This exhibition would like to pay tribute to the Italian Archaeological Missions to Jordan, active here since the early 1920s. Archeological missions also represent a commitment to intercultural dialogue and development policies in Jordan. In particular, two renowned Italian archeologist have contributed to develop the Italian archeological legacy: Renato Bartoccini and Father Michele Piccirillo.
The "Italian Archaeological Expedition to Transjordan" was carried out by Giacomo Guidi (in 1927) and Renato Bartocci (in 1929, 1930, 1933 and 1938). It was the first expedition to excavate the Amman Citadel, after a few previous surveys performed by travelers in the XIX and early XX centuries. Renato Bartocci worked not only in Amman, but traveled also across Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, taking photos and writing reports on several archaeological sites.

All the main monuments visible since then on the Amman Citadel and in the surrounding area were investigated: the Umayyad Palace and its "Audience Hall", as well as the Roman Temple, the Byzantine Church, the Odeon, the Nymphaeum, one of the main gates of the Citadel and two large cisterns. Deep soundings were also performed, in order to reach the Pre-Roman strata.

Recently, a project carried out by Stefano Anastasio and Lucia Botarelli, resulted in the publication of the private archive of Bartocci, today held by the University of Perugia. It consists of excavation journals, architectural drawings, maps and many photos, which make possible to understand, after almost a century, how the Amman Citadel appeared at the time of its first archeological survey.

Photo credits: "Fondo Renato Bartocci", University of Perugia.
Since 1999, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation is supporting the conservation of the Byzantine mosaic floors of the Memorial of Nebo in Jordan. All the precious mosaic floors were cleaned from the bed of concrete incompatible with their preservation, and relocated on the floor or placed on the walls of the new structure. The conservation work was an opportunity to deepen the formation of the Jordanian mosaic technicians who for years have performed the work under the direction of our mosaic experts. In 2015 started the construction of a new warehouse to store, in a suitable way, archaeological finds.

The Italian commitment was not limited to preserve the mosaics in Nebo, and from 2003 to 2007 summer archaeological excavations in Um Rasas and training activities in Khirbet al Mukhayyat were also supported.
The aim of the project, financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, is the promotion and the documentation of the UNESCO site of Umm ar-Rasas. The first phase concentrated on the documentation of the mosaic floors of the complex of the churches of Saint Stephen and of Bishop Sergius. For this documentation an integrated photogrammetric process “Structure from Motion” and laser-scanner applications were used: with microphotogrammetry can be retrieved the chromatic and graphic details needed for an advanced study for restoration and conservation, and the laser-scanner gives an exact geometrical and spatial representation of the elements under study. The models was further elaborated with an inspection, i.e. the comparison of the depths of the floor with a fictitious plane, showing with darker colours (towards red) the depressions formed through the time. In the project geophysics will be used to determine buried anomalies (geological and/or anthropical). The main aim will be establishing whether under the mosaic floor and in the foundations of the tower exist structures or soil subsidences that might have caused damages to the mosaic and static instability to the tower. For the moment we used these geophysical investigations for the knowledge and the conservation of the site of Petra near the Treasure Tomb (Al Khazneh). The same technique in the future will be used in the site of Umm ar-Rasas.
The site of Khirbet al-Batrawy was a major 3rd millennium BC fortified town, acting as the central place of Upper Wadi az-Zarga (north-central Jordan), at a strategic crossroad of tracks connecting the desert and the steppe to the Jordan Valley. The city represents a rare example of an early urban centre arising in a ‘peripheral area’ of the Ancient Near East at the dawn of the urban civilization, as witnessed by the impressive fortification system.

