

# THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ AND ADJACENT REGIONS

Edited by  
**Konstantinos Kopanias and  
John MacGinnis**



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## Preface

The present volume is the outcome of a conference held at the University of Athens, November 1st-3rd 2013, under the title 'Archaeological Research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the Adjacent Areas'. The aim of the conference was to bring together scholars working in all the countries of the region, an aim in the event achieved resoundingly, with more than 100 scholars from across the world participating in the first forum of its kind to be held outside of the region itself. While the greater part of presentations related to research in the Kurdish Region of Iraq, other contributions dealt with analysis of material from sites in Syria, Turkey and Iran.

Kurdistan is home to some of the most important archaeological sites in the world, ranging from the Stone Age to the most recent past. These include cave shelters, mounds and low sites, canals and rock reliefs, castles and bridges, mosques and bazaars. For many years political and other factors held back the exploration of this heritage. The last decade, however, has seen a resurgence of archaeological activity in Kurdistan to the extent that it has become one of the most vibrant areas of near eastern archaeological research. More than forty international projects have commenced work in the region and others are in the pipeline. A major part has been played by regional survey projects which are for the first time systematically documenting the archaeological inventory in order to produce an exhaustive record of the region. The maps generated will in their turn be

able to serve as the basis both for heritage management and for the study of settlement history. At the same time the area has seen a flourishing of excavations investigating every phase of human occupation from the palaeolithic onwards. Together these endeavours are generating basic new data which is leading to a new understanding of the arrival of mankind, the development of agriculture, the emergence of cities, the evolution of complex societies and the forging of the great empires in this crucible of mankind. These field activities are complemented by epigraphic studies, numismatics and historical researches. There is a new focus on the conservation and preservation of both sites and finds, spearheaded by the Erbil based Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage.

We would like to express our deep thanks and appreciation to everyone who helped make this such a stimulating venture: to all who came to Athens to take part, to colleagues who while unable to attend nevertheless ensured that their work was represented, to everyone involved in researching and documenting this region's rich heritage, and last but not least, to Mr. Mala Awat, Head of the General Directorate of Antiquities of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and to all our colleagues from the Directorates and Universities of Kurdistan who have led the way and who have been so welcoming to the archaeologists and scholars from across the international community.

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