors: Antonietta Catanzariti and Cristina Baccarin

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|                           |                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey                        |
| <b>Location</b>           | Qara Dagh Valley              |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | N 35° 19' 52" E 45° 17' 25"   |
| <b>Website</b>            | -                             |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2014                          |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years                       |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Palaeolithic - Ottoman Period |

The Qara Dagh Valley covers an area of 311.05 km<sup>2</sup> and is located in the ecoregion of the Zagros Mountain Forest Steppes, 41 km south of the city of Sulaimaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan. The valley encompasses an area bordered by the Qara Dagh mountain chain to the south/west and the Baranand Dagh range to the north/west and the east. The area was previously surveyed in the 1940's by the Iraqi Department of Antiquities, which identified around 30 archaeological sites that include settlements and monuments. One important monument is the so-called Naram-Sin relief. The Qara Dagh Regional Archaeological Project (QDRAP) aims to perform a systematic survey of the valley and document the archaeological sites located there to contribute to the understanding of the historical relevance of the region. The project will develop in two main phases. The first phase will include carrying out a study of the region through the examination of satellite images with GIS software together with the collection of historical documentation relating to this area obtained from ancient texts and from the archaeological monuments already identified by previous European explores. The preliminary study of the area will lead on to the second phase of the project, the carrying out of surface survey. The archaeological sites identified by the Iraqi Department of Antiquities in the 1940's will be verified during the survey, geo-positioned, dated and mapped. Additionally, the QDRAP aims to document heritage sites not identified previously and to document ancient routes. The final result will include the creation of a database documenting the location both the sites recognized from the 1940's survey and newly located sites. The analysis of the data collected will be interpreted to reconstruct the settlement history of the Valley and the impact of landscape on the urbanization of the area.



Fig. 1 Map of the Archaeological Sites Identified in the 1940's



Fig. 2 Geographical Location of the Qara Dagh Valley in Iraqi-Kurdistan

# Rania Plain: NINO Archaeological Project

Director: Jesper Eidem

Affiliation: Netherlands Institute for the Near East (Leiden)/University of Amsterdam

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|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Regional project   |
| <b>Location</b>           | Rania Plain  |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | N 36,2009, E 44,9382 (Shemshara Main Hill)                 |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://www.nino-leiden.nl">www.nino-leiden.nl</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2012   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 6 + years  |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Late 3. - early 2. Mill. BC (ca. 2200-1750 BC)             |

The NINO Archaeological Project on the Rania Plain is a "2nd phase salvage project" within the area of the former Dokan Dam Salvage zone, investigated by Iraqi and Danish archaeologists 1956-60. The project includes major excavations at Tell Shemshara, as well as survey within a 15 km radius of this site (the survey proceeds in cooperation with the University of Copenhagen; see separate file). An important focus for the project is flood damage assessment and 2nd phase salvage work at other selected sites on the edges of Lake Dokan. The site of Tell Shemshara itself has suffered heavy erosion since the formation of Lake Dokan. The 2012/3 survey of the site shows an estimated 164,000 cubic meters loss from the area mapped in 1957 alone! The entire site covers three natural hills: Main Hill, North Hill, Camp Hill (for Gird Bardastee see separate file), which form a triangular area originally framed by the Lower Zab to the east and the Boskin Wadi to the west. Most of the site shows traces of the earliest Neolithic and Hassuna occupation exposed in small areas by the Danish 1957 excavation, and currently investigated by a team from the University of Reading (directed by R. and W. Matthews). After a long interval Shemshara again saw major occupation from the late 3rd into the 1st quarter of the 2nd millennium. BC. The old excavations famously exposed portions of an 18th century BC palace on Main Hill, Level V, where two separate archives of cuneiform tablets, in total ca. 250, were found. The new excavations have exposed/re-exposed a major part of this structure, and probed the earlier levels VI-IX, all apparently featuring major administrative structures. Finds (as of early 2014) include two cuneiform tablets retrieved in Levels VIIIa and VIIIb. The early Level IX seems to define this era of occupation, but has as yet only been exposed in small areas. After another long interval Shemshara was again occupied in the Medieval period (Levels I-III), and numerous clay tobacco pipes indicate extensive Ottoman period squatter(?) occupation.