Batrawy was discovered in 2004 and systematically excavated by Rome Sapienza University (www.lasapienzatojordan.it), with the scientific direction of Prof. Lorenzo Negro, in strong cooperation with the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, and thanks to the financial support of Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. An important aim of the expedition has been the exploration of the well-preserved city-walls on the northern slope. In 2010, a major building dating back from the third quarter of the 3rd millennium BC was brought to light just inside the Main Inner Wall, the “Palace of the Copper Axes”. Several other items were retrieved: up to 100 vessels; ritual and symbolic vases; four copper axes; a potter’s wheel; a bear’s paw belonged to a bear-skin; a four-string necklace consisting of 688 beads of carnelian, bone, sea shell, rock crystal, copper, green olivine and amethyst from Egypt.

www.lasapienzatojordan.it
The Italian Archaeological Mission in Jerash/Gerasa has been operating since 1977, under the direction of Arch. Roberto Parapetti of Monumenta Orientalia (www.monumentoorientalia.com).

Given the extraordinary state of preservation of the remains of the ancient town, the original objective of the research found its bearings in the precise identification of the architectural and urban planning models of the provincial Roman times. Large colonnaded streets and the monumental complex of the sanctuary of Artemis, in particular, appeared with evidence the preferential survey sites.

In the most recent campaigns, the research activity has been focused in particular on the sanctuary area east of the great colonnaded street. The imperial monumental structures approaching the temple from este, which revealed profound changes in the Byzantine and Umayyad ages, have been the subject of specific restoration projects as well.

The research activities were supported by the annual contribution of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (Directorate General for Cultural and Economic Promotion and Innovation), while the preservation and restoration projects by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Directorate General for Development Cooperation) and the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and of Tourism.
From 2013 to 2015 an international team, composed by Italian (Istituto Italiano di Paleontologia Umana) and Brazilian (Universidade de São Paulo and Universidade Estadual de São Paulo) scholars has studied the oldest prehistory East of Jordan rift, in the upper portion of Zarqa valley. The study has focused the stratigraphy, chronology and archaeology of the Dawqara formation, an alluvial sequence with palaeolithic remains dated by Ar/Ar and Palaeomagnetism to more than 2 million years ago. The stone tools from this formation, all pertaining to Oldowan technocomplex, are the oldest archaeological remains outside Africa and are consistent with the hypothesis of a first demic expansion of hominins before the well known spread of Homo erectus and Acheulian technology 1.5 my ago. Part of the project has been financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.
The Italian-Spanish Archaeological Mission in Jebel al-Mutawwaq, financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, is a joint project between the University of Perugia and the Facultad San Esteban de Salamanca. The project is codirected by Andrea Folco and Juan Muniz. The mission started in 2012 with the intent to understand the historic significance of the site dated to the fourth millennium BC, located on a hill overlooking the az-Zarqa river valley, and previously object of excavations of the University of Oviedo. These excavations had already identified in Jebel al-Mutawwaq an important sanctuary of the Early Bronze I, roughly dated to 3300 BC, named the “Temple of the Serpents”, which is at the center of a village.

This settlement is extended for 18 hectares, is surrounded by a wall megalithic and characterized by domestic structures built of stone. The first archaeological explorations of the new Italo-Spanish joint mission focused on a part of the extended megalithic necropolis surrounding the settlement, which has hundreds of megalithic tombs or “dolmen”, built with large stone slabs. The following campaigns have unearthed an intact burial inside a dolmen, and have clarified the relationship between the settlement and necropolis, dating them with certainty to the same period and identifying trails that connected them. The latest excavations have been performed in a central area of the town, where some structures used for the processing of important historical value foods were discovered.
'Medieval' Petra is the largest Italian medievalist archaeological mission operating abroad and, in collaboration with the DoA since 1986, is the oldest among international missions currently operated in Petra. Thirty years of research have brought to the attention of the international scientific community the key role played by Petra region in the Crusader-Ayyubid re-founding of Jordan, between the 12th and 13th century. Also a crucial period in the formation of today's settlement (and geopolitical) structures. The mission works through Light Archaeology investigation programs at macro and micro territorial resolution, as part of a University of Florence strategic programme for the study of Mediterranean feudal societies in cc. 10th – 14th. Current territorial investigations include: southern Transjordan, Petra region, Petra Valley and the Shawbak area. Archaeological excavations have so far been conducted at 5 sites, in Petra (Al-Habis, Wu'ayra, Corinthian Tomb) and Shawbak (Crac de Montréal).

