

EcritUr

La ville d'Ur d'après les textes du premier quart du II^e millénaire av. J.-C.

The City of Ur according to the written sources of the first quarter of the IInd millennium B.C.E.

Project summary

Tell al-Muqayyar in southern Iraq is one of the major archaeological sites of Ancient Mesopotamia. Identified in 1854 as the ancient city of Ur, it has been briefly excavated in 1918-19 before a joint expedition was set up by the British Museum of London and the University Museum of Philadelphia. From 1922 to 1934, L. Woolley carried out excavations that proved extremely fruitful, providing information for historical phases spanning from the protohistoric period to hellenistic times. The objective of “EcritUr” is devoted to the first quarter of the 2nd millennium BCE, a period which has been already subject to various studies but about which there is still much to learn. The uncovering of two residential sectors (areas EM and AH) in Ur provides ample information on the inhabitants of the city during that period; moreover, the excavation of the Moon-God (Nanna/Sin) great sanctuary (named Ekišnugal) and of other shrines allows to perceive how these religious organisations took part in the political, legal, economic and social life of the city.

The Old Babylonian royal inscriptions and literary texts discovered at Ur have been the subject of much work, the archival documents however were published only as hand copies and never thorough edited. Therefore, the first objective of “EcritUr” is to give an electronic edition of these 1500 texts, after collation of the originals; this will be realized within the “Archibab” database which allows for the embedment of a lot of metadata. This corpus will be increased by the publication of still unpublished tablets kept in the British Museum or at Yale. This will allow a better understanding of the new tablets that are and will be found at Ur by the new mission directed since 2015 by E. Stone (Stony Brook University), who chose the scientific coordinator of the proposed project as epigraphist of her expedition.

Once the texts will be properly edited, the information derived from them will be subject to pluridisciplinary approaches according to the areas of specialization of the project's members. Monographs will be devoted to the study of the syllabary thanks to a newly developed tool (TXM), as well as to the evaluation of the levels of literacy including a reappraisal of schools and schooling. Other will focus on the management and accounting practices, the archival practices and the juridical life; special attention will be paid to the status of women. The religious calendar and the pattern of offerings will be investigated. Other studies will concern historical geography, political history as well as environment, economical and religious life. During the last months of the project, an international workshop followed by a colloquium will be organized. Eventually, the scientific coordinator will publish a book tentatively entitled *Portrait of a Mesopotamian City: Ur during the first quarter of the 2nd Millennium B.C.*

The creation of new digital tools to exploit the wealth of data hidden in the cuneiform documentation becomes evermore important. Besides the scientific outcomes, the proposed project will also be of relevance for Assyriology as such: the “Archibab”-site is an important digital tool with high international reputation and the way “EcritUr” will benefit *from* and *to* “Archibab” can be seen as a very good example of the possibility to make long term research compatible with the financing of projects of limited duration.

Making the wealth of information available about Ur and its region as well as publishing the tablets newly discovered, and providing a new picture of one of the major Mesopotamian cities is a challenge and at the same time an exciting prospect. The experience of the research team, the complementarity of its members' skills, its close relationships with foreign teams, and the well-defined nature of the project are elements that ensure the feasibility of the operation within the planned 36 months.

Summary table of persons involved in the project:

<i>Partner</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>First name</i>	<i>Current position</i>	<i>Involvement (person.month)*</i>	<i>Role & responsibilities in the project (4 lines max)</i>
<i>Collège de France</i>	<i>CHARPIN</i>	<i>Dominique</i>	<i>Professeur</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>Scientific coordinator</i>
<i>Collège de France</i>	<i>JACQUET</i>	<i>Antoine</i>	<i>Chercheur</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>Assistant coordinator</i>
<i>CNRS</i>	<i>ZIEGLER</i>	<i>Nele</i>	<i>Directeur de recherche</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>Edition of texts; historical geography; cultural and religious studies</i>
<i>CNRS</i>	<i>BATTINI</i>	<i>Laura</i>	<i>Chargée de recherche</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>Archaeology</i>
<i>CNRS</i>	<i>MARTI</i>	<i>Lionel</i>	<i>Chargé de recherche</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>Edition of texts; archaeology</i>
<i>EPHE</i>	<i>GUICHARD</i>	<i>Michaël</i>	<i>Directeur d'études</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>Edition of texts; Sumerian and Akkadian literature</i>
<i>EPHE</i>	<i>DÉMARE-LAFONT</i>	<i>Sophie</i>	<i>Directeur d'études</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Legal history</i>
<i>EHESS</i>	<i>CHAMBON</i>	<i>Grégory</i>	<i>Directeur d'études</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>Edition of texts; Cultural history</i>
<i>Université de Lille 3-SHS</i>	<i>LACAMBRE</i>	<i>Denis</i>	<i>Maître de conférences</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>Edition of texts; Archaeology</i>
<i>SUB-TOTAL</i>				<i>144</i>	
<i>ANR/Collège de France</i>			<i>Post-docs</i>	<i>60</i>	
<i>TOTAL</i>				<i>204</i>	

I. Proposal's context, positioning and objective(s)

I.1. Objectives and scientific hypotheses

Tell al-Muqayyar in southern Iraq is one of the major archaeological sites of Ancient Mesopotamia. Identified in 1854 as the ancient city of Ur, it has been briefly excavated in 1918 and 1919 before a joint expedition was set up by the British Museum of London and the University Museum of Philadelphia. From 1922 to 1934, L. Woolley and his team carried out excavations that proved extremely fruitful, providing information for historical phases spanning from the protohistoric period to hellenistic times. However, Ur was, so to say, a victim of its own success. First, because attention was drawn in the first place to the most tremendous discoveries: the royal tombs of the 3rd millennium B.C. being the most typical example, the interest they received from the beginning having been renewed by an exhibition that was shown all around the USA between 1998 and 2007 (Zettler & Horn 1998) before their definitive display was presented to the public of the University Museum of Philadelphia in the autumn of 2009. Other periods, less rich in prestigious objects, did not draw attention so strongly. Some of the reasons that motivated Woolley are no longer relevant, for instance his search of traces of the biblical Flood. It was also in the hope of finding traces of Abraham that he undertook an extensive clearance of two neighbourhoods from the beginning of the second millennium. The interpretation of the narratives in the book of Genesis has changed, but this of course does not diminish the interest of what has been excavated. Moreover, data were so abundant that their publication could only be carried out in a selective and incomplete way. Woolley's attitude was assuredly exemplary for his time: at the end of each of the 12 excavation campaigns, he published a preliminary report in *Antiquaries Journal* (*AJ* III, 1923 through *AJ* XIV, 1934) and he spent the years that followed the end of field operations writing the final reports that appeared in form of 8 large volumes in the series *Ur Excavations* (UE), published as of 1934. The last volume to appear (UE VII) was published in 1976, sixteen years after his death. Only a few archaeological missions from the interwar period in the Near East published their discoveries so quickly and completely. At the same time, the epigraphists of Woolley's team published the texts in the series *Ur Excavations, Texts* (UET): no fewer than 9 volumes were devoted, from 1928 on, to the publication of the thousands of texts discovered on the field, that can be dated from the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C. to the hellenistic period (Charpin in press). The fact remains that the scientific standards of the time were not ours and that some phases of the history of the site deserve a renewed and thorough examination. From that perspective, the first quarter of the 2nd millennium B.C. proves to be quite interesting, what the recent (and disappointing) synthetic study of H. Crawford about Ur (Crawford 2015) does not reflect (cf. Charpin 2016).

