

Alessio Agostini (MA and PhD, University of Florence) teaches Semitic Epigraphy and Philology at the Sapienza University of Rome. His main interests focus on the archaeology and ancient languages of the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula. Since 2002, he has been member of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Yemen, directed by the late Alessandro de Maigret (IsIAO – ‘Orientale’ University of Naples), where he has been field director and epigraphist at the sites of Baraqish, Tamna‘ and at the necropolis of Hayd ibn ‘Aqil. He has been Marie Curie Fellow at the French CNRS (UMR 8167 “Orient & Méditerranée”, Paris) and collaborator to the Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions (direction of A. Avanzini, University of Pisa). In recent years he also conducted excavations and field surveys in the Sultanate of Oman (2013) and Ethiopia (Tigray, 2017).

Francesca Balossi Restelli graduated at the Sapienza University of Rome (1998) in Prehistory of the Near East, she took a master’s course at the University of Michigan, USA (1999). PhD at the University of Rome La Sapienza. Aggregate professor since 2008 at the same university. Alexander von Humboldt fellow in 2016-18. Habilitation for Associate Professor in Prehistory and in Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, in 2012. She teaches Prehistory of the Near East for the BA, Ma and graduate school. She is member of the Doctoral School in Archaeology and Associate Editor of the Journal “Origini”. Field research activities: yearly, since 1993, in Europe, Central America and the Near East. Vice-Director of the excavations at the site of Arslantepe, Turkey. She is part of the working group for the construction of a site management plan for Arslantepe and is involved in community programs for the enhancement of the knowledge on the site of Arslantepe. Research Interests: Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods in the Near East, domestication, development of complex societies, specialization of craft production, commensality as an instrument of social cohesion and/or social success, and as expression of socio-cultural identity.

Maria Giovanna Biga. Since 2001 Associate professor at the Sapienza University of Rome. From 1976 to 2010 (date of the last archaeological mission before the war in Syria) epigraphist of the Italian Archaeological Mission at Ebla. She published, with A. Archi and L. Milano, two volumes of the Serie Archivi Reali di Ebla with editions of Ebla texts, the volume *I Babilonesi* (Carocci ed.) and with Gloria Capomacchia the volume *Il politeismo vicino-orientale* (Poligrafico dello Stato ed.). She published on Italian and international revues several articles on different topics of the Ebla culture, establishing the chronology of the Ebla texts, reconstructing the military campaigns, studying the commerce and fairs, the society and the life of the Ebla court. She also published several articles on different topics of different periods of the History of the ancient Near East. She was visiting professor in Paris (three times) at EPHE and once at the Collège de France (four lessons) and in Spain (Zaragoza). She gave (invited) several lectures in Universities in Italy, Europe and US. She participated (invited) to several international conferences in Europe and US.

Julian Bogdani is Researcher (fixed-term) at the Sapienza University of Rome. He obtained his PhD in 2009 at the University of Bologna. He has been Research Fellow at the University of Bologna from 2011 to 2016, where he collaborated with several archaeological projects, both in Italy (regions of Emilia-Romagna, Marche, Basilicata, Trentino-Alto Adige, Campania) and abroad (Albania, Egypt, Iraqi Kurdistan, Iran, Croatia, Afghanistan) etc. His main research interests are: landscape archaeology, archaeological field survey, Hellenistic archaeology, topographical survey and data management, Geographical Information and database Systems applied to cultural heritage, Information Technology applications to archaeology and history. He presently teaches Digital Heritage at the Sapienza University of Rome and is responsible for the Information System, web database and the construction of the online Atlas of the ERC Advanced project “PATHs - Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths (directed by Paola Buzi).

