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CLARIN 2023 submissions, review process and acceptance

- Call for abstracts: 23 January 2023 first call published on CLARIN website, disseminated, and submission system open
- Submission deadline: 28 April 2023
- In total 52 submissions were received and reviewed (three reviews per submission)
- Virtual PC meeting: 9 June 2023
- Notifications to authors: 30 June 2023
- 37 accepted submissions

More details on the paper selection procedure and the conference can be found at <https://www.clarin.eu/event/2023/clarin-annual-conference-2023>.

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Domain-Specific Languages for Epigraphy: the Case of ItAnt

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Abstract

ItAnt is a research project devoted to the languages and cultures of ancient Italy witnessed by a digital collection of inscriptions. This contribution illustrates how the definition of a Domain-Specific Language can support the activity of the epigraphists involved in the project by increasing the human readability of the encoded data without sacrificing the compliance to standard models and formats. Finally, an example of concrete use of the encoded texts within the CLARIN-IT DigItAnt platform will be briefly described.

1 Introduction

The project *Languages and Cultures of Ancient Italy. Historical Linguistics and Digital Models* (ItAnt hereafter) is an initiative funded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research and involves a consortium comprising the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, the University of Florence, and the Institute for Computational Linguistics "A. Zampolli" of the National Research Council of Italy¹. This project aims at investigating the languages of Ancient Italy combining the methods of historical linguistics with digital technologies specifically designed to create a set of interrelated resources, particularly critical digital editions of inscriptions, lexica and bibliographies.

With the sole exception of Roman Latin, the languages of Ancient Italy (8th century BC-1st century AD) are fragmentary languages, that is to say dead languages attested through a highly restricted corpus of texts. Specifically, their evidence consists almost exclusively of epigraphic texts, which often present problems relating to the reading, segmentation into words, linguistic analysis, and interpretation. Therefore, one of the key challenges of the ItAnt project is to adapt the digital tools, practices, and methodologies of digital epigraphy and computational lexicography to the highly fragmentary nature of such a documentation.

The main objectives of the project are to create and interlink one another a digital archive of (critical editions of) inscriptions and a multilingual computational lexicon, as well as to encode project information using CIDOC CRM and its extensions, namely CRMtex², CRMInf³, and FRBRoo/LRMoo⁴. With regard to the digital archive, the inscriptions are being encoded in XML according to the XML-TEI/EpiDoc schema⁵. Furthermore, the edition of the inscriptions is enriched with standard metadata, thus allowing for an accurate description of each of them as both a linguistic and a material object.

2 The Digital Edition of the Inscriptions

As mentioned above, the project envisages the inscriptions being encoded according to the XML-TEI/EpiDoc schema. Such a schema is the result of an international effort aimed at customising the Text Encoding Initiative's standard for the representation of ancient documents according to the Leiden

¹This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence. Licence details: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

²<https://www.prin-italia-antica.unifi.it/>

³<https://www.cidoc-crm.org/crmtext/home-8>

⁴<https://www.cidoc-crm.org/crmInf/>

⁵<https://cidoc-crm.org/frbroo/>

⁶<http://www.stoa.org/epidoc/g1/latest/>

Conventions. In particular, XML-TEI/EpiDoc provides mark-ups for the text (edition, apparatus, translation, commentary, bibliography) as well as the materiality and history of the object on which the text appears (repository, support, layout, hand, place and date of origin, provenance). Furthermore, thanks to the extensibility of XML and the versatility of XML-TEI/EpiDoc, ItAnt has proposed solutions for managing specific issues arising from the nature of the languages of Ancient Italy as fragmentary languages and their specific epigraphic features, with particular reference to word division, shape and reuse of the support, opisthography, line dimensions, description of linguistic elements, and description of languages and scripts (Murano et al., 2023).

With the goal of data integration, ItAnt makes use of widely used vocabularies and gazetteers, in particular The Art and Architecture Thesaurus provided by the The Getty Research Institute for the object type ⁶, material, and writing technique ⁷, the EAGLE vocabulary for the type of inscriptions (dedicatory, funerary, etc.)⁸, and Pleiades and GeoNames for ancient and modern names respectively⁹. In addition, Trismegistos IDS are used, when available, to identify the text¹⁰ and bibliographical records are also linked through a specific library built up by using Zotero¹¹.

3 How ItAntDSL Facilitates the Encoding

Encoding epigraphic contextual metadata and textual data in XML-TEI/EpiDoc is a complex, error-prone task. Indeed, XML-TEI is quite verbose (because element names, attributes and values must be written in full) and redundant (because opening and closing tags repeat the element names). The percentage of informative and structural contents is unbalanced. XML-TEI ensures data interchange among software applications and promotes machine actionability and interpretability, but human readability of an encoded document decreases rapidly as complexity increases.