The Shemshara Hills (from NW, Oct. 2013)



Excavation on Main Hill, 2014 (UAV photo I. Kisjes)

# Rania Plain: University of Copenhagen Archaeological Project

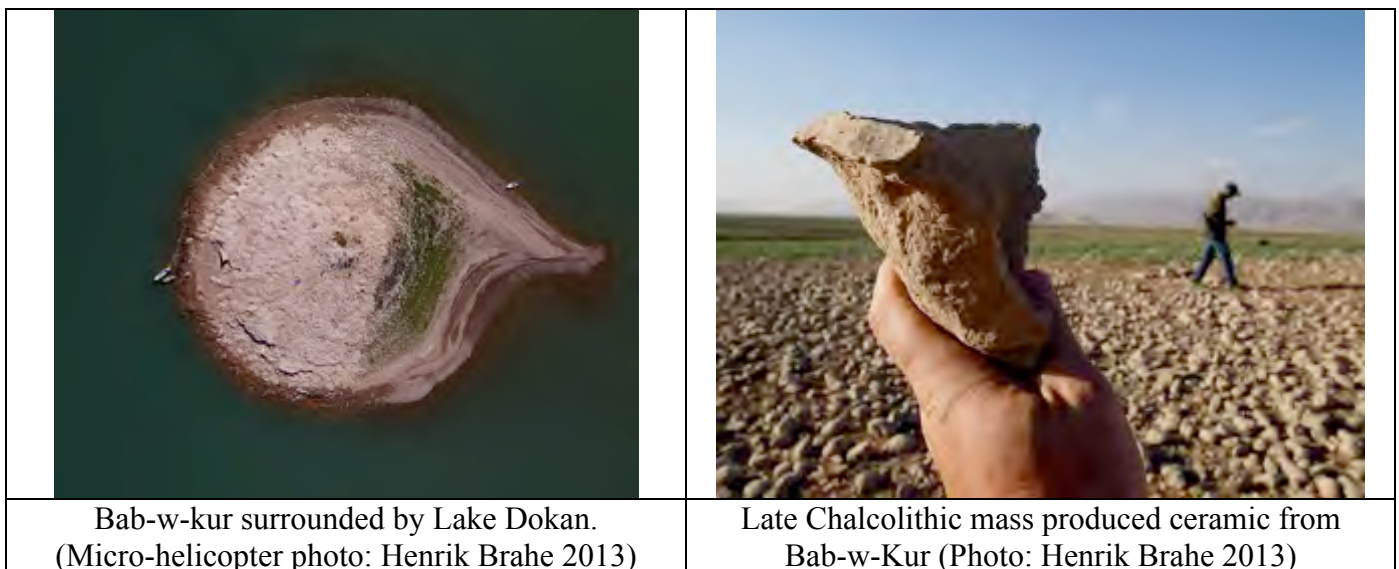
Director: Tim Boaz Bruun Skuldbøl

Affiliation: University of Copenhagen, Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies

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|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation and survey  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Rania Plain  |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | N36,16341, E044,89781  |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://www.facebook.com/babwkur">www.facebook.com/babwkur</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2012   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5+ years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Late Chalcolithic (Excavations), Multi period (Survey)                 |

The University of Copenhagen Archaeological Project on the Rania Plain aims at investigating early urbanism and early complex societies in the eastern margins of Upper Mesopotamia. This research project draws upon explorative and systematic archaeological investigations of early urban settlements in the western foothills of the Central Zagros Mountains. Methods of investigation are diverse and include archaeological excavation, surface survey, geological coring techniques, micro-helicopter photography, X-ray fluorescence inspections, archaeozoological and archaeobotanical analysis. Archaeological investigations began in 2012 by the excavation of the twin sites of Bab-w-Kur, located on the Rania Plain. Both sites lie deep within the inundation zone of the Dokan Dam and are only accessible for a limited period of the year. At Bab-w-Kur we aim at recording surface remains from the Late Chalcolithic 2-4 period (4000-3300 BC) exposed by the dam lake (Lake Dokan). The exposed remains at Bab include a fortification wall that seems to surround the settlement as well as numerous wall segments of large tripartite and monumental buildings, pottery kilns, trash pits and in situ pots, whilst surface scraping and excavation at Kur aim at exploring a large niched building uncovered in 2013 as well as extensive garbage depositional events.