Paola Buzi is Full Professor of Egyptology and Coptic Studies at the Sapienza University of Rome and Honorary Professor of the same disciplines at the University of Hamburg. She got a PhD in Egyptology in 2002. She has been working at the University of Bologna and at the Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen/University of Hamburg. She sits on the Board of the International Association of Coptic Studies (IACS) and is a member of the International Associations of Egyptologists and the Academia Europaea. She is Senior Research Fellow of the School for Advanced Studies of the Sapienza University of Rome (SSAS). She combines archaeological, historical-religious, and philological interests applied to both Egyptological and Coptic studies. She is co-Director of the Archaeological Mission at Bakchias (Fayyum, Egypt) and Director of the Course for Advanced Studies in Egyptology “From Formation to Research”.

Mario Casari is Aggregate professor in Persian Language and Literature at the Italian Institute of Oriental Studies, 'Sapienza' University of Rome. His research deals mainly with the circulation of texts and cultural relations between Europe and the Islamic world from medieval times to the modern age, with a wide variety of approaches, presented in several publications: medieval narrative literature, with special attention to the oriental travel of the Alexander Romance; history of children's literature in Iran and the Arab world; Oriental studies in Europe; Arabic and Persian gastronomic literature. He has presented lectures, seminars, and conference papers on all aspects of his research in Italy and internationally. In 2011 he was awarded the Al-Farabi-UNESCO prize for his book *Alessandro e Utopia nei romanzi persiani medievali* (1999). In 2018 he was awarded the “Premio per la Cultura Mediterranea” for his translation work from Arabic and Persian. He is scientific coordinator of the 'Islamic Civilisation' Curriculum for the Doctorate, 'Civilisations of Asia and Africa', 'Sapienza' University of Rome. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, and a member of Scientific Board of the Institut für Iranistik, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien.

Carlo G. Cereti is Full Professor of Iranian Studies at the Sapienza University of Rome and director of the winter school in *Cultural Heritage in the Near and Middle East*. Former Cultural Counsellor (2009-2017) at the Italian Embassy in Teheran, he collaborates with the UMRS 7528 “Monde iranien et indien” of the CNRS and with the Institute for technologies applied to cultural heritage of the CNR. He is also a Fellow of the School for Advanced Studies of the Sapienza University of Rome (SSAS) and Director of the Mediterranean branch of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies. His research focuses on pre-Islamic Iran, combining interests in historical-religious, philological and archaeological aspects of this area. He presently directs the Italian Archaeological Mission to Iraqi Kurdistan and the research project “Transitional Dynamics in Iranian Society. From the Sasanians to Caliphal authority”.

Angelo Colonna is Research Fellow in Egyptology at the Sapienza University of Rome, where he obtained his PhD in 2014. Since 2015, he has been collaborating with the Chair of Egyptology and Coptic Studies as “Cultore della Materia” and has been Tutor of the Course for Advanced Studies in Egyptology “From Formation to Research”. He conducted a postdoctoral research with the support of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei (2016) and the Istituto Italiano per la Storia Antica (2017) and was Academic Visitor at the Oriental Institute – Oxford University (2017) under the supervision of John Baines. Since 2017, he is member (Junior Staff, Egyptologist) of the ERC project “PATHs - Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths” (directed by Paola Buzi). He is member of the International Association of Egyptologists. As field archaeologist, he has participated in archaeological missions and surveys in Egypt and North Sudan. His main research interests focus on: state formation; early

ideology and writing (development, uses); material aspects of Egyptian High Culture (monumental art and religious iconography of the 3rd mill. BC); historical reconstruction of religious forms and practices (value and role within society), with special attention to animal worship.

Michelina Di Cesare is Assistant Professor in Archeology and History of Islamic Art (PhD) at the Department of Sciences of Antiquity of Sapienza University of Rome and Junior Fellow of the Advanced School of Advanced Studies Sapienza.

Prior to this position, she carried out her researches at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz-Max-Planck-Institut in Florence, at the Italian Institute for Historical Studies in Naples, at the Internationales Kolleg für Geisteswissenschaftliche Forschung “Schicksal, Freiheit und Prognose. Bewältigungsstrategien in Ostasien und Europa” of the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, as well as at the Department of Science of Antiquity of the Sapienza University of Rome. She has lectured and participated in numerous national and international conferences in Europe and the United States.

