

**Broadening Horizons 3. Conference of  
Young Researchers Working in the Ancient Near East**

Ferran Borrell Tena, Mònica Bouso García, Anna Gómez Bach,  
Carles Tornero Dacasa & Oriol Vicente Campos (eds.)

## Broadening Horizons 3. Conference of Young Researchers Working in the Ancient Near East

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## Presentation

**Josep Manuel Rueda Torres**

Vice Director-General of Cultural Heritage

Department of Culture

Generalitat de Catalunya

In 2010, the International Conference *Broadening Horizons 3. Conference of Young Researchers Working in the Ancient Near East* was held in Barcelona by the Universitat Autònoma of Barcelona (Bellaterra, 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> July).

The following reasons motivated the Department for Culture of the Generalitat de Catalunya and the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage to support and collaborate with the organization of the event: international character of the event, organizers belonging to a Catalan university, presence of the Prehistory Department from the Universitat Autònoma of Barcelona, the conference being focused on young researchers, and the fact that the event would be a good forum of discussion, training and of recognition of their work. Besides, the geographical scope, the Near East, the cradle of our civilization and the main topics of the conference were also suggestive, linking cultural and natural reconstruction of ancient landscapes through real interdisciplinary and transversal studies.

Thus, the conference accomplished the criteria of collaboration fixed by the Department of Culture, especially rigorous since the economic crisis started, which assure the development and the internationalization of high-quality research in archaeology in our country.

The support of the Department of Culture also wanted to recognize the consolidated research undertaken by one of the most remarkable research teams in our country. A team that has organized the conference and that, under the direction of Prof. Miquel Molist, is developing his research and field work in the Near East. In this sense, and bearing in mind that we are a small country, our support becomes extensive to all Catalan archaeological expeditions abroad, which are quite abundant and reach high standards of quality.

All these statements, together with the Mediterranean vocation of our institution, justify our participation in the event and in the interesting publication that we present to you.

To sum up, we hope that the *Broadening Horizons* conferences will have continuity in other cities from our cultural European and Mediterranean environment.



## Presentation

**Manel López-Béjar**

Vice-rector for Research

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

In July 2010, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona hosted the *World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES-Barcelona 2010)* organized by the Institut d'Estudis Mediterranis (IEMed). For one week our institution turned into an international forum where approximately 2700 experts, scholars and academics of 72 different countries debated and exchanged ideas on a wide range of topics linked to the Mediterranean including political, economic, religious aspects, literature, history, music, cultural identities, etc. Within the *WOCMES 2010* there was a festival of cinema, diverse exhibitions, musical performances and of theatre, and a series of congresses, workshops, round tables, etc.

Within this stimulating workframe the international congress *Broadening Horizons 3. Conference of Young Researchers Working in the Ancient Near East* (Bellaterra, 19-21 July 2010) was held. A congress on the Prehistory of the Near East organized by our Prehistory Department, with the peculiarity that it was organized by young researchers and that it was directed at young researchers too. An initiative like that could not but receive the support of our institution since it reflected the long-term, consolidated trajectory of research of Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in the Near East, while at the same time it supplied a relevant role to the new generations of researchers.

The event was a great success of participation and it turned into a forum of debate, work and exchange of ideas and knowledge among young researchers of several nationalities. Today I have pleasure in seeing that those efforts have taken the shape of the publication of the conference proceedings, accomplishing in this way the final goal and allowing a wide diffusion of the knowledge, results and conclusions that were obtained during these three days of intense work.

## Introduction to the *Broadening Horizons 3* Conference Proceedings

Ferran Borrell, Mònica Bouso, Anna Gómez,  
Carles Tornero & Oriol Vicente

*Broadening Horizons* is a series of international congresses dedicated to researchers, including postgraduate students, in the early-stages of their careers who are involved in a number of different disciplinary areas in the study of the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean. The third such congress was held in Barcelona (Spain), 19-21 July 2010 at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, following previous congresses which had taken place at Ghent University (Belgium) in 2006 and at Université Lyon 2 (France) in 2007. The *Broadening Horizons. 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference of Young Researchers Working in the Ancient Near East*, was organized within the framework of the *World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES), Barcelona 2010* (Bellaterra, 19-24 July 2010).

The high participation rate, the variety and interest of the contributions, the range of nationalities of the attendees, as well as the friendly and cordial atmosphere of the congress, led us from the very beginning to consider the congress to be a success. To this we must add that it has been a pleasant experience for us to organize and to learn to organize just such an international congress. It has left us with very good feelings and many fond memories. Today we have pleasure in reaching our goal, and the last of our targets to which we committed ourselves in 2008 in Lyon when we accepted the organization of the third *Broadening Horizons* congress, namely the publication of the papers presented in Barcelona. It gives us great satisfaction to see the publication of the works of so many brilliant young researchers who are developing their investigations in the Near East and enjoying that experience.

This volume includes not only the very interesting and diverse set of papers presented in Barcelona but also the invited contributions of the key speakers. These two sections are followed by a final paper by the editors about the trajectory of the *BH*

conferences and about the particularities and difficulties confronting young scholars who are carrying out research in the Near East.

