



## PREFACE

Within the scope of the Austrian special research programme SCIEEM 2000 (“Synchronisation of the Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium BC”) a small conference with the title “Mesopotamian Dark Age Revisited” took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2002, which was organised by the project 1405 “Chronological Data in Mesopotamia”.

SCIEEM 2000’s projected and primary goal is to synchronise chronologies for the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium of the regions in the Eastern Mediterranean and to create a definite chronological framework for its history. The project “Chronological Data in Mesopotamia” focuses on information mainly deriving from written sources dealing with historical events and rulers of Mesopotamia and its surrounding areas, namely Syria, Anatolia, the Levant and Elam. By establishing reliable connections between these regions, correlating all data relevant for relative and absolute chronology and synchronising the known “facts” it is hoped to offer new insights and results in respect to chronological issues.

The aim of this conference was to bring together various colleagues specialized in chronology and to discuss (new) sources, research results presented and their compatibility with the recently proposed “New Chronology” by GASCHÉ *et al.* 1998<sup>1</sup> by taking a closer look at the so-called “Dark Age” (period starting after the fall of the Babylon I Dynasty). Being aware of the numerous problems and shortcomings of the textual evidence in this respect, we still wanted to try to approach a reconstruction of chronology of the

2<sup>nd</sup> mill. BC by defining the “Dark Age” once again. In the course of this the material’s overall importance for the process of historical and chronological reconstruction was presented and discussed.

Our main objective in this workshop was to evaluate sources from Mesopotamia and its so-called peripheral areas shortly before, during and slightly after the “Dark Age” and to possibly overcome and define this period of darkness by chronological means. We tried to lay an emphasis on the documentation and history of the regions adjacent to core Mesopotamia, i.e. Anatolia and Syria, concentrating mainly on philological evidence, since synchronisms disclose contacts and links are important to refine absolute chronology.

It is hoped that the conference has helped disclose valuable new links, interconnections and results concerning the understanding of Mesopotamian chronology, also judged from the angle of “peripheral areas” within Ancient Near Eastern Studies. We believe to have collected seven valuable contributions covering different aspects for chronological research in this volume, which may clearly show the abundant work still to be done in order to find reliable answers to chronological questions.

We should like to thank the Austrian Academy of Sciences for sponsoring this conference. For organisational help we thank Angela Schwab.

The Editors

<sup>1</sup> GASCHÉ, H. *et al.* 1998, *Dating the Fall of Babylon, A Reappraisal of Second-Millennium Chronology (A Joint Ghent-Chicago-Harvard Project)*, Mesopotamian History and Environment Series II Memoirs IV 4, Ghent.