Maria Vittoria Fontana Since 2000 Full Professor of Islamic Archaeology and History of Art at “L’Orientale” University in Naples. Since 2005, she is teaching “Islamic Archaeology” and “Islamic Archaeology and History of Art” at the Sapienza University of Rome. Since 1973, she participated in numerous excavation campaigns in Iran (Isfahan) and Jordan (Jerash); since 1992, directed Urban and Archaeological Projects in Yemen (Tihama coast, al-Hudayda, al-Luhaya, al-Mukha) and Iran (Istakhr). Her scientific interests focus on both field activity and iconographic-iconological studies, and also intercultural issues between the Islamic and the Western world. She is the author of more than 100 scientific articles in volumes, and monographs (6). She participated, by invitation and presenting reports, in 32 International Conferences and numerous National Conferences; she was also invited to hold 28 conferences in Europe, Asia, Africa and the USA.

Rita Francia is Assistant Professor in Anatolian Studies at the Department of Sciences of Antiquity of the Sapienza University of Rome. She graduated at the Sapienza University of Rome (1991) in Hittitology; PhD at the University of Florence (1995) and at the Sapienza University of Rome (2013); graduated at the School of “Paleografia Archivistica e Diplomatica” of the Archivio di Stato of Rome (1997). She obtained numerous scholarships both from Italy and Germany. She is member of the PhD School in History and Philology of the Ancient World of the Sapienza University of Rome and member of the editorial board of *Studia Asiana*. She teaches Anatolistic and Hittitology at the Sapienza University of Rome, and Hittite History, Religion and Culture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. Her research fields are Hittite philology, linguistic, history, archivist, paleography and diplomatic of Hittite texts.

Marcella Frangipane is Full Professor of Prehistory and Protohistory at the Sapienza University of Rome, where she teaches Prehistory and Protohistory of the Near and Middle East and Strategies and Methods of Archaeological Research. She is a Foreign Associate Member of the National Academy of Sciences (USA), and a Corresponding Member of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Berlin and the Italian Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. She is also the editor in chief of the journal *Origini* and the editor of two monograph series, *Arslantepe* and *Studi di Preistoria Orientale* (SPO), all published by the Sapienza University of Rome.

She has participated in field research in Mexico, Italy, Egypt and Turkey, becoming field vice-director of the Sapienza excavations at the Late Predynastic site of Maadi (Egypt), and, in 1990, the director of the Italian Archaeological Project in Eastern Anatolia (excavations at Arslantepe-Malatya and Zeytinli Bahçe-Urfa, Turkey). The Arslantepe Project, where Prof. Frangipane has worked for more than forty years, is the core of her research activity. The results obtained through interdisciplinary investigation at that site have oriented her main research interests toward themes such as the rise and

early developments of hierarchical societies; the emergence of inequality; and the rise of centralised economies, bureaucracy, and the State in the ancient Near East, with particular reference to Mesopotamian and Anatolian environments. For her research at Arslantepe, Prof. Frangipane received the Discovery Award by the Shanghai Archaeology Forum (2015); the Vittorio De Sica Prize for Science (Archaeology) (2015); and the Rotondi Prize to Saviors of Art (2017). She has also received two honorary titles by the President of the Italian Republic and an honorary PhD by the University of Malatya.

Ciro Lo Muzio Associate Professor of Indian and Central Asian Archaeology and Art History in the Department - Italian Institute of Oriental Studies, Sapienza University of Rome. Habilitated (2018) as Full Professor. BA (1984) in Central Asian Archaeology and Art History in the Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli. PhD (1994) in Eastern Asian Art History (Central Asian curriculum) at the Università degli studi di Genova, with a dissertation on the iconography of Śiva in Central Asian art. Research fellowship (2000-2002) in the Department of Oriental Studies (Sapienza University of Rome), on the theme “Religious iconography in Sogdiana”. He took part to the activities of the Italian Archaeological Mission to Nepal (1986) of the IsMEO (Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente). From 1995 to 2010 he has been a member of the Uzbek-Italian Archaeological Mission to Uzbekistan, taking part to the field research (surveys, diggings) and to the study of the material, in particular terracottas and wall paintings. He teaches Indian and Central Asian Archaeology and Art History in the School of Specialization in Archaeological Heritage, Sapienza University of Rome. He has been (2010-2013) Coordinator of the PhD course (Doctorate) in Asia’s and Africa’s Civilisations (Department - Italian Institute of Oriental Studies, Sapienza University of Rome), and is in the teaching staff of the same PhD course. Since 2015 he is Head of the first and second level programs in Oriental Languages and Civilisations, at the Italian Institute of Oriental Studies, Sapienza University of Rome. He is member of the scientific board of the *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*.

