



2017

DARIAH-EU Innovation Forum
Nov 2017, Aarhus



Digital Humanities Research Group

University of Sofia St. Kliment Ohridski

11/1/2017

University of Sofia- Description of the Institution

University of Sofia St. Kliment Ohridski is the oldest Bulgarian higher education institution. Its history is an embodiment of a century-long cultural and educational tradition of the Bulgarian nation.

The University is national leading learning, teaching and research institution with the best Bulgarian scholars in all fields of science. Today, University of Sofia focusses on teaching and research projects funded by national and European programmes, national agencies, NGOs, and enterprises.

As a separate part of the development strategy of the University is creation, maintenance and enlargement of its international activities. The University sustains teaching and research agreements with more than 80 universities from various countries, hundreds of joint participations in international projects and multilateral contacts with scholars from all over the world.

Digital Humanities Research Group at the University of Sofia

Four years ago, a group of researchers with diverse backgrounds, based at the University of Sofia, were supported by the University Centre of Excellence in Humanities in their pursuit of research in the field of Digital Humanities (DH). The core of this group consists of historians, philologists – both classical and Slavic – archaeologists, geographers and academics in different multidisciplinary fields as geo information systems (GIS), digital epigraphy (EpiDoc TEI), software engineering, computer linguistics, etc.

Ongoing projects relevant to the main goals of Dariah

- Historical Geographic Information System of South-Eastern Europe

A multidisciplinary research team of historians, archaeologists, classical philologists, geographers, urbanists, GIS and IT specialists from the University works on developing the HGIS-platform “Historical Geographic Information System of South-Eastern Europe”. As a first stage (until the end of 2017), the project is focused on the region of Thrace and covers a chronological frame from Antiquity to the end of the First World War (1919). A database has been developed for the analysis and visualization of historical-geographic data such as: historical toponymy; roads and communications; military infrastructure; settlement network and historical demography; economy; religious sites, etc.

- Master programme in Digital Humanities

The Digital Humanities research group works on establishing an international Master programme in the area of DH with the active involvement of experts from University of Sofia, Leipzig University, University College of London, King's College London and other higher education institutions.

The MA programme in DH is cross-disciplinary, allowing for further specialisations for specific practical purposes, enabling the students to acquire additional skills and knowledge in history, archaeology, philology, linguistics, literary studies, computer science and other scholarly and scientific realms. The experts trained in the programme will be able to develop their particular skills in digital technologies, humanitarian research and arts.

The MA Programme in DH will be in English and is expected to begin in the spring of 2018.

- Digital Archive of Zographou Monastery on Mount Athos

Joint teams from the University of Sofia, Zographou Monastery and other educational and research institutions are currently working on the initial stages of a long-term research agenda for building an integrated description and cataloguing system for the digitized collection of the monastery. The latter consists of thousands of manuscripts and archival documents covering a period of 600 years – from 14th to 20th century. The rich organic digital monastic archive consisting of Byzantine, Slavic, Ottoman, Wallachian and other manuscripts and documents is expected to set standards not only in cataloguing and RDB-linking a number of attributes of their metadata, but also potentially to train students in the fields of traditional and digital archive and manuscript studies.

- Telamon project

The aim of the Telamon project hosted by the Department of Classics is to create a digital library of the ancient Greek inscriptions found in Bulgaria. Their total number amounts to more than 3500 monuments created within a period of about 1000 years (6th century BC — 4th century AD). Prof. Georgi Mihailov published those that have been discovered up to the mid 80's in his 5-volume series *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae (IGBulg)*.

Currently the focus is on digitising the inscriptions of the most eminent poleis of Roman Thrace, Philippopolis (today's Plovdiv) and Augusta Traiana (today's Stara Zagora). The inscriptions are approximately 1600, 1200 of which are already included in *IGBulg*. We hope that the creation of an electronic database of these inscriptions will facilitate the study of the history, culture and language both of the Bulgarian lands in antiquity and of Greco-Roman civilization as a whole.

Our approach is to use, modify and build tools based on the main standard of applying XML to the encoding the epigraphic monuments – EpiDoc. This subset of TEI for the aims of digital epigraphy and papyrology is developed by an international consortium of specialists.

- Training workshops in EpiDoc XML, 3D modelling, digital geography and prosopography and other DH tools – Summer Schools in Digital Humanities

Since 2013, the DH Research Group has been organizing several regional training events with leading international experts in different fields of DH. Among the modules and topics of the four events held so far are: EpiDoc XML; Digital Geography (Pelagios/Recogito, HGIS); Named Entities and Prosopography; 3D Modelling and Photogrammetry; Text Alignment; Treebanking. These events succeeded in creating a core community of researchers from Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Poland, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Ukraine, Slovakia, Croatia, Belarus and Russia, all experts in various scholarly fields such as Ancient and Medieval Epigraphy, Papyrology, History, Archaeology, Textual Criticism, Manuscripts Studies and Codicology, Museum Studies, Art History, etc.

In September 2017 was held the fourth Summer School in advanced tools for Digital Humanities and IT (further information on: <http://ukh.uni-sofia.bg/en/page.php?c=29&d=191>).

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