In ItAnt linguistic, philological and prosopographical data are highly entangled. Each word is associated to its part of speech, conjectural integrations to textual gaps (lacunae) are recorded, and named entities are identified. These chunks of information often overlap: for instance a lacuna in a line of text may extend between the end of the third token and the beginning of the fourth one, whereas a named entity defined by *praenomen* (partially conjectured), *gentilicium* and *patronymicus* may extend from the fourth to the sixth token.

The problem of overlapping hierarchies in TEI is well-known and many solutions are available, both through manual encoding of stand-off annotations in XML (Spadini & Turska, 2019) and through alternative representations (e.g. in json), currently or planned to be convertible in XML-TEI (Neill & Schmidt, 2021). An experimental solution adopted in ItAnt for encoding part of the corpus, is based on a domain-driven approach, which involves the epigraphists to co-design a Domain-Specific Language (Parr, 2009), named ItAntDSL, to encode data and metadata. The aims of this approach are twofold: a) optimising the human readability of the encoded documents, both during manual encoding and for subsequent uses of the documents, and b) complying with the EpiDoc abstract model. As shown in Fig. 1, in fact, the encoding of contextual metadata (on the left) and textual data (on the right) is very compact. ItAntDSL is defined by a Context-Free Grammar (CFG) available on github¹². The documents encoded in ItAntDSL are parsed by ANTLR (Parr, 2013), which first converts the Domain-Specific Language into XML with a proprietary schema (XML-ItAnt), based on the production rules of the CFG.

Then, a chain of xquery scripts and XSLT stylesheets transforms XML-ItAnt documents into XML-TEI/EpiDoc documents. The transformations are not limited to the translation of element names and to structural modifications, but extend to the integration of a) automatically generated IDs; b) default values omitted in ItAntDSL documents; c) expansion of complex structured data encoded in ItAntDSL

⁶The iDAL.thesauri provided by the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (<http://thesauri.dainst.org/de.html>) is used as a supplement with regard to natural supports such as cliffs.

⁷<https://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat/>

⁸<https://www.eagle-network.eu/resources/vocabularies/typeins/>

⁹<https://pleiades.stoa.org/>; <https://www.geonames.org/>

¹⁰<https://www.trismegistos.org/tm/>

¹¹<https://www.zotero.org/groups/2552746/>

¹²<https://github.com/CoPhi/itantdsl/>

```

5 IDENTIFIERS
6 #Place: "Schilavi d'Abruzzo (Chieti)"
7 #Site: "in situ (under the coverage of the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio dell'Abruzzo)"
8 #Name: mosaic from the sanctuary of Schilavi
9 #In: "TM.37863"
10 #Find: "ST_Sa_2" "IntI_Terzantun_36"
11
12 SUMMARY
13 Inscription recording building and dedication of the paving from Temple B of Pietrabbondante sanctuary.
14
15 SUPPORT
16 "Temple Floor" " tesserae (mosaic components)" de: 308
17 #note: used every fragment (The inscription is damaged; reading is only possible through photographic material)
18
19 LAYOUT
20 #colLams: 1 #writtenLines: 2
21 #hex: "mosaic Copus signinae" #note: Epistograph
22
23 HAND, SCRIPT, AND DECORATION
24 #palaeographyNotes: Letters measure 12 cm in height
25 #characterDimension: 12
26 #alphabet: "Oscan national alphabet"
27 #punctuation
28
29 Save | Delete
30
31 DIPLOMATIC EDITION
32 #face_a | #text_direction_r-to-l | #sinistrorse
33
34 1 = t ni d[e]l[4]o[1] [1] [2] . [10-12] site legi . tanginid
35 2 oominfed . esil[3] . [3]eld . ulpsed . g . paapl . g f
36
37 ***
38
39 INTERPRETATIVE EDITION
40 #face_a | #text_direction_r-to-l | #sinistrorse
41
42 1 = t[ed]i[ku]d t[ov]t[ku]d n[im]s[u]d d[e]l[kit]i[u]d [m]i[k]n[e]t[s] . [10-12] site[ant]e[s] legi . tanginid
43 2 = oominfed[3] . esil[3] . [3]eld . ulpsed . g . paapl . g f
44
45 #line: 1
46 1 = t[ed]i[ku]d = #word
47 2 = t[ov]t[ku]d = #word
48 3 = n[im]s[u]d = #praenomen
49 4 = d[e]l[kit]i[u]d = #gentilicium
50 5 = [m]i[k]n[e]t[s] = #patronymic
51 6 = . = #pc
52 7 = g . = #pc_word
53
54 Save | Delete