Christian Greco is Director of the Museo Egizio in Turin since 2014. He led and directed the repurposing and renewal of fittings and exhibition itinerary, which concluded on March 31st 2015, which led to the transformation of the Egizio, from an Antiquities Museum to Archeological Museum. Trained mainly in the Netherlands, he is an Egyptologist with a great experience in museums: he has been the Curator of many exhibitions and projects in the Netherlands (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden; Kunsthall, Rotterdam; Teylers Museum, Haarlem), Japan (for the Okinawa, Fukushima, Takasaki and Okayama museums), Finland (Vapriikki Museum, Tampere), Spain (La Caixa Foundation) and Scotland (National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh). While at the head of the Museo Egizio, he developed important international activities of cooperation with museums, universities and research institutes all across the world. He is involved in lectures at the Universities of Torino and Pavia, of the Scuola di Specializzazione in Beni Archeologici of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, of the Scuola IUSS in Pavia with courses in Material Culture of Ancient Egypt, and Museology. Furthermore, he participated as lecturer in many master degrees for Museum Management and Communication, by drawing on his work and research experience. He was a member of the Epigraphic Survey of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago in Luxor and, since 2011, he is Co-Director of the Italian-Dutch archeological mission in Saqqara. He has many educational and scientific publications in different languages to his record, and numerous participations to Egyptology and Museology International Agreements as a keynote speaker. Since 2015 he is a member of the Technical-Scientific Committee for the Archeological Heritage of the MiBACT and of the management board of the MANN (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli).

Giulio Maresca earned his PhD from “L’Orientale” University of Naples in 2008 defending a thesis on “Material Culture and Settlement Pattern in Sistan (Eastern Iran) from the Achaemenid to the Sasanian period: preliminary re-interpretation of the data from the Italian IsMEO archaeological activities”. Since July 2016 he is a post-doctoral Research Fellow at “L’Orientale” University in Naples within the frame of a project entitled “The Eastern Iranian Region of Sistan during the Achaemenid Period: Cultural Interactions and Local Developments in the Light of the Material Culture. Case Study: Dahane-ye Gholaman”. Since the academic year 2017/2018 he is Adjunct Professor of Iranian Archaeology at the Sapienza University of Rome and Adjunct Professor of Central Asian Archaeology at “L’Orientale” University of Naples. Since 2017 he is responsible of a research project (2017-2020) entitled “Before Zranka: Researches on the Archaeological Elusiveness of the Early Iron Age in Iranian Sistan” financed by “L’Orientale” University in Naples (Department “Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo”). Since 2017 he is a Member of ISMEO - Associazione Internazionale di Studi sul Mediterraneo e l’Oriente, Rome. His main research interests focus on the evolution of the settlement patterns and of the material culture on the Iranian Plateau from the Achaemenid to the Sasanian period, on the cultural interactions between south-eastern Iran and neighbouring areas from the Achaemenid to the Sasanian period in the light of the ceramic evidence, on the cultural landscape of Iran during the Sasanian period. He participated in several international archaeological activities, at Isfahan (Iran), Bishapur (Iran), Samarkand (Uzbekistan), Firuzabad (Iran) and in the region of Sistan (Iran).

