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UNIVERSITÀ DI NAPOLI
L'ORIENTALE

Head of Bejewelled Buddha from Chapel 23, Tapa Sardar, Ghazni. Photo IAMA-ISMEO



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earthHeritage — A cultural rescue initiative for earthen heritage

An interdisciplinary, diachronic and trans-areal approach to interconnected artistic productions in clay and stucco in Iran, Iraq, Central Asia and the north of the Indian subcontinent (3rd cent. BCE–8th cent. CE)

International Conference

Re-materialising the ephemeral:

The clay and stucco artistry of ancient Asia

16-17 September 2025

University of Naples "L'Orientale"

Palazzo Corigliano, Salone delle Conferenze (2nd floor)

Piazza S. Domenico Maggiore 12, Naples

To attend the workshop online, please send an email to: info@earthheritage.it

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Dottorato
Asia
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PROGRAM — Tuesday 16 September

9:15–9:30 OPENING REMARKS

Roberta GIUNTA, Head of the Department of Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies

Anna FILIGENZI, Project Principal Investigator

9:30–11:00 SESSION 1 | CHAIR ANNA FILIGENZI

9:30–9:50 **St John SIMPSON** (British Museum)

Transcending modern borders: Archaeological evidence for decorative and structural use of plaster from the Achaemenid to Sasanian periods in the British Museum

9:50–10:10 **Nicolas ENGEL** (Musée Guimet)

The stucco and unbaked clay collection from Afghanistan at the Guimet Museum: To resume the study

10:10–10:30 **Deborah KLIMBURG-SALTER** (Emer. Prof. Univ. of Vienna) (online)

Fondukistan: Princely portraits made of clay

10:30–11:00 Discussion

11:00–11:30 Coffee break

11:30–13:00 SESSION 2 | CHAIR ALEXANDRA VANLEENE

11:30–11:50 **Zafar PAIMAN** (Archaeologist, UMR Assoc. member)

L'emploi de l'argile crue dans le décor des monastères de Kaboul

11:50–12:10 **Ciro LO MUZIO** (Sapienza Univ. of Rome)

Towards a reassessment of the clay sculptures from Kuevkurgan (Southern Uzbekistan)

12:10–12:30 **Cristiano MOSCATELLI** (Sapienza Univ. of Rome)

The Meditating Monkey from Tapa Sardar, Ghazni: Remarks on a transregional Buddhist theme

12:30–13:00 Discussion

13:00–14:30 Lunch

14:30–16:00 SESSION 3 | CHAIR LUCA COLLIVA

14:30–14:50 **Anna FILIGENZI** (Univ. of Naples "L'Orientale")

A Buddhist version of the śrīvatsa/kausthuba: Artistic and ideological ties between Afghanistan and Xinjiang in the second half of the 1st millennium CE

14:50–15:10 **Alexandra VANLEENE** (Harvard FAS CAMLab)

Iconographic insights into the decorative programs of Great Stūpa 68 at Tapa Kalān and Edifice 56 at Bāgh Gai, Hadda (Afghanistan)

15:10–15:30 **Alice CASALINI** (Univ. of Chicago) (online)

Making the Buddha: Plaster statuary and spiritual technologies at Hadda

15:30–16:00 Discussion

16:00–16:30 Coffee break

PROGRAM — Wednesday 17 September

9:30–11:00 SESSION 1 | CHAIR ST JOHN SIMPSON

9:30–9:50 **Giulia FORGIONE** (Univ. of Naples "L'Orientale")

Colour and power: Political and ritual symbolism in ancient Central Asia

9:50–10:10 **Luca COLLIVA** (Univ. of Bologna)

Sasanian stucco from Iraqi Kurdistan: Preliminary notes on recurring iconographies

10:10–10:30 **Serenella MANCINI** (Univ. of Bologna), **Chiara MATTEUCCI** (Univ. of Bologna), **Giancarlo GRILLINI** (Univ. of Bologna), **Gaia TARANTOLA** (Univ. of Bologna)

Materiality and technique in Sasanian architecture: Stucco, mortars, and plasters from Gawr Tepe (KRI, Iraq)

10:30–11:00 Discussion

11:00–11:30 Coffee break

11:30–13:00 SESSION 2 | CHAIR CIRO LO MUZIO

11:30–11:50 **Mònica LÓPEZ-PRAT** (CNR Florence)

Alchemists of clay: Reframing raw earth (terracruda) in ancient Buddhist sculpture

11:50–12:10 **Momoka YAMANE** (Univ. of Tsukuba)

An attempt to reconstruct the practice of Buddhist sculpture in Central Asia: Technological approaches through scientific analysis

12:10–12:30 **Alessia ANDREOTTI** (Univ. of Pisa), **Emma CANTISANI** (CNR Florence), **Anna FILIGENZI**, **Giulia FORGIONE**, **Stefano LEGNAIOLI** (CNR Pisa), **Giulia LORENZETTI** (CNR Pisa), **Zafar PAIMAN**, **Ilaria BONADUCE** (Univ. of Pisa)

Polychrome sculptures from Qol-e-Tut and Tepe Narenj (Kabul, Afghanistan; 4th–5th cent. – 7th/8th cent. CE): A scientific survey to shed light on the painting technique

12:30–13:00 Discussion

13:00–14:30 Lunch

14:30–16:00 SESSION 3 | CHAIR NICOLAS ENGEL

14:30–14:50 **Yoko TANIGUCHI** (Univ. of Tsukuba) (read by M. Yamane)

Manufacturing techniques and dating of 'stucco' sculptures from Central Asia: The case of five statues protected in Tokyo

14:50–15:10 **Birgit Angelika SCHMIDT** (Museum für Asiatische Kunst)

Waste-mould technologies: Ephemeral aspects of the chaîne opératoire of Buddhist sculptural production along the Silk Road

15:10–15:30 **Andrea Luigi CORSI** (Deutsches Archäologische Institute) (online)

The question of making: Different approaches to stucco surfaces in the early Islamic period

15:30–16:00 Discussion

16:00–16:30 Coffee break