# Rania Plain Survey

Directors: Jesper Eidem, Tim B. B. Skuldbøl

Affiliations: Netherlands Institute for the Near East (Leiden)/University of Amsterdam,  
University of Copenhagen

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|                           |               |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey        |
| <b>Location</b>           | Rania Plain   |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | See map below |
| <b>Website</b>            | -             |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2012          |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 6 + years     |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | All periods   |

The Rania Plain Survey covers a 15 km radius around the site of Tell Shemshara (see separate file), and proceeds as a cooperation between NINO and The University of Copenhagen. As such it is designed to explore the regional setting of the focal sites for the two teams, respectively Tell Shemshara and Bab-u-Kur (see separate file), but also aims to assess and reinvestigate most of the sites within the original Dokan Dam Salvage Area. Prior to completion and closure of the Dokan Dam Iraqi archaeologists surveyed 40 ancient sites on the Rania Plain, and subsequently 1956-60 excavated or sounded 10 selected sites, *inter alia* Basmusian, Deim, Qorashina, Kamarian, and Shemshara (first excavated by a Danish team 1957). The first phase of the new survey covered the area around Bab-W-Kur, and was able to identify and document numerous minor and hitherto unknown sites within a small test area. Subsequent phases are planned for 2014-15. Methodology includes remote sensing, selective detailed mapping, surface collection, and UAV photography. A special emphasis is on flood damage assessment for sites on the edges of Lake Dokan. Soundings and 2nd phase salvage excavation at selected sites are also planned.



The Rania Plain Survey project area



Tell Basmusian surrounded by Lake Dokan (autumn 2013, UAV photo H. Brahe)

# Rowanduz Archaeological Program

Director: Michael D. Danti  
Affiliation: Boston University  
email: mdanti@bu.edu

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavations and Surveys   |
| <b>Location</b>           | Soran, Rowanduz, Sidekan, Mudjesir  |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 36° 39' N, 44° 31' E  |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://www.jezireh.org/balabra_home.html">http://www.jezireh.org/balabra_home.html</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2013  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | All   |

The Rowanduz Archaeological Program (RAP) seeks to advance understanding of the rich and virtually unexplored archaeological resources of the Rowanduz-Soran region of northeastern Iraqi Kurdistan (Erbil Province) through intensive surveys and excavations. RAP's research focus is the early Iron Age (1200–600 BC), although all periods will be thoroughly documented. Textual sources suggest that the northeastern portion of the research region comprised the kingdom of *Musasir/Ardini*, renowned for its temple dedicated to the official state deity of Urartu, the warrior-god Haldi. The kingdom's riches and status as an Urartian religious center led the Assyrian king Sargon II to attack and pillage the area in 714 BC. The southern portion of the research region around the modern city of Rowanduz-Soran marked the northeastern frontier of Assyria. RAP's main objectives are delineating the shifting limits of Assyrian and Urartian state control and the nature of these empires' influence in the Zagros hinterland. RAP promises to contribute significantly to our understanding of this geopolitically prized border region, as well as theory on secondary state formation, early empires, and frontiers.



The Rowanduz Gorge



## Satu Qala Project

Director: Wilfred H. Van Soldt (2009-2011), Cinzia Pappi (2012- )

Affiliation: University of Leiden, University of Leipzig, Salahaddin, University

email: pappi@uni-leipzig.de

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Satu Qala   |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 35° 52' 31" N 44° 41' 50" E   |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~satuqala">http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~satuqala</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2010  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 Years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Iron Age  |

The site of Satu Qala is located ca. 70 km southeast of Erbil (Iraq) on the northern bank of the Lower Zab. In 2008, a team from the University of Leiden first identified the site with the ancient city of Idu, a provincial capital of the Assyrian Empire from the 14th to the 11th centuries BC. The main mound measures roughly 170 by 120 m and is approximately 10 m high. Evidence from pottery and lithics suggests occupation of the site during the late Epipalaeolithic or early Neolithic period (11000–9000 B.C.), the Uruk period, the Late Bronze Age, and the Early Iron Age up to the Parthian and Sasanian periods. The first two seasons of fieldwork (2010-2011), conducted in cooperation with the Salahaddin University of Erbil and the University of Leipzig (Germany), yielded evidence for several subsequent occupation levels. The oldest phase excavated so far is represented by post-Assyrian domestic levels. Epigraphic finds and older materials re-used in later contexts provide evidence for an independent local kingdom which established itself after the collapse of the Middle Assyrian provincial control.