Paolo Matthiae is Emeritus Professor of the Sapienza University of Rome. Founder and Director of the Italian Archaeological Expedition to Ebla since 1963, co-Director with Frances Pinnock since 2010. Member of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Associé Étranger of the French Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Foreign Member of the Akademie der Wissenschaften of Vienna, member of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut. Knight of Great Cross of the Italian Republic. He worked in Syria without interruptions between 1964 and 2011 and is still strongly engaged in awareness raising about the Cultural Heritage of Syria. He organized several exhibitions about Ebla, the cultures of Syria and the destruction of the Cultural Heritage of Syria and Iraq. He is author of more than 20 monographs and more than 250 articles in scientific journals or volumes. His main interests are Ebla, the cultures of pre-classical Syria and the Assyrian world.

Andrea Meloni Ambassador, formerly Director General for the Promotion of the country system at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, retired since February 2016. He entered the Farnesina in 1975 and served in Mozambique, Argentina and Pakistan; then he returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Directorate General for Development Cooperation; he was later in Geneva as vice-president at GATT and the WTO; again in Argentina as Consul General in Buenos Aires; in the Ministry at the Unit for Analysis and Programming; he further served at the Permanent Representation in Brussels from 2006 to 2010 as Ambassador at the Political and Security Committee (PSC) of the European Union; Ambassador of Italy to Canada from January 2010 to January 2013; General Director for the Promotion of the Country System at MAE from January 2013 to January 2016. As General Director, he held, among others, the responsibility for the activities of cultural promotion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including the management of the network of Italian Cultural Institutes abroad. He is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Fermi Research Alliance of Chicago and a contract professor at the University of Tor Vergata.

Lucia Mori (PhD at Istituto Universitario Orientale, Naples) is Aggregate Professor in History of the Ancient Near East at the Sapienza University of Rome. She is member of the PhD School in History and Philology of the Ancient World, Sapienza University of Rome and associate editor of “Origini” Journal. She is author of two monographs (“Reconstructing the Emar Landscape”, 2003; “Life and Death of a Rural Village in Garamantian Times. Archaeological Investigations at Fawet, Libyan

Sahara”, 2013), and numerous articles in international journals. She has collaborated to several Archaeological Expeditions both in North Africa (Libyan Sahara, with a project on the genesis of the earliest state formation in the Sahara), and in the Near East (Tell Leilan Project, Syria, with Yale University). She is currently member of the Italian Archaeological Expedition in eastern Anatolia and is supervising the re-opening of the Hittite and neo-Hittite areas at Arslantepe (Malatya, Turkey).

Davide Nadali is Aggregate professor in Near Eastern Archaeology at the Sapienza University of Rome and Junior Fellow of the Sapienza School for Advanced Studies (SSAS). Since 1998, he is member of the Italian Archaeological Expedition to Ebla (Syria) and, since 2010, he is involved in the “Ebla Project” for the study and publication of the final reports. Since 2014, he is Co-Director of the Italian Archaeological Expedition to Tell Zurghul/Nigin in Southern Iraq. His main interests of research concern: art, architecture and urbanism in the Assyrian period; the incipient urbanism in ancient Mesopotamia; the study of ancient warfare; the use, meaning and reception of the production of images and pictures in ancient Mesopotamia and Syria with articles as single author and co-authored studies on the impact of pictures in ancient societies.

Lorenzo Nigro, PhD, is Professor of Near Eastern and Phoenician Punic Archaeology in the Faculty of Letters, Dept. of Oriental Studies at the Sapienza University of Rome. He is an archaeologist with 25 years of experience on the field in the Near East and the Mediterranean. Since 2002, he is the Director of the Sapienza Expeditions to Motya, a Phoenician colony in Western Sicily, to Palestine & Jordan (2004-2018) carrying on projects at the sites of Tell es-Sultan (ancient Jericho), Tell Abu Zarad (ancient Tappuah), and Bethlehem in Palestine; and Khirbet al-Batrawy, a 3rd millennium BC early city. He coordinated several programs for Cultural Heritage protection in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. His studies address pre-classical societies in the Levant and the Mediterranean ranging from architecture to metallurgy, from pottery to art, with a major focus on contextual archaeology, safeguard, as well as on historical and cultural synchronization and conceptualization of Levantine and Mediterranean civilizations as part of Humankind Cultural Heritage. He is among the highest ranked scholars in Levantine and Mediterranean Archaeology in Scopus and academia.edu

