

# MEDINA PROJECT AT THE DIGITAL HERITAGE 2013



Prof. Alessandra Avanzini and Ms. Annamaria de Santis from **UNIPi**, the Leading partner in **MEDINA**, represented the project at the [DIGITAL HERITAGE International Congress 2013](#) held in Marseille from October 28th until November 1st.

The DIGITAL HERITAGE International Congress was organized by CNRS (french National Center for Scientific Research) under the patronage of UNESCO. It is one of the largest international scientific events on digital heritage. It focused on digital technologies applied to the protection, documentation and understanding of cultural heritage. Researchers, educators, scientists, industry professionals and policy makers from all over the world met to explore the state-of-the-art and address future emerging research scenarios.

The MEDINA project presented its approach and strategy for the communication of the Ancient Near East heritage within the Mediterranean Sea basin. This contribution has been selected for the poster session in the *“Theory, methodologies and applications of Digital Heritage”* track. The project has been presented to the scientific and the professional communities.

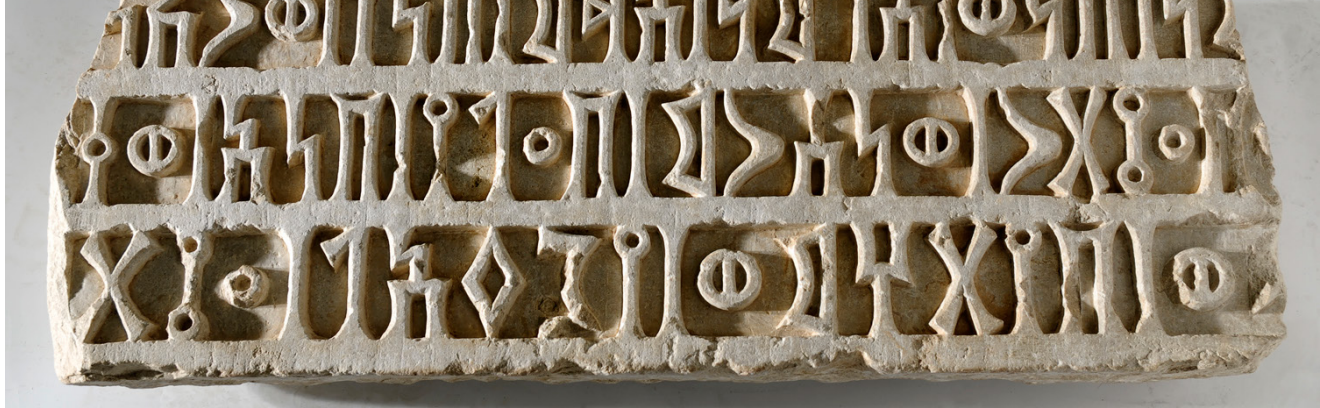
The contribution of MEDINA will be available in the proceedings of the congress, published with the support of the *Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers*.

For more info: [Digital Collections, Online Exhibitions and Virtual Museums in the MEDINA Project](#).



## CATALOGUING THE SOUTH ARABIAN COLLECTION OF THE MUSEO NAZIONALE D'ARTE ORIENTALE IN ROME

At the end of September 2013, the University of Pisa conducted a mission in the Department of Ancient Near and Middle East of the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale in Rome, aimed at inventorying the pre-Islamic South Arabian collection.



**THE HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION.** The collection was started in the 1930s with the pieces brought to Rome by Italian officers in Yemen. In the following decades, this collection grew by virtue of donations of Italian personalities, such as doctors and scholars, working in what was once the Arabia Felix. In addition to the scholarly publication by A. Jamme dating back to the 1950s, two important exhibitions held in Rome in 2000 and in 2012 were occasions to display to the public these important testimonies of the flourishing South Arabian civilization. However, the nearly 40 epigraphic and 60 anepigraphic objects which constitute the collection are at present held in the storerooms of the Museum, waiting for the arrangement of the new rooms which will host the most significant pieces of the collection.

The cataloguing by the MEDINA project seeks to remedy the accessibility of these objects by making the whole collection available shortly, digitally and on paper, to the wider public and to scholars.



**THE ARTIFACTS.** Most of the epigraphic pieces are Sabaic and date back to the first centuries AD, attesting to the construction works and the cultic activities of the tribes living in the northern highlands of Yemen. Other inscriptions are Minaic and come from the al-Jawf province. Although mainly fragmentary, the texts are beautifully carved and sometimes finely decorated, like the fragment of stela MNAO 13047.



The collection includes also stone, alabaster and bronze anepigraphic artefacts, compromised of plaques, incense burners, offering tables, stelae with human figure in relief, seals and sculptures in the round. The majority of these are funerary objects, as the MNAO hosts an important group of statuettes representing the deceased, mostly in a stylized way but sometimes with peculiar traits as for MNAO 13024. Reliefs of animals, plants and geometric motifs adorn the fragments of the plaques.



The digitization of the inscriptions and the digital cataloguing of the not-inscribed objects of the MNAO are about to be completed. Soon MEDINA will publish for consultation both the digital and the paper catalogues.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Partners of the **MEDINA** project will meet on *December 12th and 13th* for the third SC project meeting at the **University of Barcelona**.

The current speed of MEDINA activities is slow awaiting the beginning of the second phase of the project. Stay posted for interesting news in the upcoming months!