Satu Qala from the East (Satu Qala Project)



Inscription brick of King Ba'aiuri of Idu (Satu Qala Project)

# Shahrizor Survey Project

## Directors

*Environment:* Mark Altaweel - University College of London

*Archaeology* (historic periods): Simone Mühl - LMU

*Archaeology* (prehistoric periods): Olivier Nieuwenhuys - Leiden University,

*Historical Geography:* Karen Radner - University College of London

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey, small scale excavations, environmental research  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Shahrizor Plain  |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | cf. map below  |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://www.shahrizor.org">www.shahrizor.org</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2009   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | -  |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | All  |

The Shahrizor Survey Project is investigating the Shahrizor plain, a wide valley in the headwater region of the Diyala River on the border with Iran, located in the province of Sulaimaniyah in south-eastern Iraqi Kurdistan. The plain is framed by the surrounding foothills and ranges of the Zagros Mountains. Due to its fertility the region is today known as the bread basket of Kurdistan. However, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C. economic texts and royal inscriptions, which document wide-range trading activities as well as expeditions by Mesopotamian kings to this region, emphasize the high agricultural and economic significance of the Shahrizor plain in antiquity. Additionally, its geographic situation between the western Zagros and eastern Mesopotamia made it a hub for traffic between Mesopotamia and the highlands of Iran. The high number of multi-period tell sites suggests that the Shahrizor plain was densely populated throughout prehistoric and historic periods. Nevertheless an analysis of various sites that were only occupied over short periods of time helps us detect changes in settlement patterns. The distribution of these sites sheds light on differences regarding both the organization of rural communities in certain periods as well as the spatial organization of the regional centres and their hinterland. The Shahrizor Survey Project investigates the archaeological sites within the entire Shahrizor plain and the plain itself as a habitat of ancient societies. This habitat can be addressed and reconstructed with geo-archaeological and archaeo-botanical research. The project will also address the regional as well as trans-regional implications that these findings have on our understanding of the settlement patterns and material culture of this area. Our environmental research includes off site coring and soil analysis amongst other methods. High density survey techniques combined with satellite remote sensing will provide a complete picture of settlement patterns. The local pottery sequence is established on the results of other teams' excavations in the plain and small soundings at lower mounds. The processed data will be made available by publication and as web based contents.



Map of the Shahrizor Plain with the extents of the Shahrizor Survey Project



View on the Shahrizor Plain looking towards the southern ridges separating the plain from the Qara Daq valley

# Shanidar

Director: Graeme Barker

Affiliation: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, UK

email: gb314@cam.ac.uk

|                           |                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation and Survey            |
| <b>Location</b>           | Upper Zab valley, Soran province |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 36.8312000 N, 44.2202420E        |
| <b>Website</b>            | www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk           |
| <b>Started in</b>         | March 2014                       |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | Five years                       |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Palaeolithic                     |

One of the most intriguing questions about human evolution relates to why, after surviving for hundreds of thousands of years, Neanderthals died out around 40-30,000 years ago, a time when our own species, *Homo sapiens* ('Modern Humans') was successfully colonising much of the globe. The 1950s excavations of Shanidar Cave by Ralph Solecki showed that it is one of the very few sites in the world that was used by both Modern Humans and Neanderthals, in both cases for both habitation and burials. Global climates were fluctuating profoundly through the period that Neanderthals and Modern Humans were in the Near East, from conditions like today to far colder climates. Was the ability to adapt to abrupt climate change a critical factor in their different evolutionary histories? The original excavations were exemplary for their time, but scientific techniques of dating, climate reconstruction and cultural study have transformed since then. In this new project, a team of archaeologists and geographers is re-excavating the cave and surveying the Palaeolithic archaeology of the surrounding landscape in order to establish climatic frameworks, investigate the daily lives of the Neanderthals and Modern Humans who sheltered in the cave, and understand how they dealt with the changing landscapes that they inhabited.



# Qasr Shemamok-Kilizu Project

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Co-Director M.G. Masetti-Rouault (EPHE-Sorbonne University, Paris)

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|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Approximately midway between Erbil and Kalah-Nimrud   |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 36.105367°, 43.752581°  |
| <b>Website</b>            | in preparation. See <a href="http://archeorient.hypotheses.org/1302">http://archeorient.hypotheses.org/1302</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2011  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Late Bronze, Iron 1 and 2, Hellenistic, Parthian  |