The order of the papers in the first section has been arranged according to the chronology. The first two papers present the results of the field surveys conducted in the Syrian Jazr by the Italian team of Universities of Pisa and Siena (Gregorio, Pepe & Aureli), and in the Leja region (Syria) by the Spanish team of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Boix & Abdo). The next set of papers concern different studies conducted at Neolithic sites in Syria. These papers include the study of the funerary practices at Tell Halula and Bal'as (Ortiz & Chamel), a functional approach to the study of grinding stones (Bofill), an archaeometric approach to flint exploitation at the neolithic complex of Mamarrul Nasr (Borrell & Vicente), the study of hearths related to cooking activities, from Tell Aswad (Albukaa) and a report about recent field work at Tell Al-Baharia (Sulaiman). The papers that follow are about various topics relating to the study of the Bronze Age in Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Transjordan. In the first one, the author (Uildriks) attempts to disentangle the physical and semiological use of an iconographic 'floral' motif in Egypt during the fourth millennium B.C. The next three papers bring new data and interpretations concerning the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar (Baccarin), the urban and social organization and economic dynamics in northern Palestine and Transjordan (Gallo & Tumolo), and the fortification and burial grounds in Tell Afis (Di Michele & Pedrosi). This group of papers finishes with two interesting contributions, the first one of which explains how satellite imagery can be used to evaluate the destruction of archaeological sites (Cunliffe), and the second is a detailed study discussing the limits of the western border of the Assyrian Empire during the Late Bronze Age (Llop-Raduà). The last set of papers starts with an attempt to characterise the spatial conceptualisation of the double wAs-sceptre region in Upper Egypt based on epigraphic sources (Torras). This paper is followed by an evaluation of the Neo-Assyrian and Post-Assyrian settlement in the Upper Khabur valley through the study of the pottery assemblages recovered during a regional survey (Gavagnin), and by a paper about the recent finds in the Beqa valley and the discovery of a new inscription in Old-Babylonian dated to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (Da Riva). Finally, the section concludes with a detailed analysis of the form, development and function of the "salle à quatre saillants" in Babylonia during the mid first millennium B.C. (La Farina).

The second section contains the invited contributions of key speakers which allow us to update our knowledge of three long-term consolidated projects: Domuztepe (Campbell), Tell Halula (Molist) and Arslantepe (Frangipane). The volume closes with a paper written by the editors about the trajectory of the *BH* conferences and about the particularities and difficulties confronting young scholars who are doing research in the Near East.

In the acknowledgements section, there are a large number individuals and institutions to which we must express our sincere thanks.

The celebration of the congress and the later publication of the conference proceedings has been possible thanks to the financial support of the Departament de Cultura i Mitjans de Comunicació de la Generalitat de Catalunya and the Vicerectorat d'Investigació and the Deganat de Lletres of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ACT2010-10 and ORG2010-44). We are very grateful for the support given by both institutions, and would like to make special mention of the Vice Director-General of Cultural Heritage of the Generalitat de Catalunya, J.M. Rueda, and V. Magrans who gave unconditional support to the initiative from the first meeting when we raised the possibility of organizing the event in Barcelona.

Also we are grateful for the support provided by the Seminari d'Arqueologia del Pròxim Orient (SAPPO) of the Departament de Prehistòria de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, under whose auspices the organization and publication of the congress has been developed. Special mention must be made of the younger members of this research group who participated in the organization of the congress (M. Bofill, H. Faisal, A. Ortiz and B. Taha) and of the director of the group M. Molist. We would also like to express our thanks to the staff of the WOCMES 2010 Congress and the Institut d'Estudis del Mediterrani for the organizational and logistical support during the celebration of the event.

We must not forget the support received by the Scientific Committee of the Congress and especially to those members, who attended the event, participated actively in it, and gave a series of invited lectures that served to inaugurate each of the themed sessions. Thus special mention goes to Stuart Campbell, Marcella Frangipane, Catherine Kuzucuoglu and Miquel Molist.

Finally we would like to express our gratitude to all those academics who have kindly contributed to the refereeing process of the papers. Their interesting comments and pertinent suggestions have helped participants to become familiar with a refereeing process and have enriched them all and this volume as well. Our thanks go to Frédéric Abbès, Heather Baker, Stuart Campbell, Sofia Fonseca, Christophe Grigo, Christophe Delage, Gian Maria Di Nocera, Laure Dubreuil, Karen Exell, Kevin Gibbs, Elizabeth Healey, Osamu Maeda, Tona Majó, Alan Millard, Miquel Molist, Miroslav Novak, Edgar Peltenburg, Danielle Stordeur, Rachel Swift, Jason Ur, Harvey Weiss and Tony Wilkinson.

Last but not least, we thank all participants to the third *Broadening Horizons* congress and to the organizers of the fourth, held in Torino (Italy) 24-28 October 2011, for accepting the responsibility for providing continuity for the congress which has allowed us to learn so many things and to keep on broadening our own horizons.