The uncovering of two residential sectors (EM and AH areas) in Ur provided ample information on the inhabitants of the city during that period (Woolley & Mallowan 1976); moreover, the excavation of the Moon-God (Nanna/Sin) great sanctuary (named Ekišnugal) and of other shrines allowed to perceive how these religious organisations took part in the political, legal, economic and social life of the city. Two studies have already been devoted to the city of Ur in the first centuries of the 2nd millennium, the first one taking a religious and cultural approach (Charpin 1986) and the second one adopting a social and economical perspective (Van De Mierop 1992). These two complementary synthetic studies, today respectively 31 and 25-year-old, already stressed the complementarity between the rich written documentation and archaeological data from Ur. One of the main interests of this site is indeed that it was relatively spared by illicit diggers at the beginning of the 20th century, unlike other great Old Babylonian capital cities like Isin or, more dramatically, Larsa. After the first explorations by Taylor in 1854 and Campbell-Thomson and Hall in 1918 and 1919, the excavation campaigns led by L. Woolley from 1922 to 1934 covered in particular levels dated from

the beginning of the 2nd millennium, in 3 main areas: the sector of the great sanctuary (ziggurat, temple of Nanna, Gipar-ku, stores of the Ganun-mah...) and two living quarters (EM and AH). The results of the excavations were carefully recorded but most of them still remain to be thoroughly exploited. Indeed, data published by L. Woolley and his assistant of the time in their final report are only a selection among a much richer material (Woolley & Mallowan 1976). Since 2012, the UrOnline project led jointly by the British Museum and the University Museum of Philadelphia, where the archives of the joint expedition are kept, is aimed at reviewing and publishing the whole archaeological documentation from Woolley's excavations on the project's website (<http://www.ur-online.org>). The EcritUr project is meant as complementary, by giving access to the textual documentation that is still hardly accessible, despite its quantitative and qualitative richness.

A majority of texts are archive documents, most of which were published 65 years ago in UET V, a volume that counts a number of 883 texts (Figulla & Martin 1953). The book includes a catalogue, some indexes and plates on which the (highly standardised) copies of the tablets are reproduced. The order in which the texts were published is strictly typological: “letters”, “family rights” (marriage contracts, adoptions, etc.), “sales”, “rent and hires” etc. No indication was given about the findspots of the tablets: this information was only made available in 1976, with the publication of UE VII (Woolley & Mallowan 1976) and the two books of Charpin (1986) and Van De Mieroop (1992) could happily take it into account. Since then, the written documentation increased significantly: 332 archive documents were added to the 1119 texts already published: G. Spada (2007a) gave an edition of 142 new texts with photographs; J. Black & G. Spada (2008) published 266 texts (among which 190 previously unpublished) in form of autograph copies, without edition or commentary. That increased the total by about 30 % over the past 25 years. Curiously enough, these two volumes have never been reviewed and their content has been hardly exploited to date.

Most of the royal inscriptions have been published for a long time: original publications can be found in the form of autograph copies and catalogue in UET I (= Gadd & Legrain 1928 [41 inscriptions from the kings of the Isin, Larsa and Babylon dynasties]) and UET VIII (= Sollberger 1965 [37 inscriptions]). All of them have been edited by D. R. Frayne (1990) who also gathered certain references together, that were only duplicates of each other, and added a number of texts, including some inscriptions from the ancient excavations by Taylor. The total number of Old Babylonian royal inscriptions from Ur was then 74, excluding seal impressions of royal servants and votive objects offered for the life of the king, that some authors sometimes include into the corpus. A bilingual inscription of Hammu-rabi, known only through some fragments of a stone stele (UET I 146) was recently re-edited (Van De Mieroop 2011: 309-317) and a long inscription of Sin-iddinam of Larsa was added to the available corpus (Volk 2011). This corpus is twofold: on the one hand, one deals with master-copies of the inscriptions (cones and prisms of foundation, inscribed bricks, stone steles, etc.); one part of these artifacts was found *in situ*, another part in secondary contexts. On the other hand, the text of some royal inscriptions can be found on clay tablets, the status of which is not always obvious: they may be copies produced in the framework of school training, but they can also be drafts of new inscriptions to be carved subsequently (Charpin 2006: 153-154; Van De Mieroop 2011: 329-331).

Finally, a large number of “literary” texts that were often found mixed with archive documents, constitute real manuscript holdings that allow study of the level of literacy of their copyists and owners and so, of the school curriculum that led them to their scribal or clerical functions (Charpin 1986). To the two volumes UET VI/1-2 due to C. J. Gadd and S. N. Kramer (1963 and 1966), which provided copies of 414 literary texts, many other “school” texts were added more recently, in UET VII (Gurney 1974) and mainly in UET VI/3 (Shaffer 2006), bringing their total number to 928, as well as collations and commentaries by M.-C. Ludwig on UET VI/1 and 2 (Ludwig 2009). The large majority of the tablets published in the three volumes of UET VI are dated from the Old Babylonian period.

As one can see, the publication of texts was made according to periods and genres, without taking findspots into account. It was one of the main strengths of the book on the *Clergé d'Ur* to gather texts by findspots, whatever their genre, and to offer an edition of most of them (Charpin 1986); however, that book only covers the EM area (as well as the “school” no. 1 Broad Street in the AH area). In his study of the AH area, M. Van De Mieroop did also gather texts house by house, but limited his corpus to the archival documents and did not provide any edition of the texts (Van De Mieroop 1992).

In addition, our approach of urban life has been refined, notably through more and more sophisticated archaeological analysis (Battini 1999, Brusasco 1999/2000 and 2015). And the way that textual data can be used to get a better understanding of domestic architecture and building techniques can surely be improved (Robson 1996; Charpin 2009).

On the basis of these sources, the EcritUr project aims at studying the city of Ur over a specified period of time, i.e. the two and a half centuries following the fall of the 3rd Dynasty of Ur in 2004 B.C. up to the end of the Babylonian rule in 1738 B.C. At that time, Ur had lost its status as a political capital, but remained however an important city as regards economics and religion, and was quite proud of its prestigious history. It first belonged to the kingdom of Isin, then to the kingdom of Larsa, until the conquests of Hammu-rabi attached it to the kingdom of Babylon for 25 years, from 1763 to 1738 B.C. These two and a half centuries are all at once characterised by continuities and changes that remain to be thoroughly analysed. It is indeed possible to come back now to the statement made in the Introduction of the *Clergé d'Ur* (Charpin 1986), p. 18: “Il n'était pas question, à partir d'un tel corpus, de présenter un tableau d'ensemble de la ville d'Ur à l'époque paléo-babylonienne, comme on avait espéré un moment pouvoir le faire, pour plusieurs raisons. D'abord parce qu'un tel projet, annoncé dès 1968 par I. Diakonoff de l'Université de Leningrad, s'est concrétisé dans un ouvrage dont la publication imminente a été annoncée à la Rencontre de Paris en 1980, mais qui est toujours actuellement inédit. Surtout, parce qu'une véritable synthèse n'est pas possible, en raison des lacunes trop criantes de nos sources.” Whereas the book announced by I. M. Diakonoff (cf. Diakonoff 1985) was finally published in Russian (Diakonoff 1990), the significant increase in written documentation, the opening of the archives of the archaeological expedition and the use of IT tool to a level that could not even be imagined 30 years ago now allow to reconsider conducting “une synthèse sur la ville d'Ur à l'époque paléo-babylonienne, consacrée à l'étude de l'urbanisme, de l'économie, de la société et de la vie politique et religieuse de cette métropole” (Charpin 1980, p. V).

It is then a quite suitable time now for studying extensively what we know about the city of Ur, especially thanks to the written documentation dated from the first quarter of the 2nd millennium B.C., which is all at once very abundant and hard to access.

