

to model these relationships. Comparative analyses will develop an understanding of the importance of issues as varied as trade, identity and migration. The GIS will be made freely available to the general public. It will be possible to search the website to generate maps that are tailored to the requirements of the individual. The presentation will provide an introduction as to how the website will work. As the project is at an early stage of development, data that will be presented comes from two pilot GIS projects only: Jewish communities living on Crete and those mentioned in the travelogue of Benjamin of Tudela (mid-12th century). The two studies have raised methodological issues that are of significance to the use of computing for the study of history generally, for example, database design and spatial analysis.

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LOOKING FOR A BYZANTINE NEEDLE IN THE WEB'S HAYSTACK: A NEW TOOL FOR BYZANTINE STUDIES ON THE INTERNET (A PROJECT OF THE IBR/NHRF)

Information management on the World Wide Web has become extremely problematic and one of the most discussed issues for the last few years. It is a fact that conventional search engines alone are not sufficient to meet the needs of specific scientific searches. Researchers and institutions are constantly looking for ways of organizing the data produced and managed on the Web, creating local or thematic criteria tools, directories and networks, trying to ensure direct access to unlimited on-line data.

In many cases, however, the rapid developments on the Internet overpower any good effort. The new IBR/NHRF project aims at creating a dynamic tool for the management of Byzantine Studies data on the Web. It will produce a practical and structured application rendering access to the on-line scientific material produced worldwide on Byzantine history and culture easy. The project will be forged by the collaboration between Byzantinists and IT specialists, developing an original methodology which will answer specific needs for research in Byzantine Studies.

This paper intends to outline the current situation of Byzantine Studies on the Internet and introduce the innovative approach adopted by the project. Solutions to a number of the basic problems will be proposed, and new issues and perspectives will be suggested taking into consideration multilingualism and diversity in Byzantine Studies on the Web. The main goal of the project is to facilitate the work of researchers on the World Wide Web and to assist the dissemination of scientific material within the wider community, using a non-profit academic platform.

In sum, this new project of the IBR/NHRF intends to offer assistance to those who work in the field of Byzantine Studies. Methodologically it is based on close cooperation with IT specialists who will adequately be monitoring developments on the Internet. This academic service will be constantly updated in order to reduce user time and effort, and to ensure the most accurate search result possible.