```

Figure 1: ItAntDSL

documents by reference (between quotation marks) and retrieved from the XML documents stored in an eXist-db. A sample of the final result is shown in Fig. 2.

```

145 <tei:div type="edition" subtype="interpretative" xml:space="preserve">
146 <tei:div type="textpart" n="face_a" style="text-direction:r-to-l" rend="ductus:sinistrorse">
147 <tei:ab>
148 <tei:lb n="1" xml:lang="osc-Ital-x-oscetr" xml:id="Osc_3_1_1"/>
149 <tei:w xml:lang="osc-Ital-x-oscetr" xml:id="Osc_3_1_1_w_1">
150 <tei:expan><tei:abbr><tei:supplied reason="lost" evidence="previouseditor">m</tei:supplied></tei:abbr><tei:ex>ediküd</tei:ex></tei:expan>
151 </tei:w>
152 <tei:w xml:lang="osc-Ital-x-oscetr" xml:id="Osc_3_1_1_w_2">
153 <tei:expan><tei:abbr><tei:supplied reason="lost" evidence="previouseditor">t</tei:supplied></tei:abbr><tei:ex>üvtküüd</tei:ex></tei:expan>
154 </tei:w>
155 <tei:name type="praenomen" xml:lang="osc-Ital-x-oscetr" xml:id="Osc_3_1_1_w_3" ref="#p1">
156 <tei:expan><tei:abbr><tei:supplied reason="lost" evidence="previouseditor">n</tei:supplied></tei:abbr><tei:ex>umsüüd</tei:ex></tei:expan>
157 </tei:name>
158 <tei:name type="gentilicium" xml:lang="osc-Ital-x-oscetr" xml:id="Osc_3_1_1_w_4" ref="#p1">
159 <tei:unclear>de</tei:unclear>
160 <tei:supplied reason="lost" evidence="previouseditor">kiti</tei:supplied>
161 <tei:unclear>d</tei:unclear><tei:supplied reason="lost" evidence="previouseditor">d</tei:supplied>
162 </tei:name>
163 <tei:name type="patronymic" xml:lang="osc-Ital-x-oscetr" xml:id="Osc_3_1_1_w_5" ref="#p1">
164 <tei:expan><tei:abbr><tei:supplied reason="lost" evidence="previouseditor">m</tei:supplied></tei:abbr><tei:ex>inisis</tei:ex></tei:expan>
165 </tei:name>
166 <tei:pc unit="word">.</tei:pc>
167 </tei:ab>

```

Figure 2: XML-TEI/EpiDoc

4 ItAnt and CLARIN-IT: a Concrete Use-Case

ItAnt is developing a user-friendly web platform, DigItAnt, for creating, exploring and querying LOD-compliant lexica natively interlinked with critical editions of inscriptions, citations and bibliographic references, plus other external available salient resources. The DigItAnt editing application (*EpiLexO*) is meant to be useful especially for encoding lexical information of ancient languages and in assisting scholars in linking it to other relevant (re-)sources according to the semantic web principles. Particularly important and central to the platform is linking to the texts encoded in digital scholarly editions of relevant inscriptions in TEI-EpiDoc. The editions encoded with ItAntDSL and then converted to EpiDoc-XML as described above, are subsequently ingested by the platform, for linking to the lexicon and searching into the exploration platform (see Quochi, Bellandi, Mallia, et al. (2022) for reference). In details, the (historical linguist) user uploads one or more EpiDoc XML documents into the platform so that (s)he can then link the exact text loci to either existing or newly created lexical items (see Fig. 3 and Quochi, Bellandi, Khan, et al. (2022)).

