



H.F.R.I.
Hellenic Foundation for
Research & Innovation

Description of the funded research project
1st Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects to Support Faculty Members &
Researchers and Procure High-Value Research Equipment

Title of the research project: Testimonies of religious, political and social life of Dion. Digital editing and contextual analysis of the inscribed monuments

Principal Investigator:
Semeli Pingiatoglou

Reader-friendly title: DecalInDion

Scientific Area: Humanities and Arts

Institution and Country: Greece

Host Institution: AUTH

Collaborating Institution(s): -

**Project webpage
(if applicable):** www.decaindion.gr



Budget: 198000€

Duration: 36 months

Research Project Synopsis

The ancient written sources revealed that Dion, a place of worship of Olympian Zeus on the eastern foothills of Mt. Olympus, was the sacred city of the Macedonian kingdom, that the Roman colony *Colonia Iulia Augusta Diensis* was founded on its site by Octavian Augustus in c. 30 BC and that the life in the city continued until the early Byzantine period.

The long-term excavations at Dion have brought to light inscribed monuments, which as testimonies contemporary with the events of their time constitute the safest and most reliable source of information on the life of the ancient city. Only part of those monuments has been sporadically published.

The project focuses on the documentation and study of all inscribed monuments at Dion throughout its activity in order to extrapolate new scientific knowledge, disseminate, promote and highlight those characteristics particular to the city, which are associated with the important changes that occurred during its long history. These changes concern religion as well as the social and state structures. In order to facilitate the reading of the inscriptions, a methodology based on innovative digital techniques will be developed.

The aim of the project includes the publication of the epigraphic texts, the combined study of their data to draw conclusions on the religious and socio-political life at Dion and the comparative study of the epigraphic, archaeological and literary information available from other Macedonian sites to formulate conclusions on Macedonia in general. One of the results will be the presentation of a rich epigraphic material, largely unknown, to the scientific community.

Through the dissemination of the results, the specialists will be able to exploit the acquired knowledge, which will also have an impact on the even bigger promotion of ancient Dion with all the ensuing benefits on a cultural, social and economic level.

Project originality

The purpose of the interdisciplinary research is the systematic examination of all the inscribed monuments of the city of Dion, which could form a reliable tool for the study of the city's religious, political and social life and its organisation both at the time of the Macedonian kingdom and in the subsequent periods. The scientific research seeks to cover a principal issue of the survey by publishing the inscriptions of one of the most important cities of ancient Macedonia that also saw changes throughout its history.

The content is clearly defined, both from a geographical and typological point of view, as it is based on a particular category of material (inscribed monuments) of a specific city. It is not limited to compiling a corpus of inscriptions but proceeds to review all data. Namely the inscriptions are examined in relation with their archaeological context, i.e. in their provenance in the space and their co-finds.

In the context of the project, in order to make a more accurate recording and facilitate the reading of the inscriptions, a methodology will be developed based on innovative techniques suitable to this purpose. Using state-of-the-art digital 3D digitization technology, the inscriptions that pose problems in character recognition can be transformed into extremely detailed digital form. Techniques for showing form and shape characteristics will be explored in order to make it easier to find and record inscriptions.

Expected results & Research Project Impact

The inscribed monuments are reference sources for evidence of the life in the antiquity. Their study is the most reliable source for becoming knowledgeable about the ancient world, because they are direct testimonies of their era.

The study of this material offers many challenges as Dion was a living city that saw many changes; at first, it was the religious center of the Macedonian kingdom, afterwards a Roman colony and in the end, a Christian diocese. The project in question will examine all the inscribed monuments and will give answers to various questions that arise about the political, the social and the religious life of Dion, a city active for at least ten centuries. Comparisons can be made through times and cultures of the Greco-Roman world.

It is of great scientific importance the publishing of the excavation material and indeed, the epigraphic ones, which reconstruct the history of Dion. The project scientific results will contribute to interdisciplinary basic research. In terms of sustainability, it is expected that the project's outcomes and the newly acquired knowledge will support future studies and stimulate new research in the various areas.

The project also builds on innovative methodologies with cross-disciplinary approach. It also creates a digital archive and database of inscriptions of Dion.

The importance of this funding

- **Supporting experienced researchers and endorsing an effective collaboration among them as well as capitalizing on their expertise to produce new scientific knowledge that will be promoted and exploited appropriately.**
- **The improvement and extension of research activities carried out at the University Excavation of Dion and the exploitation and reinforcement of existing research structures.**
- **The attribution of special features to the research effort performed in the field of Humanities with the essential contribution, integration and employment of state-of-the-art technologies.**



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