I.2. Originality and relevance in relation to the state of the art

It could be considered that studying a city and its neighbourhoods in a given era is after all a rather traditional approach. We know how decisive that kind of studies has been as concerns the knowledge of the Old Regime in France. Let us only recall the importance of the crucial dissertation of P. Goubert on *Beauvais et le Beauvaisis de 1600 à 1730* (Goubert 1960) or the major study of E. Le Roy Ladurie about Montaignou and Occitania from 1294 to 1324 (Le Roy Ladurie 1975). Such works may seem old fashioned as regards French history. However, it must be stressed that such monographs are very rare in the field of Ancient Near Eastern studies. Far too often general overviews (e.g. Van De Mieroop 1997) lack such comprehensive case studies to build on, hence some general considerations lacking material to be convincing. Moreover, the few monographs that exist are often both methodologically unsatisfactory and outdated, as for example the monograph by R. Harris on Old Babylonian Sippar (Harris 1975). And yet, there is ample data allowing such studies. We are in a rather paradoxical situation where there is a large gap between textual sources and synthetic studies:

what is missing is the two intermediate levels that are editions of texts and case studies. To take another example, the same is true with regard to the last synthetic study on economic life in northern Babylonia in the early Old Babylonian period (Goddeeris 2002): most of the texts used by the author have never been edited (cf. Charpin 2005b: 163-175). As concerns Ur especially, the contrast is striking between the royal inscriptions and literary texts on the one hand, and the archival documents on the other: while the first two categories of texts have been well edited, most of the archival documents have only been published in the form of autograph copies accompanied by catalogues and indexes, but never transliterated nor translated. Several projects were initiated to remedy that situation:

- a PhD thesis was started by H. Farber at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago at the end of the 70's, but was never completed;
- work on the texts from Ur was carried out by K. Butz at the Freie Universität Berlin under the supervision of J. Renger; it led to the publication of four important articles all along the 70's (Butz 1973, 1978-79, 1979, 1980), but the texts on which this work is based remained unedited after the premature death of this scholar;

- a project was initiated at Columbia University by M. Van De Mierop, in collaboration with S. Richardson and S. Garfinkle, which aimed at the publication of a book *Private Archives from Ur* (cf. Richardson 2005: 47 n. 22). It is significant that M. Van De Mierop, in spite of his synthetic study published in 1992 — or rather due to it —, felt a need to provide subsequently an edition of the texts on which his book was based. In more than one instance, by the way, it has been noted that his problematic interpretations could be solved with an accurate edition of certain texts (Charpin 2005a: 26 and n. 60; 32 and n. 85; 33 and n. 87). However, that project was ultimately shelved (personal com. M. Van De Mierop, New York, April 2013).

In other words, it has become urgent that a project may cover these needs that have often been felt by scholars but never gave rise to the development of the necessary tools or to the publication of studies allowed by the available sources.

But there is more. Unlike many other sites in the area, the city of Ur was relatively unaffected by illegal diggings after 1991 (Al-Hamdani 2008). A new archaeological mission resumed excavations on the site in fall of 2015 (Stony Brook University, NY); they should be carried on in the next years, a new season having just begun as we write this application. These excavations are particularly aimed at continuing the uncovering of the AH residential sector. The project holder has been chosen as field epigraphist by E. C. Stone, the director of the expedition, in which he already took part in 2015 (Charpin 2015a and Charpin ip). E. C. Stone and P. Zimansky presented the main results already available at the 10th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (ICAANE) of Vienna (Austrian Academy of Sciences, April 25th-29th, 2016). A more detailed presentation was also given at the 62e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (RAI) in Philadelphia (“Ur in the Twenty-First Century CE”, University of Pennsylvania, 11-15 Juillet 2016), by E. C. Stone as regards archaeology (“New excavations at Ur”) and D. Charpin as for epigraphy (“Epigraphy of Ur: Past, Present, and Future”). Already 4 texts from the Old Babylonian period have been discovered, among which an administrative document dated from the 24th year of Rim-Sin and a loan contract dated from the reign of Samsu-iluna. The second season began on March 14th, 2017; D. Charpin is going to join the team during the second part of April.

The new excavations largely cover one of the living quarters already excavated by Woolley (AH area): the extension of the work is very likely to lead to the discovery of new batches of archive documents [an email received on 28.03.2017 informs us that numerous OB tablets have just been unearthed]. To have an effective and updated tool for analysing them would obviously be quite necessary and it cannot be improvised within a few months.

I.3. Risk management and methodology

Our project is of interdisciplinary nature. It is based on epigraphic and philological treatments of the documents. But once the texts have been properly edited, information derived from them will be subject to different approaches according to the specialties of the members of the team: economic history, law history, archaeology and urbanism, etc. The most important change from what has been done so far with the documents from Ur is our commitment to a serial and contextual approach: very often, texts seen in isolation are rather disappointing, while their meaning can only be seen when the series to which they belonged are reconstructed and the links between apparently unrelated texts are discovered.

From this perspective, the EcritUr project will benefit from a tool already developed for the treatment of Old Babylonian archival texts in general: the “Archibab” database (Charpin 2014a). Launched in 2008, its catalogue now covers a little more than 50% of the published texts which have been identified in the bibliography (more than 32,000 documents). The effort has been primarily focused on the archives of Mari and other sites of Upper Mesopotamia (Rimah, Shemshara, Chagar Bazar, Terqa, etc.), particularly because of links with other projects pertaining to this region, directed by N. Ziegler (HIGEOMES/TEXTELSEM, cf. N. Ziegler & E. Cancik-Kirschbaum, in Ziegler & Langlois 2016: vii-xi) and also because of the need to share online hundreds photographs of the tablets from Mari currently inaccessible in Syria (“DIGIBARCHI” project funded for 24 month by PSL Research University, cf. http://www.digitorient.com/?page_id=2693). In the framework of “ARCHIBAB”, we have benefited from the collaboration of numerous foreign colleagues, especially Ilya Arkhipov (National Research University Higher School of Economics, School of Asian Studies, Moscow), Boris Alexandrov (Moscow State University, History Department) and Rients de Boer (Free University of Amsterdam).

Southern Mesopotamia did not receive so much attention. The texts of Larsa have been partly integrated in “ARCHIBAB” by B. Fiette in the frame of his PhD and his post-doctoral work (Fiette 2017) and the letters to Sin-iddinam by M. Béranger in the frame of her ongoing PhD (Béranger 2017), but those of Ur have hardly been exploited. For the time being, the database mostly gives access to PDF files of documents which have not been duly catalogued, being only accessible by reference to their copies. The only exceptions are ca. 60 texts discovered prior to 1919 (Charpin 1981), small batches of administrative documents kept at Philadelphia (Loding 1976 and 1989; Ormsby 1972), ca. 40 texts from UET V (Charpin 1986) as well as 83 letters (de Boer 2016), all in all 15% of the total. We need to treat the great majority (85%) of the ca. 1500 texts published so far.

We may add that the computer software created for “ARCHIBAB” has been considered to be so successful for the treatment of archival documents that it has been adopted by specialists working on corpora dated from another period than the Old Babylonian one for which it was conceived: for middle-Assyrian texts by E. Cancik-Kirschbaum's team at the FU Berlin (“ARCHIMASS”, cf. Cancik-Kirschbaum & Hess 2016), and for Kassite documents by S. Paulus at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (“ARCHIKASS”).

The EcritUr project will benefit from the considerable (paper and digital) documentary resources of the library of the *Institut du Proche-Orient Ancien* within the *Institut des Civilisations* of the Collège de France (<http://www.college-de-france.fr/site/bibliotheques-archives/institut-du-proche-orient-ancien.htm>): we can freely access all publications in Assyriology and Oriental Archaeology from the beginnings, and we enjoy a fast acquisition of every new publication in these fields. The members of the project will be hosted in the work rooms of the “Proche-Orient ancien” center of the Institut des Civilisations, presently housed on the 5th floor, Building E of site Marcelin-Berthelot of the Collège de France.

II. Project organisation and means implemented

II.1. Scientific coordinator

Dominique Charpin will be the scientific coordinator of the project (see <http://digitorient.com/?author=8> and <https://www.college-de-france.fr/site/dominique-charpin/>). After teaching at the Université de Paris 1 as assistant of P. Garelli (1976-1985), he spent 3 years in the CNRS; he became professor, first at Paris 1 (1988-2005), then at the EPHE (2005-2013). He has held the Chair of “Civilisation mésopotamienne” at the Collège de France since January 2014 (Charpin 2015b).