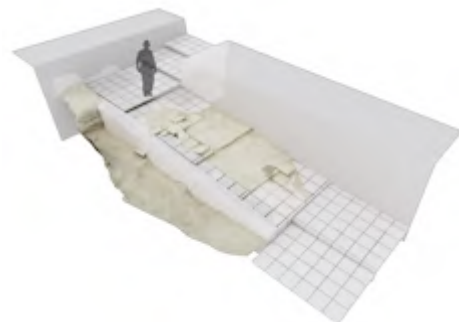
The site of Qasr Shemamok covers an area of approximately 70 ha (citadel and lower town). It is located 25 km South-West of Erbil, midway between Erbil and Nimrud, close to the modern villages of Terjan and Sa'adawa. Explored in the mid-nineteenth century by A.H. Layard and V. Place, then excavated during a single campaign by G. Furlani (Florence University, 1932), the site, identified through inscribed bricks with the ancient Kilizu/Kakzu, is also known from cuneiform texts as an important regional capital city during the Neo-Assyrian period, especially for the reign of Sennacherib. During the first three campaigns (2011-2013), it has been possible to bring to light evidence of the heavy work done by Sennacherib (huge mudbrick terrace with a monumental stairway) in the Citadel, but also to discover the presence of an important late Bronze occupation (middle-Assyrian period, 14<sup>th</sup> century B.C.), with the remains of a palace built by Adad-nirari I. More ancient periods are attested up to now mainly by sherds, at least from the Late Chalcolithic period, while more recent ones are documented by important Hellenistic and Parthian-Sassanid levels.



General view of the citadel



Neo-Assyrian terrace, intruded by Hellenistic pits



Monumental stairway, with Sennacherib's cuneiform inscription, and reconstitution

# Sirwan (Upper Diyala) Regional Project

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|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Germiyan Province, from Darbandikhan to Khanaqin                        |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 35.1128° N, 45.7064° E - 34.3333° N, 45.3833° E                         |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://www.diyalasirwan.info">http://www.diyalasirwan.info</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2012  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Prehistoric to Ottoman  |

The Sirwan (Upper Diyala) regional project is a five years archaeological survey project conducted by the Universities of Bitlis Eren, Glasgow and Arkansas in the area between the towns of Darbandikhan and Khanaqin along the Iranian border. The project aims to investigate the settlement patterns and local cultures of this transitional area between the Zagros Mountains and the central Mesopotamian plains from the Prehistoric times until the Ottoman period. Our main research subjects include the early beginnings of agriculture and animal domestication, sedenterisation, early state formation and cultural interactions between central Mesopotamia and the areas surrounding it. The project aims to study the archaeological material through a multidisciplinary perspective, studying the past environmental conditions, human cultural and biological adaptation, and past socio-economic systems. We are also considering starting small scale excavations at a number of sites in this area to achieve a better understanding of the archaeological stratigraphy and the cultural material. Two fieldwork seasons were conducted in the area in 2012 and 2013, mainly focusing on the plains at the southern edge of our study area, where numerous mounds were detected using satellite images, of which only a few could be surveyed. Most of these sites were multiperiod settlements and our surveys revealed that the area was settled from the Neolithic until the Ottoman Period without any interruptions. The Ottoman towers which lined the Diyala River as a part of a defensive system monitoring the Safavid border and the Sassanian water canal systems need special attention and will be studied in further detail in the future.

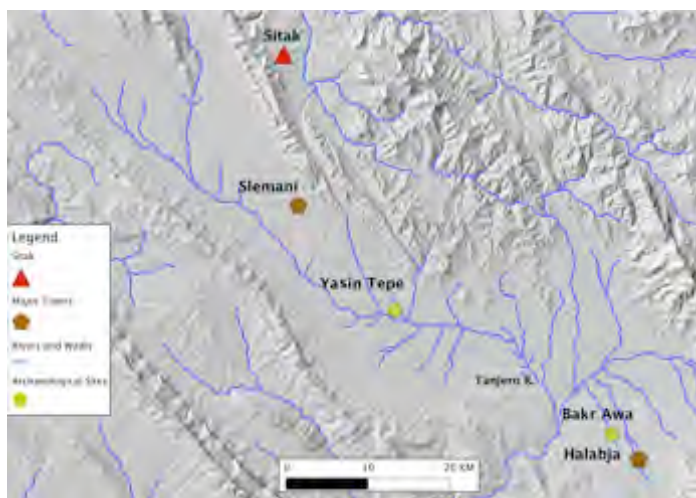


# Tell Sitak

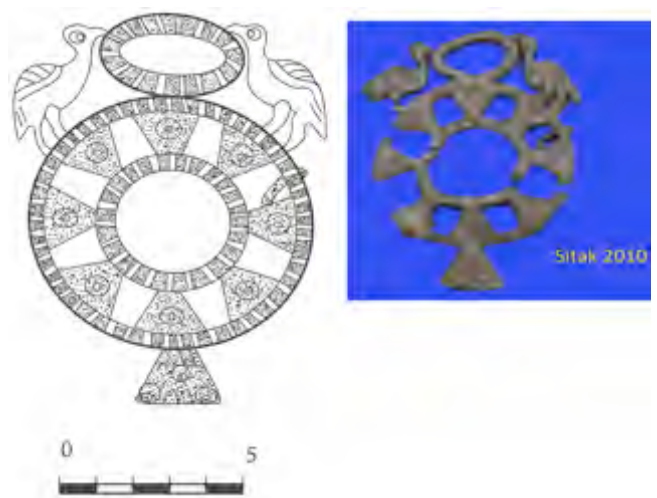
Director: Saber Ahmed Saber and Hussein Hamza  
 Affiliation: Slemani Department of Antiquities  
 email: jwtyara@yahoo.com

