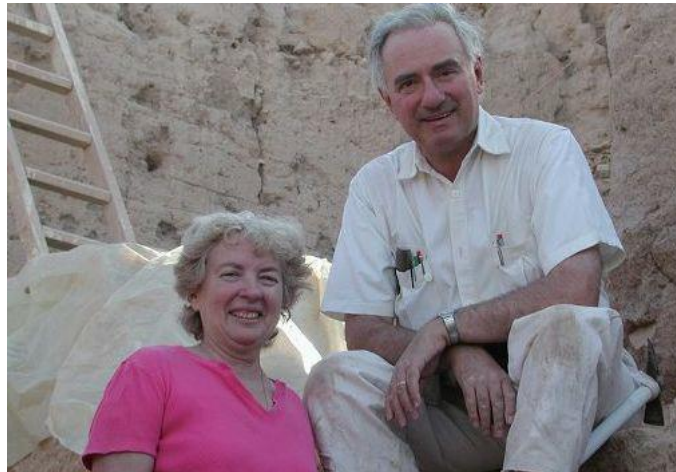


<https://www.24newsonline.it/index.php/nazionale/67568-a-giorgio-buccellati-e-marilyn-kelly-archeologi-con-l-ossola-nel-cuore-un-importante-premio-internazionale>

To Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly, archaeologists with Ossola in their hearts, an important international prize



BACENO – 06-20-2022 -- Giorgio Buccellati is a world renowned archaeologist. Together with his wife, Marilyn Kelly, he led the archaeological excavations that brought to light the ancient city of Urkesh in Syria, founded by the Hurrians and forgotten for more than three thousand years. He is very linked to Valdossola: just think that since 2018 he has promoted an educational and cultural project, entitled “Archaeology for a young future”, which led the Domo middle school “Floeanini” to be in contact with a school in Qamishli, a Syrian town near to an important archaeological site. Recently, news has come of an international award obtained by the Buccellati spouses: the “2021 [Balzan Prize](#) for Art and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East”, promoted by the homonymous foundation named after the journalist Eugenio Francesco Balzan (1874 – 1953). The reason for the award refers to the “successes obtained in the study of the Hurrian culture”, which made it known as the “founder of a great urban civilization, one of the most flourishing of the Ancient Near East in the third millennium BC”, but also to the fact that the two scholars have promoted a digital approach to the study of archeology; “for having cultivated the theoretical approaches to this discipline”. Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati will receive the award in Bern

on ~~July 22~~ July 1, together with several other scholars from around the world, including another Italian, Alessandra Buonanno, awarded the prize for her research in Physics and Astrophysics. Each year the Balzan Foundation offers four international prizes, two in the fields of literature, humanities and arts, and two more in that of physical, mathematical, natural and medical sciences. By regulation, half of the 750,000 Swiss Francs of the prize (approximately 724,000 Euros) must be allocated to research and specifically to projects conducted by young researchers. In fact, the Foundation aims to favor new or emerging research fields and to support important fields of study, but neglected by other major international awards. In addition to this, it intends to promote the most deserving humanitarian initiatives, of peace and brotherhood among peoples. This last detail brings us back to the educational project between Domodossola and Syria, entitled “Archaeology for a young future”, which obtained in November 2020, together with an Estonian cultural initiative, the “[ILUCIDARE](#)” Special Prize, offered by the homonymous consortium as part of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards, promoted by Europa Nostra in collaboration with the European Commission. “ILUCIDARE” is a project funded by the E.U. which promotes cultural heritage as a resource for innovation and international cooperation. The cultural exchange between Italian and Syrian students was also described in an exhibition at the Meeting of Rimini in 2018. On that occasion (see [notice](#) on AVASA) we interviewed Giorgio Buccellati (<http://www.ossola24.it/index.php/17116-siria-reopens-the-national-museum-present-a-piece-of-ossola>). The link between the famous archaeologist and Valdossola does not end here: when, together with his wife, he created the “Associazione per la Valorizzazione dell’Archeologia e della Storia Antica” ([AVASA](#)) [i.e. “Association for the Enhancement of Archeology and Ancient History”], he chose to locate its headquarters in Baceno and from Baceno come some members of its Board of Directors. “The origins of this decision date back to when I was studying at the Catholic University of Milan – explains Buccellati – The Ecclesiastical Assistant, Father Luigi Villa, had found a house in Graglia, a hamlet of Baceno, and we were coming up. I did so for two years, then I went abroad but the bond with Baceno remained. When I returned with my wife and son we first rented, then bought a house in Beola. It is a very inhabited area, where we also have many friends, there is an intense

local life and we are well connected for the journeys we make, thanks to the railway and the Malpensa airport". The Buccellati spouses, despite their advanced age, are still in full activity. Their project with the "Floreatini" school has undergone a pause but they want to restart it. Moreover: they have extended it to various schools around Italy. Among these, also the primary schools of Baceno, where they met the children a few days ago. Meanwhile, they are transforming Beola into a kind of research center of international level; between August and September they will hold a series of study days there. In Syria they are trying to keep alive the presence on the territory of the archaeological excavations. Buccellati proudly describes the role this plays in rescuing young people from the coils of extremism and terrorism. The local population is fully involved in the protection and enhancement of their historical heritage. "Until before Covid – he says – we had organized tours, we gave conferences in the villages. An experience that began during the war years; we suspended it only for Covid. Many other sites have been abandoned and vandalism came up; ours are instead well maintained. People from a village near one of our sites asked us for permission before digging a [well](#) to fight the drought". The two scholars have also already decided how to use the Balzan Prize funds. "We will use them all in research, not just half, as the regulation requires – replies Buccellati immediately – We will use them for a project that we have developed along with the Catholic University and the Polytechnic of Milan: it concerns the use of digital technology not just to document the conducted research, but also to develop websites with many levels of analysis carried out in parallel, which are related to each other. This is not possible in a book; at most you can create notes that refer to another book or article; in a website you can have a whole scaffolding of levels within the site itself or with other sites created in a similar way, a series of arguments in dynamic relationship between them. This should once again develop in young people a capacity that they seem to have lost: putting together things leading to the discovery of what is not yet known. Today on the internet young people tend not to do it anymore; they tend to focus on the already known".

Mauro Zuccari