



Arabia Antica Newsletter Issue 2013, No. 2

DASI: Creating a network of European cultural institutions engaged in the study of pre-Islamic Arabia



DASI Meeting in Pisa

After the meeting held in May 2013 in Pisa, two leading European research institutions have agreed to collaborate on the DASI Project.

The CNRS laboratory UMR 8167 – Mondes Sémitiques will undertake the digitization of the Nabataean inscriptions under the supervision of Dr. Laila Nehmé. The first step of the project concerns a selection of texts which will include all the tomb inscriptions from Hegra but also important texts from Petra and the Hawran.

A collaboration with the OCIANA-Online Corpus of the Inscriptions of Ancient North Arabia Project of the University of Oxford, directed by Prof. J. Johns and Mr. M.C.A. Macdonald, has been launched. The OCIANA and DASI data will be pooled so that it will be possible to search the information from both corpora via a single portal.

The DASI archive, containing the vast amount of data collected thus far, will be ready and made available for consultation on an open-access basis in September 2013.

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IMTO: Updates from Khor Rori

The University of Pisa's second archaeological campaign of 2013 to the site of Sumhuram was conducted from June 15th to July 18th. Two main areas of the site were investigated – Area H and Area B – and the very interesting findings that were brought to light can be found on the [relevant page](#) of *Arabia Antica*. Row data can be found in the [IMTO fieldwork database](#).

Remains connected with various productive activities were discovered in Area H, including rectangular basins coated in plaster. Economic activities being conducted in the area are not yet exactly determined, although there is some limited evidence of artisanal work with shells.

Indeed, two decorated shell lids were unearthed in this area, that may be added to the list of similar finds at Sumhuram. The fact that the two lids were found in the vast working area of the city lends some credibility to the thesis that these lids may have been produced locally, but further study will be required.

IMTO: Restoration of a IIIrd millennium storage jar found near the Bronze Age Tower at Salut

The fragments have now been pieced together of a [large clay storage jar](#) that was found during the archaeological expeditions [2012 B](#) and [2013A](#) in the moat that once surrounded the Early Bronze Age tower.

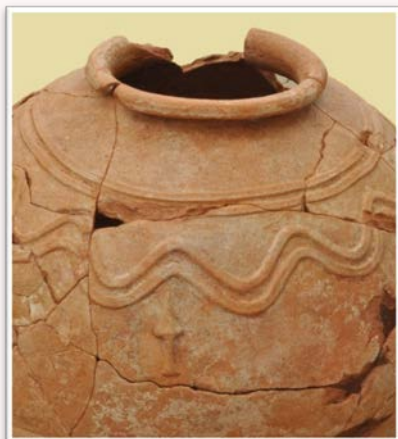
The jar, excavated in a sealed context dating to the Early Bronze Age, stands



Shell lid Sh496 from Khor Rori



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Bronze Age jar from Salut

out unique among the tower assemblage in terms of its shape, dimension and fabric. The appliqué decoration is unusual, consisting of an undulating double ridge running around the upper part of the jar, in addition to a short dagger or spearhead.

The existence of parallels remains is to be verified, but at first glance the jar would seem to be comparable to the large storage vessels found in Early Bronze Age sites in Iran. This would add another element to the growing amount of evidence (the Indus-related black slipped jars and a remarkably fine Indus-style seal discovered two years ago) of Salut's long-distance trade contacts.

Reports on the excavation results and studies on the artifacts found at the Bronze Age Tower will be regularly published in the new series of monographs [Quaderni IMTO](#).

Cooperation between UniPi and the Military Museum of Sana

Ties of cultural cooperation between the Museum and the Dipartimento di Civiltà e Forme del Sapere have been resumed.

This initiative is being funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in consideration of the importance of the collection of ancient South Arabian artifacts at the Military Museum and the longstanding ties of close collaboration between the research group led by Prof. Avanzini and a number of [Yemeni museums](#) and cultural institutions.

The first project that will be undertaken is the [restoration of a group of bronze artifacts at the University of Pisa](#), and their display in an exhibition. This project will include the preparation of new exhibition rooms in the Military Museum, the training of museum staff in restoration techniques and digital cataloguing, and the promotion of the museum around the world.

Arabia Antica will post regular updates on the activities connected with this and future projects.



Military Museum of Sana, incense burner

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MEDINA: cataloguing of Nabataean and Phoenician artifacts in progress

After a thorough examination, the collections of the Museum of Jordanian Heritage and the National Museum of Beirut selected by the MEDINA working group are presently being catalogued by the DASI data entry.

In the next future, data will be harvested by a digital library able to display them into thematic pathways and online exhibitions, provided with explicative texts and multimedia materials, in order to involve the general public through both scientific information and engaging content.