Ten scientific partners are strategically involved in our research: the Universities of Pisa, Urbino and Sheffield, the University College of London, the University of Jordan, I T A B C Institute of the CNR in Rome and L-Sis CNRS in Marseille, the Instytut Archeologii of the Polish Academy of sciences and the Opificio delle Pietre Dure of Florence. The staff of the Mission consists of 7580+ experts, with an average of 3045+ mission participants per year. Since 1994 the Mission has a permanent dig-house in Wadi Mousa. The project is financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.
Qusayr ‘Amra is a residence and bath house located 85km to the east of Amman. It is one of the so-called “desert castles”, built during the Umayyad period in the 8th century AD. They were also agricultural estates supported by ingenious hydraulic works, while maintaining their political function as a link between the Umayyad dynasty and the nomadic tribes that were at the core of their power. Although mural paintings existed at other sites, and some fragments have also been found, Qusayr ‘Amra is the only site where the paintings are legible and largely preserved. The site was “discovered” in 1898 by a Czech traveler and scholar, Alois Musil. The site was inscribed, in 1985, on the World Heritage List. From 2008 the Italian Government assigned a grant to the conservation project, through the involvement of its Istituto per la Conservazione ed il Restauro (ISCR, Institute for Conservation and Restoration) in Rome. Following the signature of agreements in 2010 between ISCR, DOA and WMF, conservation work at the site began in early 2011.

The objective of the project is to achieve the complete conservation of the paintings and it includes the cleaning and consolidation of the entire cycle of wall paintings, the consolidation and cleaning of the stonework inside, the cleaning and presentation of the hypocaust system in the tepidarium and calidarium rooms, capacity building for young experts of the Department of Antiquities in conservation techniques and site management planning, a three months training course in Italy for 4 selected Jordanian conservators, on-the-job training for Department of Antiquities professionals, workshops, exhibitions, and publications to present the work accomplished.
The Petra "Siq Stability" Project

UNESCO Amman Office
Petra Archaeological Park - Department of Antiquities of Jordan

The Petra Archaeological Park is one of the first sites inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List for Jordan. Petra is also a very fragile site facing a wide diversity of risks, from those posed by environmental factors, as natural and geological hazards, to those related to tourism and site use. In recent years, natural phenomena, such as earthquakes, floods and landslides were registered as increasingly impacting the site, and most specifically the Siq, a 1.2 km narrow gorge which represents the main entrance to the site.

Since 2012, UNESCO Amman has engaged with the Petra Archaeological Park and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan in the project "Siq Stability" funded by the Italian Development Cooperation. The Phase I of the project (20122015-) focused on an in-depth assessment of landslide risk based on engineering geology field survey and the application of an integrated and operational monitoring system aimed at detecting potential unstable areas. The project has also developed a shared platform for data management and analysis and a 3D computerized model of the Siq and other monuments within the Petra Archaeological Park. The Phase II of the project (20152016-) aims at the implementation of landslide mitigation measures along the Siq slopes, increase the awareness on landslides among the local stakeholders, develop capacities among the national authorities and the local community to address the management of landslide specific risk at the site.

The project reflects UNESCO's long-standing engagement with national authorities for the preservation of the Siq of Petra, through an integrated approach to sustainably manage environmental risks and to contribute to tourists and monuments safety.
Italian Archeological Missions to Jordan

The future of Italian archaeological missions in Jordan will increasingly rely on two parallel and complementary developments: on one hand, the enhancement of the Jordanian ownership of the process, through training, capacity building and public-private partnerships; on the other hand, the adoption of the most sophisticated tools to reduce considerably the risks and hazards of the traditional approaches, through “state of the art” technologies and less intrusive methodologies.

Italy has a very high reputation in both fields. We are able and willing to cooperate further with Jordan in the promotion and preservation of cultural heritage.