

## **EAA 2022: acceptance speech, read by Arwa Kharobi on August 31, 2022.**

I am delighted to be here and accept this prize in the name of [Federico Buccellati](#), the Director of the [Mozan/Urkes](#) Archaeological Project, who has been prevented to come in person because of a personal emergency in the family, and in the name of all the people who give life and meaning to the project – in particular:

- [Hiba Qassar](#), the Director of the School program;
- [Yasmine Mahmoud](#), who manages the project from Damascus;
- [Amer Ahmad](#), our archaeologist who keeps everything going at the site.

I am [Arwa Kharobi](#), and am also part of this unique project that has opened a bright ray of light in the darkness of the current Syrian situation, and has become a beacon of how a remote archaeological past can become integrated and come to be felt as living heritage by all the communities that live around the site.

The prize gives special recognition to one particular program, namely the [One-on-One](#) and the [School projects](#), which bring together the youngsters, from grammar to high school, from the region of Urkes with their counterparts in Europe. In the last few years, we have seen a remarkable new bond emerge among these youngsters, as they talk to each other about the archaeology in their own backyards, raising the awareness of their identity in the light of what diversity there is in everyone's background. The pride that comes from recognizing the value of one's roots is palpable in all the many experiences we have seen mature and take shape in the course of our work.

It is a pride we, too, the many archaeologists active in the project, deeply share. It gives us reason for a new sense of commitment to what we are doing as scholars, to see how profoundly relevant the traces of a life once lived, and still alive today, are for the young ones as they gain a sense of who they are not only as individuals, but as members of a community that thrives on shared memory.

The recognition your prize gives us also goes to the funding agencies that have made it possible for us to carry on the project, of which we wish to remember, in particular, the [Kaplan Fund](#), the [Balzan Foundation](#), the [Cariplo Foundation](#), and the Italian Foreign Ministry. They, too, share deeply in our pride.

Thank you!