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation                                |
| <b>Location</b>           | new suburb of Sitak                       |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | 545534, 3944367 UTM 38N                   |
| <b>Website</b>            | -   |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2010                                      |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 1 season                                  |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Neo-Assyrian, Sassanian; some Hellenistic |

Tell Sitak is a 0.2 ha site located on a hilltop at an elevation of 971 m in a newly built area of the town of Sitak in Sulaimaniya province. The site, which suffered damage in recent conflicts, is naturally fortified by mountains, hilly terrain, and deep wadis. Salvage excavations by the Department of Antiquities of Slemani province were commenced in October 2010. Four 5 x 5 m areas were opened up in addition to four 2 x 2 m soundings. Three main levels were exposed: Level 1 had fragmentary remains of two building phases dating to the Sassanian period, while Level 2 (which was somewhat disturbed) and Level 3 date to the Neo-Assyrian period. No further levels were found below the Neo-Assyrian occupation but the ceramics recovered indicate there must have also been an early Hellenistic settlement. The Assyrian levels preserved the remains of a fortified structure with at least three towers built of large stones and mud brick. There were also the remains of both large and small scale architecture. Some of these buildings had pebble mosaics with rosette patterns; there was also evidence of storage facilities. Small finds included stone grinders, whetstones, weights and loom weights, as well as a terracotta *sikkatu* (wall peg), a frit flower, fragments of blue glass, a small fragment of a cuneiform tablet recording a land sale and an elaborate lead ornament in the form of two rings with two birds sitting on top, possibly part of a ritualistic sceptre.



Map of the region near Tell Sitak showing major archaeological sites and towns in the region.



Lead ornament from Level 1A

# Sulaimania Governorate Archaeological Survey (MAFGS)

Director: Jessica Giraud  
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|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey                                 |
| <b>Location</b>           | Sulaimania Governorate                 |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | cf. map below                          |
| <b>Website</b>            | -                                      |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2012                                   |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | Five years                             |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Palaeolithic to Contemporaneous Period |

The Archaeological survey mission MAFGS is being carried out in the governorate of Sulaimania, an area of c.17 000 km<sup>2</sup>. The main objective of this pioneering mission is an agenda of diachronic regional research, which will allow us to draw out the story of the settlement of the region over the *longue durée*, from the Paleolithic to modern times. The first stage of this programme is an exhaustive inventory of archaeological sites. All types of sites - caves, tells, ancient canals, modern cemeteries, inscriptions, rock reliefs and so on - are entered into this inventory. This forms the basis for constructing an archaeological map that will when completed allow the Kurdistan government to manage and protect the sites inside the governorate. The survey method is based on three stages. The first is a bibliographic study of the archives, with a view to gaining information on sites listed in the *Atlas of the Archaeological Sites in Iraq*. The second stage is based on locating unknown sites through interviewing local inhabitants. After building a preliminary map from these two stages, CORONA and Quickbirds imaging are utilised in order to allow us to intensify and systematise the survey on the ground. All sites are the localized by GPS, described, and collected. The data is then entered into a database and a GIS. At the time of writing, the material collected to date is being processed and studied, with the interpretation of artifacts benefitting from comparison with artifacts from neighbouring regions. The prospections started in 2012 in the regions of Rania, Peshdar and Dukan, over an area of c.800 km<sup>2</sup> : 172 archaeological sites have been localized to date and entered into the database and are currently being dated.



Map showing the area of the work permit and relation to other projects' areas (RK)



The site of Saïd Ahmadan in the of district of Pshdar (photo by J. Giraud)

# Sulaimaniya Museum: Provenance study of cuneiform tablets

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Affiliation: Osaka Gakuin University

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|                           |                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Analysis of cuneiform tablets |
| <b>Location</b>           | Slemani Museum of Antiquities |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | -                             |
| <b>Website</b>            | -                             |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2013                          |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 4 years                       |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Historical cuneiform periods  |

This study aims to collaborate with the Slemani Museum of Antiquities by carrying out scientific analysis on cuneiform tablets in order to clarify the material features of clay used for the tablets. Data obtained by the examination has the potential to add information about their provenance as well as indicators of environmental changes in the past. The preliminary examination has been conducted against clay tablets in the Yale Babylonian Collection as well as those in the British Museum.