Thanks to the EpiDoc-XML encoding, visualisation of contextual information as well as of the text according to the Leiden conventions is also possible, both in the Epilexo editor and in the exploration platform (*EpiLexO-search*, see an example in Fig. 4)

The platform is supported by CLARIN-IT and will become one of its services once the project is completed. The editing components of the platform are ready and in use within the project¹³, while the

¹³The code is available at <https://github.com/DigItAnt/Epilexo>

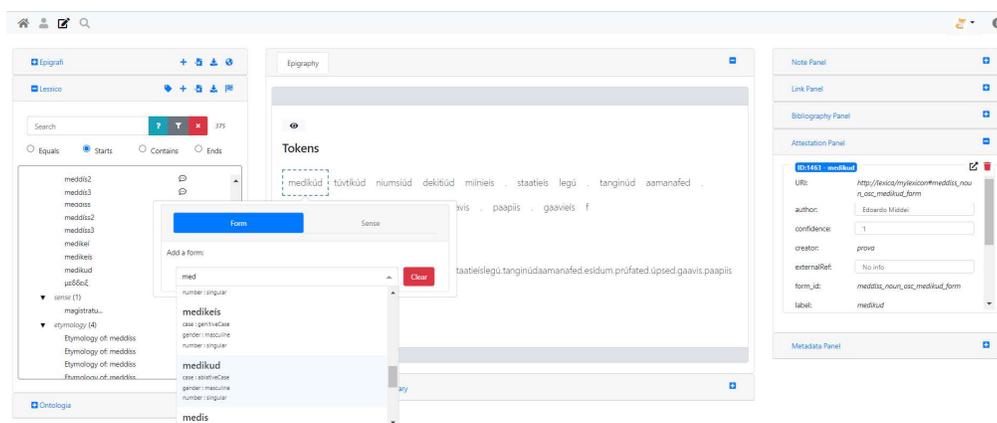


Figure 3: Linking texts loci to lexical forms in DigItAnt - EpiLexO

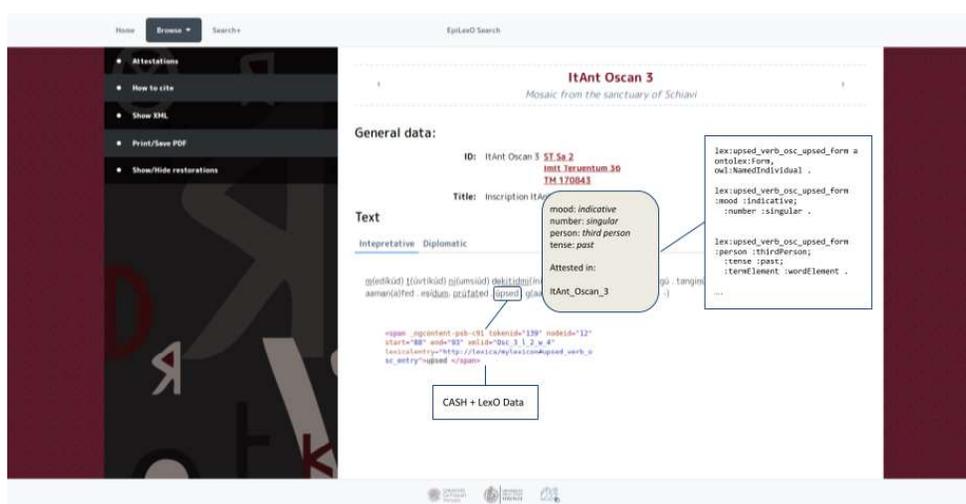


Figure 4: Linking texts loci to lexical forms in DigItAnt - EpiLexO

exploration platform is still in progress, continuously upgraded with new functionalities and improvements. An alpha version will be shown at the conference. Furthermore, as concerns the relations with CLARIN, all project resources, data and tools will be deposited into the ILC4CLARIN repository¹⁴, in order to ensure their FAIRness, long-term preservation and maximal exploitability by the community¹⁵.

Finally, the know-how related to the annotation of inscriptions through ItAntDSL will be shared through the Digital and Public Textual Scholarship Knowledge Centre¹⁶ (DiPText-KC) of CLARIN.

¹⁴<https://ilc4clarin.ilc.cnr.it/>

¹⁵Currently, we deposited the first versions of ItAntDSL (<http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11752/ILC-1003>) and EpiLexO (<http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11752/ILC-1004>). At the end of the project all software, inscription corpora and ancient lexicons will be preserved, discoverable and consumable via CLARIN channels.

¹⁶<https://diptext-kc.clarin-it.it/>

Videotutorials and other initiatives, such as webinars and workshops, are planned towards the end of the project and after.

5 Conclusion

VeDPH, CNR-ILC and ILC4CLARIN in the last years are collaborating on DH projects related to many kinds of resources, such as collections of literary texts (Boschetti et al., 2021) and collections of epigraphic sources (Vagionakis et al., 2022). ItAnt provides a good opportunity to develop methods and tools to facilitate the encoding activities of the epigraphists, which must deal with complex entangled data. CLARIN provides not only the infrastructure to deposit the research data, but also the instruments to share new practices adequate to the domain of the epigraphic studies.

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