

Wednesday, July 13, 2022

<http://www.ossola24.it/index.php/37964-il-premio-balzan-2021-alla-coppia-di-archeologi-giorgio-buccellati-e-marilyn-kelly-buccellati>

“The 2021 Balzan Prize to the couple of archaeologists Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati”



BERN – Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, internationally renowned archaeologists, were awarded with the prestigious “2021 Balzan Prize for Art and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East.” A couple at work and also in life, the two scholars are known for their research at the Urkesh site in Syria.

The award was assigned to them on Friday, July 1 at the Federal Palace of Bern with the following motivation: “For the successes obtained in the study of Hurrian culture and for having revealed its importance as the founder of a great urban civilization, one of the most flourishing in the Ancient Near East in the third millennium BC; for promoting the digital approach to the study of archaeology; for having cultivated theoretical approaches to this discipline.”

The Buccellati spouses are well known also in the VCO [Verbano Cusio Ossola] for their cultural and research activities, and because they are the founders of the AVASA association – “Associazione per la Valorizzazione dell’Archeologia e della Storia Antica” [“Association for Furthering Value Archaeology and Ancient History”], which is based in Baceno.

The ceremony, in the presence of the President of the National Council of the Swiss Confederation Irène Kälin, was introduced by the President of the “Balzan Foundation,” Gisèle Girgis-Musy, and by the President of the “Balzan Prize,” Alberto Quadrio Curzio. According to the ceremonial procedure,

each winner, presented by Luciano Maiani, President of the “General Prizes Committee,” delivered a speech of acceptance and thanks.

“Marilyn and I went to the field together for the first time in 1966. We spent a month in Syria, surveying the steppe near Palmyra, and then three months in Iraq, digging in the ancient site of Nippur. Many other seasons of fieldwork followed, in Iraq, Turkey, Georgia and especially in Syria, until the great project of Tell Mozan, the ancient Urkesh, where the excavations stopped in 2011 at the beginning of the war, at which point we began an intense activity of community archaeology with local stakeholders. The award of the “Balzan Foundation” comes as the culmination of our effort, which has recently passed the milestone of half a century. By accepting it, we wish to express our deep gratitude for the recognition it gives of the theoretical and practical implications of our approach” (excerpt from Giorgio Buccellati’s speech).

The “International Balzan Foundation,” an organization that operates between Milan and Zurich, aiming at encouraging culture, science, and the most deserving humanitarian initiatives of peace and brotherhood among peoples, annually assigns the “Balzan Prizes” to scholars and scientists who are internationally distinguished.

The prizes are worth 750,000 Swiss Francs (approximately 740,000 Euros) for each of the four subjects and a half has to be allocated by the winners to research projects.