## Surezha Excavations – Iraqi Kurdistan Chalcolithic Project (IKCP)

Directors: Gil Stein and Abbas Alizadeh

Affiliation: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

email: gstein@uchicago.edu

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Excavation  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Erbil Plain, 20 km south of Erbil on Makhmur Road           |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | N. 399555.0694, E. 3984361.1196.                            |
| <b>Website</b>            | -   |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2013  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 5 years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | Ubaid, LC1, LC2, LC3, LC4/Uruk, Seleucid, Parthian, Islamic |

Surezha is a 28-31 ha site with a 16 m high, 2.8 ha. conical high mound surrounded by a sloping terrace and lower town. The high mound is almost entirely Late Chalcolithic in date, with later occupations in the lower town. The site was first identified and documented by the Erbil Plain Archaeological Survey (EPAS) as site 27. Oriental Institute excavations and controlled surface collections at Surezha began in 2013 as part of a planned 5 year project aimed at defining the local Late Chalcolithic archaeological sequence for the Erbil plain. Excavations focus on the Chalcolithic high mound, with additional controlled surface collections and soundings in the Lower Town. The 2013 excavations on the high mound have documented a continuous Late Chalcolithic sequence from the LC-1 through the LC-3 periods. In addition, surface finds of brown painted ceramics and small finds such as 6 baked clay "mullers" indicate an Ubaid occupation underlying the LC-1. Surface collections also suggest a possible Halaf occupation preceding the Ubaid, and an LC-4 (=Late Middle Uruk) occupation as well, based on reserved slip ceramics and bevel rim bowls (BRBs). Calibrated AMS radiocarbon dates for the Chalcolithic deposits excavated in 2013 range from 4790-3640 BC. One C14 sample from deposits near the top of the mound yielded a Middle Bronze Age date of 1530-1430 BC. The most recent date from the lower town derives from a sample found in association with an Ottoman pipe fragment and dated to 1700-1830 AD/CE.



Painted Ubaid sherds from Surezha

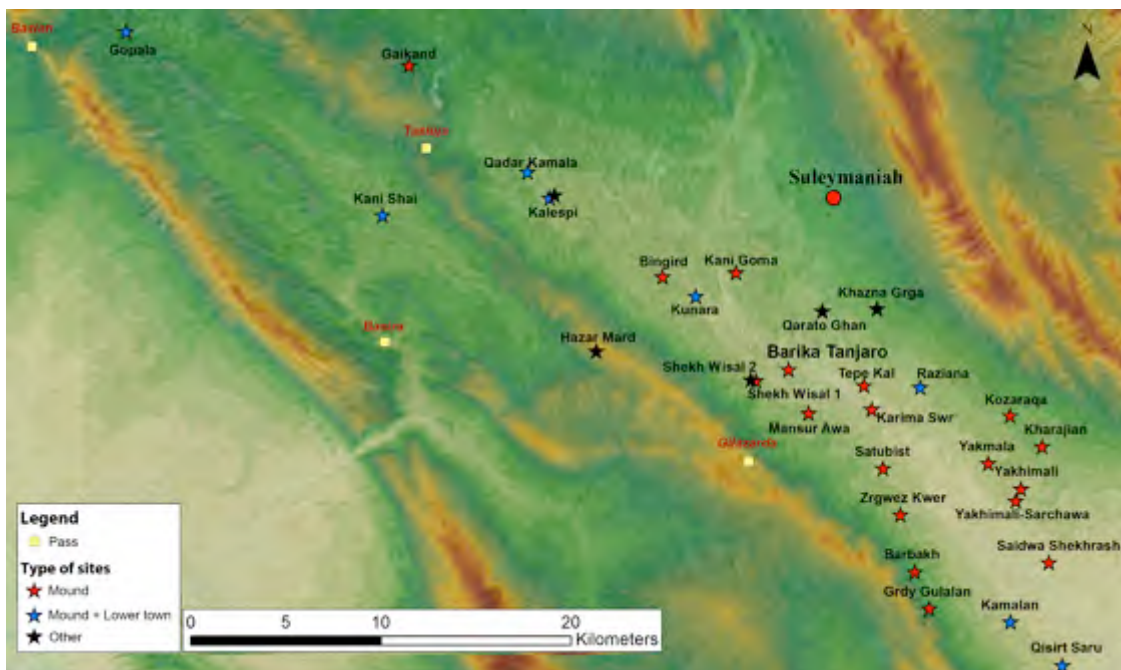
Ubaid period baked clay "mullers" from Surezha.