His first contact with southern Mesopotamia was in 1974, when he took part as a MA student to the excavations of Larsa directed by J.-L. Huot. He then wrote his dissertation on a group of ca. 100 tablets kept at the British Museum, considered as found in 1854 at Tell Sifr, ancient Kutalla, near Larsa; he discovered that one third of this group derived in fact from the diggings of Taylor at Ur during the same period (Charpin 1980). He decided to go on studying the texts of Ur and published his study on the clergy of this city which had been his *Thèse d'État* (Charpin 1986). Since 1979, he also worked as an epigraphist together with J.-M. Durand in the new excavation team at Mari directed by J. Margueron, and has published a lot of texts in the series *Archives royales de Mari* of which he is the co-director with J.-M. Durand since 2009. In 1987 and 1989, he came back to Iraq as epigraphist of the mission of Larsa: the discovery of new houses allowed him to better understand the archives found during the illicit diggings of the first decades of the 20th century (Charpin 2003).

He directed the ANR project “ARCHIBAB”, granted between 2008 and 2010 in the framework of the call “Corpus et outils de la recherche”, and renewed for 2011-2014 as a “programme blanc”); a presentation of the project can be found in Charpin 2014a. He presently coordinates the DIGIBARCHI project funded by PSL Research University (2016-2017), which is primarily focused on the royal archives of Mari (http://www.digitorient.com/?page_id=2693). Since the end of the 80's, D. Charpin has been active among assyriologists eager to use the new possibilities offered by the digital revolution; he published a few years ago a general review of electronic resources available to assyriologists (Charpin 2014b). He developed himself the program used for the ARCHIBAB database, in collaboration with A. Jacquet.

He has been chosen by E. C. Stone (Stony Brook University, NY) as epigraphist of the American mission at Ur since 2015. He worked on the field in December 2015 and will be again in Ur in April, 11th to 24th, 2017.

D. Charpin will coordinate the whole team of the EcritUr project, making his hundreds of files available to the group and supervising the diverse tasks. He will be particularly involved in the writing of the final synthesis.

II.2. Consortium

We did not formalize cooperations with other teams or institutions, given the many individual collaborations already acquired, which make the consortium, built around a few scientific personalities of first rank, both coherent and multidisciplinary.

The EcritUr project is a unifier in France and the core of the permanent collaborators is made of researchers and teachers/researchers belonging to different research units: first of all UMR 7192 (Proche-Orient, Caucase: langues, archéologie, cultures: D. Charpin, N. Ziegler, M. Guichard, L. Marti, L. Battini and A. Jacquet) but also UMR 8210 (ANHIMA: G. Chambon), UMR 8164 (HALMA: D. Lacambre) and UMR 7184 (IHD: S. Démare-Lafont).

In addition, numerous international collaborations are already established. The project will be led in close collaboration with Pr. Elizabeth Stone, Stony Brook University (NY, USA), director of the archaeological mission of Ur (Iraq) and Pr. Adelheid Otto, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München,

associate director, and their teams; Dr. Jon Taylor, keeper of the Cuneiform Collections, Department of the Middle East at the British Museum, London, in charge with the texts in the UrOnline project; Pr. Richard Zettler, associate curator-in-charge, Near Eastern Section of the University Museum, Philadelphia; Dr. Agnette Lassen, associate curator of the Yale Babylonian Collection, New Haven.

The principal scientific leaders of the EcritUr project will be, in alphabetical order (see below II.3. for the distribution of tasks and responsibilities) :

– Laura Battini, Chargée de Recherche, CNRS (<http://digitorient.com/?author=169>); as author of a PhD dissertation largely devoted to the living quarters of Ur (Battini 1999), she is a specialist in Mesopotamian urbanism and architecture; she will bring her archeological expertise to the project by helping with the interpretation of the data of the excavation reports; as such, she will play a key-role in Task 2.

– Grégory Chambon, Directeur d'Études, EHESS (<http://www.anhima.fr/spip.php?article1636>); his numerous publications and his primary involvement in the ComptaBab project (PICS – CNRS/Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow) regarding the history of norms and practices in weighing, measuring and bookkeeping activities in the Ancient Near East, bring a new and original light on some aspects of our documentation. He currently leads the Archeo-Metrologia project in collaboration with L. Marti (see below) (<https://www.ehess.fr/fr/%C3%A9chos-recherche/projet-archeo-metrologia-mesures-et-hommes>). Moreover, his past publications of documents from the Mari archives (e.g. Chambon 2009) is a guarantee of his accurate knowledge of the Old Babylonian administrative documentation.

– Sophie Démare-Lafont, Professeur, Université Paris II – Directeur d'Études, EPHE (Section des sciences historiques et philologiques) (<http://www.ihd.cnrs.fr/spip.php?article23>); her indepth knowledge in history of Ancient Near Eastern law and legal documents will strengthen our understanding of the family archives of Ur; she currently leads the D.O.C. project (Droits Orientaux Cunéiformes) that is aimed at publishing an online handbook on Mesopotamian legal formulae.

– Michaël Guichard, Directeur d'Études, EPHE (Section des sciences historiques et philologiques) (<http://digitorient.com/?author=101>); his skills as an epigraphist are also of primary interest. He has notably studied administrative documents pertaining to material culture (Guichard 2005), which is a significant part of the epigraphic material discovered at Ur. His expertise on Sumerian and Akkadian literary texts (Guichard 2014) will be of great importance regarding the edition and study of the literary texts as well as of the royal inscriptions of Ur.

– Antoine Jacquet, Researcher Collège de France (<http://digitorient.com/?author=68>); he has been the main actor besides D. Charpin in the ARCHIBAB project. He has a good experience in the publication of cuneiform tablets (Jacquet 2011) and his researches on family archives (Jacquet 2013) and legal documents (Jacquet 2017) of southern Mesopotamia are fully in line with the aims of the present project.

– Denis Lacambre, Maître de Conférences, Université de Lille III (<http://halma.recherche.univ-lille3.fr/index.php/denis-lacambre/>); the accuracy and rigorous skills that he demonstrated in his various publications of administrative texts (i.a. Lacambre 1997) will be of great help to the project as well as his experience as a field epigraphist (see Tunca & Baghdo 2008, in which D. Lacambre is the author of the majority of the text publications and commentaries).

– Lionel Marti, Chargé de recherche (CNRS) (<http://digitorient.com/?author=3>); he has published many administrative documents from the Mari archives (Marti 2008). Moreover, he has been directing new excavations at Bash Tapa in the Iraqi Kurdistan since 2013 (Marti et al. 2015). His twofold experience will then be a key advantage for our project. He currently leads the Archeo-Metrologia project in collaboration with G. Chambon (see supra).

– Nele Ziegler, Directrice de Recherche HdR, CNRS (<http://digitorient.com/?author=94>); her long experience as an epigraphist will be a major advantage for the project. The teachings that she has delivered as a chargée de conférences at the EPHE (2005-2011) and as a chargée de cours at the Ecole

du Louvre (1996-) classify her as a prominent expert in Akkadian literature. Her skills as a historian will also constitute an essential contribution to the project: she indeed published important researches about family life (Ziegler 1997), women (Ziegler 1999) and also cultural life with her numerous studies about music and musicians in the Ancient Near-East (i.a. Ziegler 2007). She has also directed the PICS “Comptabab” for the CNRS, with G. Chambon and I. Arkhipov (https://digitorient.com/?page_id=2655) and two major projects funded jointly by the ANR and the DFG (HIGEOMES, 2011-2014, and TEXTELSEM, 2014-2017) pertaining to the toponymy and historical geography of Upper-Mesopotamia in the 2nd millennium B.C.

II.3. Means of achieving the objectives

Two disciplinary fields are involved in the EcritUr project, each one requiring specific means. First of all, epigraphy and philology are concerned, because one of the objectives is to provide editions of texts whose copies have been published 64 years ago (Figulla & Martin 1953) and even nearly one century ago for some of them (Grice 1919), and which remained mainly unedited since then. In addition, there are completely unpublished texts, mostly in the British Museum and in the Yale Babylonian Collection, notwithstanding the texts available through the ongoing new excavations. The second component belongs to historical research: the documentary corpus thus assembled will be used to produce monographs, in the fields of economic and social history, religious and cultural studies, political and juridical studies.