Frances Pinnock, Associate Professor of Archaeology and Art History of the Ancient Near East at the Sapienza University of Rome, Co-Director with Paolo Matthiae of the Ebla Expedition since 2010. Member of the International Advisory Board of the Collaborative Research Center 1070 “Resource Cultures” of the University of Tübingen. Member of the scientific committees of several exhibitions, most recently of the exhibition “Reborn from Destruction: Ebla, Nimrud, Palmyra”, held in the Coliseum, October-December 2016. Secretary-General of the Scientific Committee of the International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East. Representative for Italy in the International Workshop “Regional Training on Syrian Cultural Heritage: Addressing the Issue of Illicit Trafficking” organized by UNESCO, Amman Office, 2013. Author of 6 scientific monographs, co-editor of 7 volumes, author of more than 70 scientific articles and more than 60 contributions in encyclopedias, catalogues of exhibitions or other journals.

Piero Pruneti was born in Florence 1st February 1948. Teacher in Literary subjects for fifteen years in secondary school. Become a scientific journalist and collaborator of archeology, art and environment with the magazines "Airone", "Qui Touring", "Scienze e vita", "Mondo archeologico", "Universo". In 1982 he founded and still directs ARCHEOLOGIA VIVA (35.000 copies, Giunti Editore), the first Italian periodical magazine on the newsstand of scientific divulgation in the historical-archaeological sector, to which the best experts in the field of Italian universities collaborate. He organized from 1992 to 2013 the "Lessons of archeology and underwater sciences"

in Ustica island to spread the knowledge and respect of underwater cultural heritage. In 2015 he founded and still directs "tourismA -Archaeology and Cultural Tourism Exhibition", the yearly most important and participated European fair event dedicated to archaeological communication and the promotion of cultural heritage, at Congress Palace in Florence. In 2017 he founded and directs "Firenze Archeofilm-International Festival of Archeology Art Environment", where about 80 documentary films are presented every year from all over the world.

Marco Ramazzotti graduated at the Sapienza University of Rome (1996) in Near Eastern Archaeology and Art History, he took the PhD (2002) and Specialization (2005) in the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East at the Sapienza University of Rome. Research fellow in Computer Science at the Semeion Research Center of Rome since 2003 and Aggregate professor in Near Eastern Archaeology and Art History since 2007, he teaches as adjunct professor and follows bachelor's degree students, master's degree students, specialization's degree students and PhD students in Near Eastern Archaeology and Art History and in Museums and Archaeological Parks Valorization. He is member of the Doctoral School in Archaeology, member of the editorial board of the Journals "Cognitive Philology" and "Scienze dell'Antichità", scientific reviewer of the Journals "Orientalia" and "Physica A", director of the Laboratory of Analytical Archaeology and Artificial Adaptive Systems (LAA&AAS) and co-director of the "Atlas of the Ancient Near East" (since 2016). Since 1989, he participated in many archaeological excavations, topographic surveys, geophysical prospections and restoration field activities on the natural and anthropic landscapes in Africa and Western Asia, especially in Syria, where he has been area supervisor of excavations and cooperated to the planning and opening of the Ebla Archaeological Park. He participated, by invitation and presenting reports, to many Conferences in Western Asia, Europe, Peru and the USA; he also organized interdisciplinary exhibits on the arts and sciences of the ancient Near Eastern Civilizations in collaboration with different regional museums and important international museums (Musei Capitolini, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Palazzo Strozzi, British Museum, Musée du Louvre, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin). He is author and co-author of three scientific monographs and over seventy publications in scientific journals and books, and he is also editor of the proceedings of national and international congresses and workshops. In his researches on the urban origin and archaic state formation, on the mythopoetic thought and on the visual languages he combines cultural-historical approaches, semiotic analysis and computational modelling.

