



Denar of Louis I of Hungary (1342-1382) from the Ancient Elis 2005 hoard

## **New evidence from Argos, Clarentza, Sparta, and Zaraka, regarding the later medieval monetary affairs of the Peloponnese**

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### **Abstract**

After 1204 the Peloponnese was divided into Franco-Neapolitan, Venetian and Byzantine areas. This political constellation provided new opportunities for the peninsula in terms of the exploitation of its resources and its integration into wider economic and political networks, though internal conflict was equally inherent. This was compounded by an increasingly difficult strategic position, with threats from the North (the rulers of Epiros and Catalan/Navarrese mainland Greece) and the Turks in the East. Medieval coinage in the region is a very potent historical source, thanks to its own diversity and abundance. It remains, however, largely unexplored in this respect: coin types and issues, especially their chronologies, their sizes and places of production, are yet to be fully understood. Likewise, their spread and usage in time and space are often unknown. A connection between numismatic data and general historiography is also very seldom attempted. One of the outstanding *desiderata* is to broaden the existing database of well-published coin finds. In this paper four newly-studied sites from the Peloponnese will provide the starting point. These will inform us, amongst other things, about early post-1204 imitative coinages; the first penny-style coinage of the Principality of Achaia; the increasing arrival of western coinages (Venetian, Neapolitan, and Hungarian) and their usage or elimination; the production of a Byzantine coinage of Venetian denomination in Byzantine Lakonia. Coinage closely accompanies the political and economic vicissitudes of the Peloponnese throughout the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, speaking to us about aspirations, needs and constraints, public and private enterprise, its failure and success.

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