# Upper Tanjaro Archaeological Survey

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|                           |                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey of the Upper Tanjaro     |
| <b>Location</b>           | Sulaimania Province             |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | -                               |
| <b>Website</b>            | -                               |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2011                            |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | 10 years                        |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | From Hassuna to Islamic periods |

The Tanjaro valley is located near Sulaimania in the Zagros mountains between the Azmar and Baranand ranges. Together with the Sirwan river, the Tanjaro gives birth to the Diyala. Our survey is intended as part of the archaeological map of Iraqi Kurdistan, a project in progress and being carried out by a number of different teams at the request and initiative of the Kurdish Ministry of Municipalities and Tourism. 31 sites were mapped in 2011; they range in size from 1 to 7 hectares and are between 10 and 20 m high. Most are just a single mound but 10 include a lower town. Sherds from the Neolithic (Hassuna period) up until the Islamic periods were collected. This survey constitutes the very first step for the study of the Upper Tanjaro. At the same time the excavations are being undertaken at a number of carefully chosen sites in the region (Kunara, Bingird and Kalespi) within the frame of the French Archaeological Expedition at Peramagron (see under Peramagron, above) and the results of the survey will undoubtedly be improved as a reliable sequence emerges in the coming seasons of these excavations.



# Upper Greater Zab Archaeological Reconnaissance

Director: Rafał Koliński

Affiliation: Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland

email: kolinski@amu.edu.pl

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of Project</b>    | Survey  |
| <b>Location</b>           | Greater Zab Valley  |
| <b>Coordinates</b>        | cf. map below   |
| <b>Website</b>            | <a href="http://archo.amu.edu.pl/ugzar/indexen.htm">http://archo.amu.edu.pl/ugzar/indexen.htm</a>   |
| <b>Facebook</b>           | <a href="https://www.facebook.com/pages/UGZAR-Upper-Greater-Zab-Archaeological-Reconnaissance/108602636000466">https://www.facebook.com/pages/UGZAR-Upper-Greater-Zab-Archaeological-Reconnaissance/108602636000466</a> |
| <b>Started in</b>         | 2012  |
| <b>Estimated duration</b> | Six years   |
| <b>Main periods</b>       | All   |

The project “The Settlement History of Iraqi Kurdistan” is being carried out in an area of c. 3 000 km<sup>2</sup> located on the eastern and western bank of the Greater Zab river. The aim of this pioneering research is to collect and analyse evidence on the heritage sites located in the study area, to increase knowledge of the history of Iraqi Kurdistan, including its settlement development and the potential for further research there. The outcome of the project will consist of an archaeological map of the surveyed area with the location of the identified sites, from Palaeolithic to the 20<sup>th</sup> cent. AD. Sites of all kinds, settlements, cemeteries, castles, civil structures (canals, aqueducts, bridges), art monuments (rock reliefs), and inscriptions will be carefully recorded, documented and dated by archaeological finds. Last, but not least, the information collected by the project team will be passed to the Kurdish authorities to allow for the creation of an effective heritage management policy. The project will be carried out in three stages. The first stage consists of analyses of the available satellite imagery of the area, from the 1960s on. The identified potential archaeological sites are then verified by reference to information from archaeological and geographical publications on the area as well as from accounts of European travellers. A very important reference is the *Atlas of the Archaeological Sites in Iraq*, which published information on archaeological sites kept in the archives of the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage prior to 1976. Most important, however, is the second stage of the execution of the project – the fieldwork in Kurdistan. During two-month-long field seasons the list of tentative sites is verified in the field, and additional sites discovered from interviews with local population and field walking. All the sites and monuments are fully documented by topographical surveying, photography and video, and their location recorded by GPS. Collected surface pottery material and other finds are used to determine the date of identified monuments. All the information is recorded in a database and published on the internet as “Site Cards”. The third stage of the research comprises the interpretation of the collected data and comparison to similar data retrieved from neighbouring regions.



Map showing the area of the work permit and relation of the other projects' areas (RK)



Site S080, Girdi Çeme Gawre East of Daratu (photo by D. Piasecki)