First phase: epigraphic and philological study of the written documentation

This will take place in months 1 to 24 of the project and will consist of 4 main tasks:

Task 1: an electronic edition of the archival texts found in Woolley's excavations and divided, according to the laws of Antiquities prevailing at that time, between the Iraqi National Museum in Bagdad, the British Museum in London and the University Museum in Philadelphia. They have been mostly published only in the form of copies in UET V (Figulla & Martin 1953), Nisaba 12 (Spada 2007) and Nisaba 19 (Black & Spada 2008). This task will be distributed among the permanent collaborators and the post-docs according to the diverse sets discovered during the excavations (in houses, etc.). As underlined above, most of them were never edited; the texts already edited must be reexamined, because the editions are often outdated and may be improved.

Task 2: systematic grouping of tablets without findspot by cross-checking the excavation informations with the internal analysis of the texts. Numerous tablets have lost their excavation numbers: they must be reattributed to the set they originally belonged to, by comparing them with the tablets which have kept their excavation number (for an example, see the case of the “Mausoleum site”; cf. Charpin 1986: 245 n. 4). The informations obtained from the unpublished excavations records thanks to the UrOnline project will be very useful – and the EcritUr project will also bring its own contribution in that respect through an internal analysis of the documents.

Task 3: in parallel to tasks 1 and 2, we will study the dozens of tablets deriving from Woolley's excavations and still unpublished kept in the British Museum, which must be edited and published, in order to complement the existing corpus. We may expect to discover joins between some unpublished fragments and fragmentary tablets already published (for an example, see Spada 2007b).

In 1919, Hall excavated some houses in the neighbourhood later called EM by Woolley and discovered there a mixture of business and legal documents and scholarly tablets (Hall 1930: 172; see Charpin 1986: 129-130). I. Finkel has worked on the tablets of medical content (Finkel 2000: 145 n. 21), but has not yet published them; the rest is still unpublished in the British Museum. EcritUr could be a good opportunity to make these texts finally available, a century after their discovery.

And of course, the Old Babylonian tablets which have and will be found during the on-going excavations of Tell el-Muqayyar will have to be published.

Task 4: identification and edition or reedition of the tablets discovered at Ur prior to the official excavations of 1918-1934 (illicit diggings of the beginning of the 20th century), the majority of which have been acquired by the Yale Babylonian Collection soon after their discovery. The texts copied in YOS 5 (Grice 1919) belong to the time of the dynasty of Larsa and pertain thus to the period prior to the conquest of Ur by Hammu-rabi of Babylon; those published in YOS 12 (Feigin 1979) are dated from the reign of Samsu-iluna, successor of Hammu-rabi. It will then be necessary to look for the Yale tablets dated from the reign of Hammu-rabi himself and originating from Ur, which cannot fail to exist. The catalogue of the Yale Babylonian Collection is not complete and clearly identifies only the texts already published. Identifying the unpublished tablets will require a long and careful work. Research will also have to be undertaken in smaller collections : the gathering made in Charpin 1980: 55-60 and Charpin 1986: 158-192 has to be complemented (see for instance Farber 2007). This last example is very interesting, because it virtually reunified two envelope fragments belonging to the collection of the EPHE (Durand 1982) with the inner tablet, kept in a private collection in Germany.

We need not only to produce the electronic editions, but also to enrich them with metadata necessary for modern research: lemmatization, indexation, bibliographical data, elements relating to the archaeological and historical context, etc. This challenge will be met by “Archibab”, a powerful and most flexible instrument since it combines the features of a true repository and a strong research tool with dynamic elements. Its functions have been tested for other Old Babylonian corpora (particularly from Mari and other sites of northern Mesopotamia) and satisfy the specific requirements of the “EcritUr” project:

- the table named [TEXTES] allows not only to enter the edition of the texts (line by line transliteration, translation), but also to lemmatize each unit of the content (words or names) very efficiently in a semiautomatic way. It also offers interesting features for a diplomatic description of the documents, relative to external (layout, sealings, etc.) as well as internal (formularies, dates, etc.) characteristics (see Charpin 2002).

- the table named [SUPPORT] includes already the fields where, for each text, informations about the findspot (locus and level) must be recorded, as well as its excavation and museum numbers;

- the table named [PUBLICATIONS] allows to place URL links which, when activated, will give, for each tablet, access:

- to the photographs already available on the CDLI website (British Museum and University Museum of Philadelphia) or to those that will be taken during the collations made by project members;

- to the website of the UrOnline project (archaeological context of each tablet).

- the table named [ARCHIVES] will allow, with some minor adjustments, to group the documentation by archives (according to their findspots) and dossiers (according to the sub-groups which an internal analysis will allow to detect).

The main advantage of a relational database such as Archibab is the possibility offered to parameter multi-criteria searches and to cross data and metadata from different tables in order to allow a great variety of queries: historical, juridical, prosopographical, lexical, etc. (cf. Charpin 2014a: 145-149). It will for instance be possible to immediately have access to the texts where an oath is taken (whatever its formulation), or to the house sales made during the reign of Rim-Sin, etc., all kinds of queries that no other database existing in the assyriological domain presently allows.

We need to make only minor changes to the database itself, but the internet website where the data of EcritUr will be freely available (<http://www.archibab.fr>), must be more radically improved: there has been very little changes in the last years (except for an English interface), while the database has been much improved on some points. This development in html will be entrusted to an external contractor. The DIT society, which has already developed the Archibab website, may be again responsible for updating the site. **A budget of € 15,000** will be necessary for this operation.

The computer application is thus ready and the financial contribution of EcritUr will only be very limited on this chapter, which was the core of the Archibab project in the years 2008-2014. The needs of EcritUr are divided in two main expense items:

a) It is obvious that the work of preparation of this huge documentation can only be made by epigraphists and philologists very well trained as regards Old Babylonian texts. The working time of the permanent members of the project will not be enough for the work to be accomplished. The main expense item will then be staff costs. We need to recruit post-docs for the duration of the project; a PhD on large documentary files, preferably from the Old Babylonian period, must ensure that the candidates have the required expertise. Based on the wage scales of the Collège de France, which will be manager of the project, and including all the wage costs, we need to recruit:

- a post-doc (with a professional experience between 2 and 4 years) for 36 months (ETP): € 160,000;
- a post-doc (with a professional experience between 5 and 10 years) for 24 months (ETP): € 118,000.

[N.B. for foreign reviewers: “professional experience” in France includes years when a candidate held a position such as “ATER”, even before the obtention of his/her PhD. Labour costs in France include social insurance etc., and are such that, at this level, employed people receive a little less than half of what they cost.]

Total: **€ 278,000 for staff costs**. A pool of qualified candidates exists, today finishing their dissertation or already post-docs, with a scientific profile exactly corresponding to the required competences.

b) Editing the texts implies systematic collations of the originals kept in the British Museum, in the University Museum of Philadelphia and in the Yale Babylonian Collection of New Haven. As far as possible, we will try to access the tablets kept in the National Iraqi Museum of Bagdad (in November 2011, A.-I. Langlois could work on the tablets from tell al-Rimah [Langlois 2017]). Modern digital images (be it photography, photogrammetry or 3D scan) are of course invaluable helps, but they are still in development and they will never replace a direct contact with the tablets (especially for the possibility of a better cleaning). In order to reduce transportation costs, we prefer less numerous trips and longer stays, to be divided among collaborators within the 36 months. This will be the second heading in the project's budget:

- London: 12 trips with work during 5 days (for instance 3 × 4 people or 6 × 2 people): € 7,300.
- Philadelphia/Yale: 4 trips of 15 to 30 days (2 × 2 people) : € 16,000; additional funding could be obtained if necessary from the Yale Babylonian Collection, whose curator does not hesitate to spend money for the promotion of his collections.
- in Iraq (Bagdad/Ur): 4 trips during 15 to 30 days (2 × 1 people + 1 × 2 people): € 20,000. The cooperation with the archaeological mission directed by E. Stone allows to consider these Iraqi missions not only devoted to the collation of tablets kept in Bagdad, but also to the field work as D. Charpin already did in December 2015 and will do in April 2017.

The total of the budgetary requirements for mission expenses is **€ 43,300**.

