Dialogues between ancient Western Asia and us. Untold stories from Italian collections and archives (DiWA)

The project "Dialogues between ancient Western Asia and us. Untold stories from Italian collections and archives" (DiWA), financed by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR) and Next Generation EU, is aimed at the study, enhancement and communication of the collections of Western Asia artefacts and related archives housed in two of the most important Italian museums: the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze (MAF) and the Museo di Antichità – Musei Reali di Torino (MAT).

DiWA is a transdisciplinary project involving historians, archaeologists, and philologists of ancient Western Asia, as well as experts in non-invasive diagnostics as applied to cultural heritage, virtual museums, public archaeology, and cultural heritage communication.

The goal of the DiWA project is to characterize the Western Asia collections housed in Florence and Turin as free spaces for dialogue between past and present, and between countries and cultures.

The present workshop illustrates the results of the project, in conversation with scholars of other institutions (Aarhus University, SOAS University of London, LMU Munich, Musée du Louvre, Museo delle Civiltà, Rome).

The event is organised by the Institute of Heritage Science of the National Research Council (CNR, ISPC), in collaboration with the University of Milan, the University of Turin and the University of Florence.

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International Workshop PRIN 2022 PNRR

Friday, 17 October 2025

CNR, Piazzale Aldo Moro 7, Rome

Welcome Address

9:00 Costanza Miliani (Director ISPC, CNR)

Introduction to the Workshop

9:15 Silvia Alaura (CNR, ISPC Rome – PI project DiWA)
The Project DiWA: From Objective To Result

Keynote Lecture

9:45 Filiz Tütüncü Çağlar (UrbNet, Aarhus University)
The Ottomans Read Homer Too: How the Imperial Museum in Istanbul Engaged with Antiquity (Besides Losing It)

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break

Session 1 – Glimpses from the Archives of Ancient Western Asia Collections

Chair: Anna Consonni (MAF)

11:00 Nadia Ait Said-Ghanem (SOAS, University of London)
Women Art Dealers in 19th century Baghdad: the case of Mrs Ferida Antone Shamas

11:30 Elena Devecchi (University of Turin)
Buying Mesopotamian Antiquities in Paris, 1921: Reconstructing the Acquisition History of the Turin Collection

12:00 Silvia Alaura (CNR, ISPC Rome), Fiammetta Gori (LMU Munich)
Western Asia Collection in Florence (MAF) between Antiquity Dealers and Archaeological Expeditions

12:30 – 14:30 Lunch Break

Session 2 – Interdisciplinary Approaches to Ancient Western Asia Collections

Chair: Marco Bonechi (CNR, ISPC Rome)

14:30 Ariane Thomas (Musée du Louvre), Clélia Paladre (Musée du Louvre)
Bringing the Louvre Ancient Near Eastern Collections to a new Life: from Archives and 3D Projects to New Galleries

15:00 Stefano de Martino (University of Turin)
High-definition Archaeological Artefacts: Oriental Finds from Musei Reali (Turin) and from Other Collections

15:30 Amalia Catagnoti (University of Florence), Candida Felli (University of Florence), Tatiana Pedrazzi (CNR, ISPC Milan), Claudia Conti (CNR, ISPC Milan)
Looking into details: an analytical approach to the study of Western Asia antiquities from the MAF collection

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee Break

Session 3 – Towards a new Presentation and Fruition of Ancient Western Asia Collections

Chair: Stefania Ermidoro (CNR, ISPC Rome)

16:30 Laura Giuliano (Museo delle Civiltà, Rome)
Waiting for the reopening of the Asian Galleries at the Museo delle Civiltà, Rome: EUR_Asia*, an exhibition in progress*

17:00 Rossana Damiano (University of Turin)
Presentation of the joint Virtual Exhibition of the MAT & MAF Collections "La Mesopotamia in mostra: un viaggio virtuale tra le collezioni di Torino e Firenze". Design notes and development directions

17:30 Luca Peyronel (University of Milan)
Mesopotamian Collections between Intercultural Dialogue and Inclusive Storytelling: Methodological Reflections in a Post-Colonial Perspective

Concluding Remarks

18:00 Silvia Alaura, Amalia Catagnoti, Elena Devecchi, Luca Peyronel

Segreteria scientifica
Marco Bonechi
Stefania Ermidoro

Segreteria organizzativa
Francesca Agostini