

NOTICE FOR EVENTS

Report on Los Angeles meetings – January 3 - March, 2023 Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati

Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati spent two full months on extensive activities related to the [Cybernetica Mesopotamica](#) project, and were joined at the end by Deputy Director Federico Buccellati. We worked closely with [IIMAS](#) Associate Director Mary Syancavage. We give here a concise description of the major activities during this period.



Front row: Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, Giorgio Buccellati, James Walker (online), Mary Stancavage

Back row: Ronida Cheko, Alisée Devillers, Hoorig Sarkissian, Federico Buccellati

Missing: Ellen McIlvain

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1 The A311 lab at the UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology

The UCLA Mesopotamian lab, under the direction of Giorgio Buccellati and Mariyn Kelly-Buccellati, housed in room A311 of the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, is the USA hub of the project. The picture shows us at a meeting with the local staff (see 1.4 below). Our work in the lab entailed an extensive re-organization of the material, as follows.

1.1 The archival material in the lab

We organized the archival material from [Terqa](#) and [Moza](#) in three major categories:

- the paper archives, showing on the shelves in the photo;
- the visual archive (photos and videos) largely in cartons partly visible from under the table);
- old digital data (floppies, ZIP, JAZ, CDs and even tapes) in the cabinet in the back.

One of Mary's tasks will be to inventory these materials (especially visual and digital),

and to organize a systematic digitization process.

She will be joined by a UCLA colleague, who is a long time friend of the project: Kristine Martirosyan, the head of the Armenian lab in the Cotsen. She has much experience in the rea, and will help in our project.

Hoorig, Ronida (in the picture) and Ellen will work on the scanning and on the filing of the data on the server.

With regard in particular to the visuals, we renewed an arrangement with the Cotsen Digital Lab through its Director Deidre Whitmore: accordingly, we will use the scanner which we had originally purchased for the Digital Lab.

1.2 The server

The project server is housed in the lab (not visible in the picture).

We have been in touch with Deidre Whitmore about arranging for a long term digital archiving of our websites through a UCLA system designed for this purpose. We will prepare a sample set of files as a test.

1.3 Packing and shipping of archival and study materials

We packed the scholarly archival and study materials that were not directly related to the excavations. It was a total fo some 200 cartons, that are being shipped to Italy for us to work on with the local staff. This was a major enterprise, since the material had to be inventoried before packing.

1.4 Undergraduates

We met a few times with the local staff, especially with the undergraduates, to explain in some detail the larger scope of our work. Next year we plan to expand their number: Ronida will gradute this Spring, and Hoorig will graduate next year. They will help us recruit some other students who may take over from them.

2 Seminar with Federico Buccellati, Mary Stancavage, Jim Walker

This seminar, directly related to the [Cybernetica Mesopotamica](#) project, is reported [separately](#) by Mary on this website.

3 Lectures

We gave four lectures at UCLA:

- on the [origins of monotheism](#) at a large undergraduate class in the history of religion

- on the excavations at Urkesh and the broader significance of the *Cybernetica Mesopotamica* project, together with a colleague in neuro-psychology, at a public lecture for the [Cotsen Institute of Archaeology](#);
- on the [Digital Discourse theory](#) to colleagues and graduate students in archaeology;
- on the [social impact of the Urkesh project](#) to the Emeriti association.

4 Publications

We completed for publication the following articles:

- [“The density of types. A website approach to archaeological typology”](#)
- [“Un sistema multiplanare in atto. Lo Urkesh Global Record”](#)
- [“Umanesimo digitale. I frammenti in-discorso con il tutto”](#)

5 Work on [cyb-mes.net](#)

Giorgio Buccellati worked extensively on the section of this website that deals with the [history of the project](#). This was facilitated by the work on the archives, since much of the material to be covered was found in those files.

6 Work on the Ceramics digital book

Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati worked on various aspects of this book, particularly on the introductions to the various sections. She also worked on the material from individual excavation units, and in particular [A15](#).

7 Meeting with John Hayes about textual material

We had scheduled a meeting with John Hayes from Berkeley to work on the textual material of our project and on the bibliography of [Akkadian linguistics](#), but for personal reasons this did not take place. We are planning for a virtual meeting in April, in order to assess the progress being made and the issues that remain open.

8 Heritage

We made contact with Alisée Devillers, a Belgian post-doc at UCLA with regard to our heritage project. She has worked in Egypt and Iraq, and has a special interest in the contemporary re-appropriation of the past. We introduced her to the details of our work, and put her in contact with Hiba Qassar and Yasmine Mahmoud.

9 IIMAS trustees

An important event was the meeting of the [Board of Trustees of IIMAS](#), held at the Steinmetz meeting facility in Manhattan Beach. The major focus of the meeting was on the Balzan project [Cybernetica Mesopotamica](#) and on the Kaplan project on the public archaeology at Mozan. The budget was more complex than usual, and was presented by the Chairman of the Board, Jack Kessler, and carefully reviewed by the trustees.

10 50th anniversary of IIMAS

The year 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Institute. At the Trustees meeting, it was proposed that an effort be made to establish special endowment funds that would provide lasting benefits to the Institute. Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati have pedged a special Fund of \$60,000; they are also in touch with James Harris, the son of our deceased trustee Arlene Harris about an fund in her name; and they have talked to Martin Sheen about establishing a fund in honor of Msgr. Sheridan, who also was an IIMAS trustee.

11 Martin Sheen and the Rimini Meeting

Martin Sheen was prevented from attending the trustees meeting, but the three Buccellatis had dinner with him at the house of IIMAS trustee Ernestine Elster. Among other issues, they spoke about a new project that Martin is undertaking: the people at the Rimini Meeting (where we had three very successful exhibits) had expressed an interest in having Martin come to the Meeting for a special program relating to his work, so Giorgio will be in touch with them to facilitate their getting in touch with each other.