The last items we need are:

- 2 laptops (Apple Macbook Pro type): € 5,000;
- small equipment and consumables: € 1,500.

The second step, the preparation of monographic studies about Old Babylonian Ur, will take place at the end of the second and during the third year, i.e. approximately months 18 to 30 of the project.

Task 5: preparation of monographic studies from the documentation already put in order. They will of course depend partly on the discoveries made during the first 18 months of the project, but a dozen of studies can already be planned:

5.1. Study of the syllabary. In the “ARCHIBAB” database, in the past few years, a lemmatizer and a part-of-speech tagging were implemented. Thanks to these tools, the “ARCHIBAB” website can be used to search the Old Babylonian corpus by key word. Such research already proved to be useful for the scientific community (e.g. Arkhipov & Loesov 2015). A further step was taken with the development of an export of these lemmatized and tagged texts in XML format. Thanks to this export, and to adaptations undertaken by Marine Béranger, Serge Heiden, Alexei Lavrentiev and Emmanuel Chateau (Béranger et al. 2017, and https://groupes.renater.fr/wiki/txm-users/public/umr_proclac_corpus_akkadien?s%5B%5D=txm&s%5B%5D=akkadien), for the first time Akkadian texts can be uploaded and analyzed in a text analysis tool (the software “TXM”) – which was hitherto reserved to a few dead languages, such as Latin and Greek. Developed by the ICAR lab in Lyon (<http://textometrie.ens-lyon.fr/?lang=en>), “TXM” makes it possible to work on the lexical and graphemic levels of Old Babylonian texts, using external informations as a basis for comparisons (such as dates and places of writing). The processing of data extracted from “ARCHIBAB” into “TXM” recently allowed M. Béranger to compare the syllabaries used in two different Mesopotamian cities (Babylon and Mari), and analyze the development of regional variations as well as the training in letter-writing (Béranger 2017). In the framework of the EcritUr project, such a method will be used in order to see whether the city of Ur had developed its own syllabary, distinct from that of other Mesopotamian cities.

5.2. Furthermore, the archives excavated in Ur are a valuable source in order to analyze and define the different **levels of literacy**, a question more and more studied in the recent years (Wilcke 2000, Charpin 2004 [= Charpin 2010: chap. 1], Veldhuis 2011, Michalowski 2012). Estimation of the level of literacy of the inhabitants of Ur by calculating the number of houses hosting archives (as did Wilcke 2000: 11-13) is interesting: in the AH quarter, only 11 of the 25 excavated houses did not provide tablets, whereas 14 contained archives. This quantitative approach is nevertheless insufficient: people could have kept at home their property titles and other documents without being able to read them, even less to write. Indeed, many archives found in Ur belonged to merchants or priests (for example, “no.1 Old Street” pertained to the merchant Ea-našir, and “no.7 Quiet Street” to the purifiers Ur-Nanna and his sons Enamtisud and Ešuluhuru). As D. Charpin has shown (Charpin 1986), the priests living at “no.7 Quiet Street” had received an extant formation in cuneiform writing. On the contrary, as M. Van De Mieroop revealed with Dumuzi-gamil, a merchant living at “no. 3 Niche Lane” who is thought to have written himself his legal documents (Van De Mieroop 1992: 135), merchants had probably a functional literacy, limited to the knowledge of archival documents (economic and legal texts, letters). In this context, we intend to compare the syllabary and scriptural conventions used in the merchants and priests archives, in order to see if a different level of literacy is perceptible, and how this difference is expressed. A special attention will be devoted to letters: we will have to evaluate the skills of the writers of the 83 letters discovered so far – some of which may be school exercises (Charpin 1986: 460-465; Sallaberger 1999). It must be established whether the art of letter-writing underwent a significant development from the Ur III dynasty to the Old Babylonian period (for this issue see ultimately Sallaberger 2015).

5.3. We also have to study again the question of **schools**. The situation at “no.7 Quiet Street” (EM site) is clear: this house was inhabited by purification-priests, and was the place where young people (surely belonging in part to the family) were trained (Charpin 1986). The first phases of learning left few traces, but one can see that the transmission of traditions peculiar to this milieu gave birth to written texts without parallels elsewhere, such as Sumerian hymns. By contrast, the situation at “no.1 Broad Street” (AH quarter) is less evident: nearly a thousand of tablets have been found there, but they had been discarded and the question is to establish their original place: either the house itself, which then could have been a school, or another place (Charpin 1986: 482-485). The comparison between the schools of Ur and those from other cities is important: it has just been done with Nippur (Delnero 2016), but the awaited publication of a dissertation on the Mari school (“House K”, cf.

Nicolet 2015) will allow a reappraisal of the question of the local variations from the model of Nippur long considered by modern research as the norm. [Addition on 30/03/2017: an email from A. Otto informs us that a new house with school tablets reused as filling is currently being excavated. It is now sure that this question will become one of the main points of the EcritUr project.]

5.4. Another point insufficiently studied so far pertains to **management and accounting practices** (cf. Chambon 2016). For that, the EcritUr project can extend researches made by the “COMPTABAB” project (https://digitorient.com/?page_id=2655); some members of EcritUr also collaborate with the GDRI « BABYL.ORG » (« Gérer, administrer, contrôler : le pouvoir, les mots et les choses au Proche-Orient ancien ») which has been submitted to the CNRS by G. Chambon. Ur played a special role in southern Mesopotamia, with the Egina-temple devoted to the goddess Kittum (deified “Justice” or “Standard”), which played the role of a Bureau for Weights and Measures: people attached to that temple certified the circulating silver, which they weighed and placed in small leather bags that they closed with a clay etiquette on which they imprinted their cylinder seal; this has been revealed by a beautiful discovery in the Ebabbar-temple at Larsa in 1976 (see the new interpretation in Charpin 2017, chap. 3). In addition, a reappraisal of the archives of the big warehouse of the temple (the Ganun-mah) must be undertaken: they are important, not only for the economic informations they contain (see Butz 1973 and Maggio 2012), but also for the accounting practices they reveal (cf. the work of M. Van De Mieroop about a dossier dated from the Ur III period [Van De Mieroop 1999-2000]). The interest of Ur is not only to allow a study of the accounting practices, but also to show their ideological background: from this point of view, the hymn to the god Haya discovered at “no. 7 Quiet Street” (Brisch 2007: 186-198) is especially interesting. The approach of this difficult Sumerian text has been mostly philological (with three different editions); Haya is described as the accountant of the gods and the enumeration of his tasks within the divine world is obviously the transposition of real practices which have still to be decrypted.

5.5. Archiving practices: the spatial and chronological distribution of all the texts according to their genre will be instantly given by the database. We will thus be in a position to answer questions such as: in how many houses have letters been excavated? What about trials? Loan contracts? etc. The issues addressed in general terms by A. Jacquet, as concerns the way in which family archives were constituted (Jacquet 2013), will thus be taken up with examples both more numerous and more precise.

5.6. Juridical life: the corpus of trials gathered by E. Dombardi for Ur (1996: t. 2, p. 358-9) is made of some thirty texts, which have never been edited. They have to be studied once more (Démare-Lafont 2006). The Old Babylonian oath formulas are being studied by F. Nebiolo in her PhD dissertation and she noted Ur as a special case: the local god Nanna is very rarely named in the oaths of the legal documents, although an Akkadian literary text mentions Nanna in a very sophisticated oath (Lauinger 2014); reference is also made to Nanna's son, Nin-gublaga (Charpin 1986: 89). In addition, the city of Ur is characterised by the special role, as regards the administration of justice, of a building called Dublamah, where oaths were taken. One of our task will be to learn more about the staff that was attached to this building (called “gudu₄ Dublamah”) and to understand why it had some kind of double in the northern city of Damrum, which was also devoted to the Moon-god (Charpin 1999).