Gianfilippo Terribili is Researcher in Iranian Studies at the Department of Sciences of Antiquity (DiSA) – Sapienza University of Rome. After his PhD that focused on the Pahlavi book *Dēnkard* III and the Zoroastrian controversy over cultural identity in the early-Islamic period, he continued his research in the field of Middle Iranian Languages and Zoroastrian religion. His primary interests include, in a broader perspective, the religions of ancient Iran, the Zoroastrian literature in Middle Persian language and Sasanian epigraphy. Since 2006, he has participated in the Sapienza University Projects and Archaeological Missions led by Carlo G. Cereti, which dealt with the study and preservation of the cultural heritage in the region of Iraqī Kurdistan. In this framework he has conducted fieldwork on the Sasanian monument of Paikuli and the bilingual inscription (Middle Persian and Parthian) engraved by the king Narseh (293-302 CE). Since 2017, he participates in new DiSA research projects focused on Iran and the impact of writing on that society between Late Antiquity and Middle Ages.

Lorenzo Verderame is aggregate professor in Assyriology at the "Sapienza" University of Rome. After a four-year teaching contract in History of the Ancient Near East at the University of Palermo, in 2008 he gained the position of researcher in Assyriology at "Sapienza" University of Rome. The position became tenured-track in 2011. In February 2014, he received the habilitation ("abilitazione scientifica nazionale", ASN) for the position of Professor of II level (Associate Professor), according to the Italian evaluation system. His research topics cover the range of cuneiform cultures of ancient

Mesopotamia from the beginning of the third millennium B.C. to the first millennium B.C. One of the two main focuses of his research has been the third millennium administrative documents in Sumerian language, mainly from the Ur III period. The second focus of his research deals with the study of divination, mainly as documented in Akkadian sources from the first millennium B.C. Besides, he has carried out other major academic works on Sumerian literature and the Mesopotamian religious system; in particular, in recent years he has focused on the study of rituals and on aspects of material culture. Since 2012, he is carrying out a project on the unpublished Old Babylonian letters kept in the Yale Babylonian collection. He is member and director of different national, as well as international, projects, such as the Ur Digitization Project at the British Museum. He is member of the International Association for Assyriology, and of the editorial board of the international journals *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* and *SMSR - Studi e materiali di studi orientali*. He actively collaborates with the Trustees of the British Museum in the publication project of Neo-Sumerian tablets. Since autumn 2013, he holds the role of head epigrapher of the joint archaeological excavation of "Sapienza" University of Rome, Università di Perugia, and the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities that is being undertaken in the ancient Sumerian town of Nina/Niĝin (Surghul), in south Iraq.

Gihane Zaki is Director of the Egyptian Academy in Rome. She studied at the University of Helwan (Cairo), and that of Lyon 2 (Louis Lumière) in France, up until 2000, when she received her (PhD) in Egyptology. Following the completion of her educational journey, Gihane Zaki went back to Cairo where she joined the Helwan University's teaching staff to be in charge of courses for Civilization and Religion of Ancient Egypt, as well as courses for History of Art. In parallel, she supervised Masters and PhD programmes in Egyptology, History of Art in collaboration with different European Universities. For almost 10 years (2003-2012), Gihane Zaki acquired a large experience in the International Organisations realm as she was a key player of the Egyptian Government for the World Heritage convention for the protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage as well as different strategic UNESCO dossiers in regards with the Egyptian Culture. In 2011 Gihane Zaki moved to UNESCO's regional office and dealt with the World Heritage dossier of Egypt as Consultant for UNESCO and no longer as a member state. In September of 2012, Gihane Zaki started a new path, after winning the National Concours launched by the Egyptian government for the prestigious position of Director of the « Accademia di Belli Arti d'Egitto a Roma » to be the first woman taking the lead of this unique Arab and African renowned cultural platform in Europe. Gihane Zaki received numerous awards and honors, among them the « Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite », the honorific Membership of the German Institute for Archeology (2010), ICCROM-ATHAR Recognition (2013), Bouclier of the Cairo Opera House (2014).