



## **Climatic data rescue of the former Italian Colonies in Northeastern Africa**

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At CRA-CMA, in the underground rooms, we recently found the observation cards related to numerous weather stations located in the former Italian Northeastern Africa. They are kept in several boxes and concern the Colonies of Ethiopia, Libya and Somalia. The daily and sub-daily values of air temperature, humidity, pressure, wind speed and direction, precipitation, sun duration, radiation, evaporation and other observations, such as cover and type of cloud, were recorded in typical handwritten cards and sent to the Italian Central Office for Meteorology, today CRA-CMA.

This discovery gave us the opportunity of recovering interesting meteorological datasets about the first decades of the XX century for Northeastern Africa. CRA-CMA is making great efforts in the digitization of paper data; in the future it will concern former Colonies data too. Digitization only covers the main meteorological parameters, as temperature, precipitation, pressure, sunshine duration, wind, auxiliary information such as witness remarks, which are in the paper forms, non-instrumental observations, the type and duration of weather events and the metadata.

The image scanning of the meteorological cards is the best approach to preserve their whole contents. Recently, we have bought a professional plan-scanner, in order to start a scanning program of the meteorological cards and to produce an "Images-files Archive".

In Italy, CRA-CMA is recognized as the main institution which provides reference and consulting services concerning meteorological and climatic data to universities and agencies or other institutions of national interest. While, in spite of its potential and rich heritage, it appears to be rather unknown to the scientific and academic international community. The ongoing digitizing program represents a first step to draw up climatic studies at European scale. We hope to meet the interest of the international community regarding the recovery and rescue of the meteorological data for Northeastern Africa, to share information and develop interest in studies about the Mediterranean climate evolution.