5.7. The status of women in Ur: the city of Ur offers the particularly interesting case of the priestesses-*entum*, who were devoted to the Moon-god Nanna/Sin. Documented since the 24th century BC, these women were considered the god's wives on earth. There was only one priestess at a time, and she always belonged to the royal family. This priestess lived in a bipartite building, of which one half was a temple dedicated to the goddess Ningal (female consort of Nanna/Sin) and the other half was meant to be her residence (called *gipar*). Burial vaults were found in the basement of this building; accounting documents record various offerings made to the deceased priestesses. This case will be resumed in the light of the progresses made in funerary archaeology, especially thanks to the recent

discoveries of Qatna, and by comparison with the Mari archives (Jacquet 2012).

5.8. Patterns of offerings in the temple of Nanna/Sin: the study of D. Charpin published in 1986 was incomplete as regards this aspect and, above all, it lacked comparative elements. Since then, W. Sallaberger published his study on the texts dated to the preceding period (Ur III), which focuses notably on the city capital (Sallaberger 1993: 159-208). Comparison with other Old Babylonian sites such as Mari can also be undertaken (Jacquet 2011). In this way, the singularities of the cult in Ur, during the Old Babylonian period, as regards the cultic calendar and the sacred topography, will be better emphasised (in this context, comparison with recent studies such as the one of Baker 2013 on 1st mil. BC Uruk would be interesting).

5.9. Historical geography: the 3rd volume from the collection *Répertoire géographique des Textes Cunéiformes* (Groneberg 1980) was published 37 years ago. Since then, the corpus of published texts doubled: the most important changes concern northern Mesopotamia, whose toponymy was recently studied within the framework of two French-German projects (HIGEOMES, then TEXTELSEM) (Ziegler & Langlois 2016). But southern Mesopotamia is also becoming better understood, in particular the swamp area east of Ur, which was recently surveyed for the first time thanks to the momentary decline in the water level (Van Lerberghe et al. 2017): 304 previously unknown sites have been spotted during this survey (Al-Hamdani 2014). From 2011 to 2014, Tell Sakhariya, a site located at 6 km from Ur, was excavated by E. Stone's team; most probably, it must be identified with Ga'eš, the port city. The archaeology of the Gulf also progressed significantly, so that Ur's maritime trade must be reconsidered.

5.10. Political history: traditionally, royal inscriptions and kings' year names form the basis of studies aiming at reconstructing the political history of a given region. At the level of a site, we benefit from a very precise means for assessing political changes: year names given in texts, referring to a particular king (Charpin & Ziegler 2013). We thus know that the city of Ur was disputed between the kings of Isin and Larsa, and was finally incorporated into the kingdom of Babylon by the time of Hammu-rabi. But many problems still remain to be solved. For example, we still have to understand why Iluni, king of Ešnunna, is mentioned in several texts from Ur (Charpin 1986: 124 et 175). This research will be supported by recent discoveries which offer a better understanding of the reign of this king of Ešnunna contemporary with Samsu-iluna (Guichard 2016). We should also take up the issue of Rim-Sin II's rebellion against Samsu-iluna (Vedeler's recent article [2015] not having solved this issue). Finally, we should take up the issue as regards the abandonment of Ur after the 12th year of Samsu-iluna until its reoccupation during the Kassite period (Gasche 1989: 130-131). In the framework of the "Ur Region Archaeology Project" led by the University of Manchester, recent discoveries at Tell Khaiber – a site close to Ur (Moon et al. 2016) – made it possible to re-examine the case of the Sealand Dynasty (Dalley 2009) on new bases: E. Robson, epigrapher at Tell Khaiber, has been invited to give lectures at the Collège de France on June 2017. An additional collaboration will thus be forged in this context.

5.11. Environment, economical and religious life: a first step will be to reveal the integration of Ur and its satellites within their natural environment. The role of nearby swamplands has not been duly recognised. Yet, fishery resources and reed beds were very important for the city. The finest description of a reed bed is to be found in a hymn dedicated to king Rim-Sin (Brisch 2007: 229). This environment also explains the importance of herds of cattle (some kind of buffalo) belonging to the temple of Nanna in Ur. This temple housed dairy activities which were conceived as intrinsically linked to the nature of the god. Nanna/Sin was not only understood as a protector of cattle: he was himself one of them, as shown by his horn, the crescent moon (Charpin 2017: 177-180). The study of economics here joins that of literature and mythology. It is this kind of global approaches, crossing different perspectives, that we would like to develop.

Finally, a third aspect essential for the project must be addressed: the valorisation and

dissemination of the results achieved. In addition to the uploading of texts on the website “ARCHIBAB”, and to the publication of monographs listed above, two tasks seem essential to us:

Task 6: organisation of an international round table in Paris in the second half of the third year of work. In addition to the participants in the EcritUr project, it will bring together French and foreign colleagues as well as partners involved in different projects related to the city of Ur and its region (the archaeological mission of Ur, UrOnline, Ur Region Archaeology Project, etc.) or working on topics related to this site. **A sum of 5,000 €** would be used to invite foreign colleagues (travel and accommodation included). The Hugot Foundation of the Collège de France will be asked to cover the remaining organising costs of this round table and host researchers in its private mansion located “rue de l'Université”. In relation with this closed round table, a one-day symposium will be organised at the Collège de France, in an amphitheatre with a greater capacity: in this way, synthetic communications will open to a wider and less specialised audience the essential part of our program results. This symposium will benefit from the resources of the Collège de France's “international digital campus”: this program will fastly upload online the videos captured during the symposium, thus ensuring their dissemination and sustainability.

The proceedings of the round table and symposium will be the subject of a double publication, along with the other written productions of the “EcritUr” project: both as a paper version with the assistance of the Société pour l'Etude du Proche-Orient Ancien (<http://www.sepoa.fr>) and as an electronic version (available on Openbook Editions) as part of the electronic publications published by the Institut des Civilisations du Collège de France (<http://books.openedition.org/cdf/3712>).

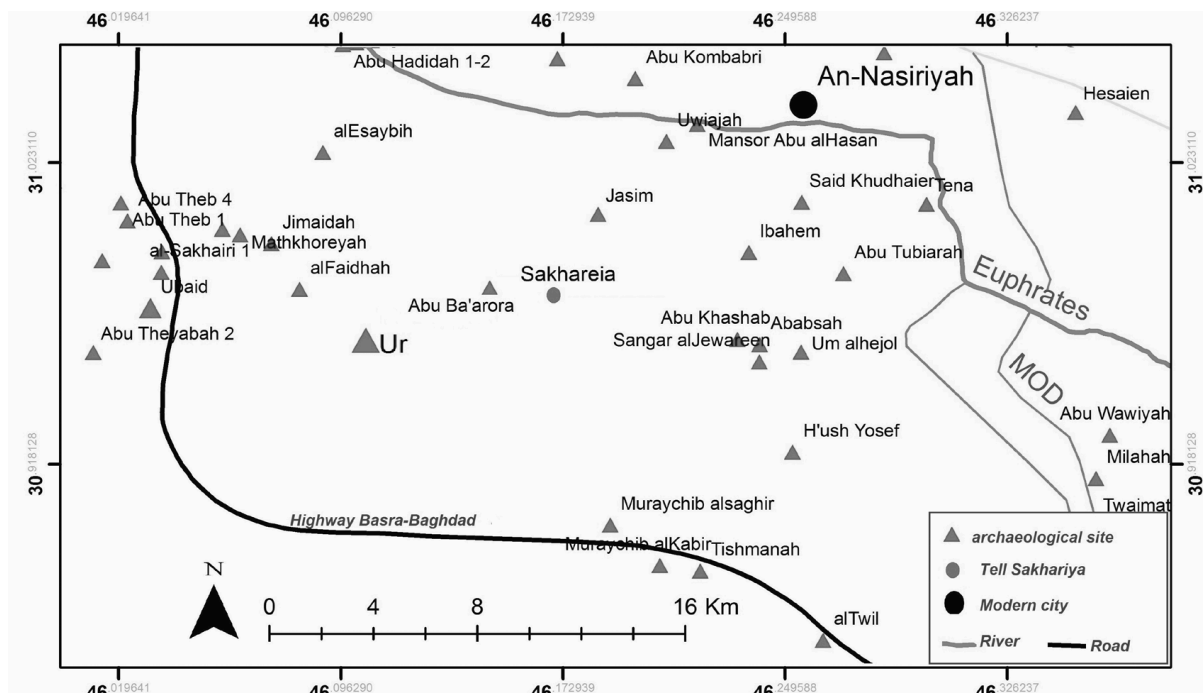
Task 7: a synthesis book. Using all the studies that will be issued during the project, the project holder will write a synthesis that will offer an overall picture of the city of Ur during the first quarter of the 2nd millennium BC.

