



H.F.R.I.
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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:

Lead Seals in Byzantine Thrace: Re-examination of data, mapping the distribution of findings and tracing the communication networks

Principal Investigator: Andreas Gkoutzioukostas

Reader-friendly title: LSByT (Lead Seals in Byzantine Thrace)

Scientific Area: Humanities and Arts

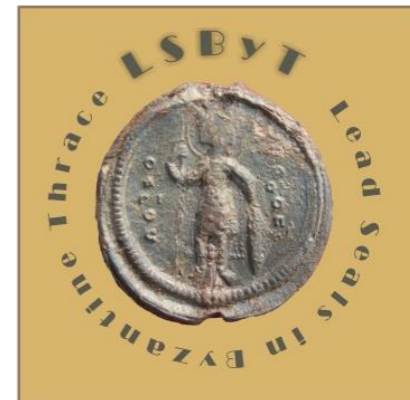
Institution and Country: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Host Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Collaborating Institution(s): Austrian Academy of Sciences (Vienna),
University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin of Preslav" (Bulgaria)

Project webpage

<http://www.lsbyt.web.auth.gr/>



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Budget: 200.000 euros

Duration: 3 years

Research Project Synopsis

The subject matter of the proposal is the Byzantine lead seals or molybdoboulla, an original primary source of Byzantine History, which promotes our knowledge in the history, and especially the administration and social structures as well as the Prosopography and the Historical Geography. An aspect relevant to the function of seals that has not until now been studied is the tracing of the communication networks and the circulation of written information in the Medieval period. In the framework of our research project we look at more than 2000 seals with an exact find spot in the regions that correspond to the Early Byzantine provinces of Rhodope, Thrace, Haimimontos, Moesia Secunda and Scythia Minor (4th-6th c.) and the Middle Byzantine themes of Thrace and Macedonia (7th-12th c.). The main goals of the project is a) the re-examination of the sigillographic material on the basis of the most accurate reading and dating of the seals, b) the mapping of seals distribution, c) the tracing of communication networks and circulation of written information in middle Byzantine Thrace.

Project originality

The project represents an interdisciplinary approach to an important material relic of the historical past, i.e. seals. It is an innovative first step in the opening up of new interdisciplinary research paths.

Its contribution to science is expected to be:

- A) An original interdisciplinary methodological approach (Sigillography, Cartography, Historical Geography) .
- B) A new corpus of seals found in Bulgaria on the basis of the modern methods and scientific approach criteria developed by the Centre of Byzantine Sigillography of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna
- C) Digital visualization of results through the creation of standard thematic maps one of the most innovative fields in modern research and leads to new research findings and results
- D) New interpretations of the Byzantine presence in Thrace and the circulation of written information in the region

Expected results & Research Project Impact

- A) Promotion of research in Sigillography and the creation of a reference study on Byzantine Thrace
- B) A fuller understanding of the mechanisms of the administrative, military, ecclesiastical and social organization of Byzantine Thrace, through an exploration of the networks of communication and the circulation of written information on the basis of road and residential networks.
- C) Utilization of the standard thematic maps by modern research
- D) Contact and more systematic familiarization of academics and the general public with an immediate and authentic source of history.

The importance of this funding

Undoubtedly, without the material support of H.F.R.I this research project would have been almost impossible to carry out. The participation of renowned scientists, who do not work at the University or any other public body, as well as the systematic work of PhD candidates for the program could not be guaranteed. One basic goal of the project, moreover, was the employment and utilization of experienced postdoctoral and young promising doctoral candidates in the production of new research results under the guidance and with the contribution of faculty members. In addition, the creation of a basic infrastructure with electronic means and instruments, which was a basic condition for the implementation of the research program, was achieved through this funding.



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