Fig. 1: Time schedule of tasks planned for EcritUr

Designation	Description of tasks	Duration	Year I				Year II				Year III			
			Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4
Phase 1: epigraphic and philological study of written documentation														
Task 1	Published texts deriving from Woolley's excavations + archaeological data	12 m												
Task 2	Tablets without findspot from Woolley's excavations + archaeological data	6 m												
Task 3	Unpublished texts deriving from Woolley's excavations + texts excavated by Hall	12 m												
Task 4	Unpublished texts found prior to the official excavations	12 m												
Phase 2: Preparation and publication of monographic studies on Old Babylonian Ur														
Task 5	Analysis and production of monographic studies	18 m												
Phase 3: Valorisation and dissemination of the results														
Task 6	Preparation and publication of an international round table + symposium	6 m												
Task 7	Synthesis book	18 m												

Table of previous or ongoing projects and funding received in connection with this proposal

Title of the call for proposals, source of funding	Project title	Name of coordinator	Starting date/End date	Grant amount	Part.	Name	Person. Month
					Of the person involved in this proposal		
ANR "Corpus et outils de la recherche en Sciences humaines"	ARCHIBAB (Archives babyloniennes XX ^e -XVII ^e siècles avant notre ère)	D. Charpin	28/12/2007 to 27/12/2010	€ 170,000		JACQUET	33
ANR "Programme blanc"	ARCHIBAB-2	D. Charpin	15/11/2010 to 14/02/2015	€ 275,000		JACQUET	22,5
PSL "Arts et Humanités numériques"	ARCHIBAB	D. Charpin	20/12/2014	€ 4,000			
PSL "Structuration de la recherche"	DIGIBARCHI ("Digitization of Babylonian Archives")	D. Charpin	01/10/2015 to 30/09/2017	€ 121,211			



Carte d'Ur et de ses environs (d'après Al-Hamdani 2012: 18)

III. Impact and benefits of the project

EcritUr is a fundamental research project in humanities, in the specific field of “digital humanities”. Information and communication technologies are not only contemplated as a means to produce a repertory of sources and put them at the disposal of users, but also as a tool for *producing new data* through an extensive analysis of these same sources and the addition of metadata produced by the research itself (localisation, bibliography, indexation, lemmatization, etc.); in addition, computing provides the opportunity to cross, sort, and manipulate data through multi-criteria searches in order to establish relevant corpora responding to problems of social sciences and humanities. EcritUr is also in full compliance with the “other knowledge challenge” of the ANR since Assyriology is clearly part of what is now (rather sadly) called “rare disciplines”. One of the goals of our project is, by the way, to contribute to alleviating this relative isolation by sharing knowledge with other disciplinary fields: due to its cross-disciplinary approach, the project's results should interest not only Assyriologists, but also many other specialists. EcritUr indeed falls within archaeology, philology, and history as well: political history at first, since the comparison of data resulting from the archives of temples or private houses with the commemorative royal inscriptions will allow for a more accurate chronology of the different phases of domination over the city, by Isin, Larsa, and Babylon, from the fall of the 3rd Dynasty of Ur to the end of the Babylonian rule over Ur; history of law, then, because the contracts and lawsuit documents that are kept in the archives testify of the legal and judicial practices in a city that was not a capital and where law officers had to deal with local customs and royal power imposed from outside; economic, social and religious history, as well, since the available sources now allow to complete and refine the studies once carried out by D. Charpin (1986), I. Diakonoff (1990) and M. Van De Mieroop (1992). Assyriologists interested in the “Old Babylonian Writing Revolution” (Veldhuis 2014) and, more generally, specialists in literacy may find more ancient Mesopotamian instances for their own research, by studying school and literary texts as regards teaching and learning, and, notably, letters as regards everyday practice: the data from Ur are specially abundant on these matters. The study of archives according to their findspots will allow some observations essential to the reconstitution of archives from other sites, which have not always been unearthed during regular excavations, such as Isin or Larsa.

Working about a city of ancient Iraq gives us special responsibilities towards modern inhabitants of the region. We hope to help them to repossess their own past, which has been unfortunately exploited by Saddam Hussein. In this respect, D. Charpin has already given a conference in Nasiriyah in December 2015 and other actions should be undertaken towards that goal. Collaboration with the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage in the person of A. Al-Hamdani has already begun and must be enlarged, for instance to help him with his project of a new digital atlas and database of the archaeological sites in Iraq (<https://soundcloud.com/auis/digitizing-the-past-a-new-digital-atlas-and-database-of-the-archaeological-sites-in-iraq>).

The results of EcritUr will be reported in various ways. The cuneiform texts edited in the framework of the project will be published gradually on the open access website of Archibab (<http://www.archibab.fr/>). This solution has two advantages: it allows to improve and update data as the work progresses and it ensures the sustainability of the data produced by the project (the database is hosted in the College de France facilities under the responsibility of the *Direction des Systèmes d'informations*). Besides, the project's collaborators will write articles in journals and collective works. Some selected studies will be presented in a non-technical way in a publication aimed at a broader audience (e. g. in an issue of the *Dossiers d'archéologie*); a digital version of the latter in Arabic should also be made. A synthetic volume on *Portrait of a Mesopotamian City: Ur during the first quarter of the 2nd millennium B.C.* is also planned: it will be published in printed form in the new

collection *Docet omnia* co-produced by the Collège de France and Les Belles Lettres publisher and in electronic form on OpenEdition Books, as is the case with the recently published book on the Mesopotamian temples (Charpin 2017) (<http://books.openedition.org/cdf/3712>). Modern tools of communication will also be used: a notebook (“Carnet de Recherche”) will be maintained on the OpenEdition website (<http://www.openedition.org/catalogue-notebooks>), in order to inform regularly the scientific community about the progresses made by the project.

The creation of new digital tools to exploit the wealth of data hidden in the cuneiform documentation becomes evermore important. Papyrologists, for instance, are in a much better situation than assyriologists: and we are working with the oldest archives of mankind! It is important as well for France not to be absent from the international efforts to create new digital tools for the exploitation of the cuneiform documents. England has been a pioneer about Sumerian Literature with the ETCSL site, unfortunately frozen since 2006, after the untimely death of its director, J. Black; updates are now only technical ones (<http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/>). In USA, the CDLI has gathered a lot of digital images of cuneiform tablets (<http://www.cdli.ucla.edu/>). There are more and more projects within the Anglo-American consortium Oracc (“Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus”) <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/projectlist.html>). Spain has set up the very useful “Database of Neo-Sumerian Texts” (BDTNS), collecting all archival documents from the Ur III period (<http://bdts.filol.csic.es/>). Germany has developed, in collaboration with Israel, the “SEAL” website devoted to Akkadian literature of the third and second millennia (<http://www.seal.uni-leipzig.de/>). In Italy, the database EbDA (Ebla digital archives) gives access to the 2950 published texts from Ebla (<http://virgo.unive.it/eblaonline/cgi-bin/home.cgi>) (for a more complete review, see Charpin 2014b). In France, Achemenet has met some difficulties after the retirement of P. Briant (<http://www.achemenet.com/>). Archibab is the only project still developing, and the way EcritUr will benefit *from* and *to* Archibab can be seen as a very good example of the possibility to make long term research compatible with the financing of projects of limited duration.

Making the wealth of information available about Ur and its region as well as publishing the tablets newly discovered, and providing a new picture of one of the major Mesopotamian cities offer exciting prospects. The experience of the research team, the complementarity of its members' skills, its close relationships with foreign teams, and the well-defined nature of the project are, in our view, elements that ensure the feasibility of the operation within the planned 36 months.