

Internship Evaluation

Research Internship

September 2020 to March 2021

My name is Chrysa Anomeriti, I have just graduated from the Department of Greek Philology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (2016-2020) and I am now in my first year of “Korais” Master Degree Programme, with specialization in Modern Greek Literature. During the last semester of my undergraduate studies, I attended a seminar of Mr. Ulbricht called “Theological-Philosophical Literature: Byzantium and Islam. The historical origins of Christian-Muslim polemics, or: the interreligious dialogue”. After completing my fourth year of study, he offered me the chance to do a research internship with him from September 2020 (15/09/2020) to March 2021 (15/03/2021). In his capacity as Research Assistant (Postdoc) at the *Chair of Byzantine Studies* at Freie Universität Berlin/Germany (Institute of Greek and Latin Philology, Department of Philosophy and Humanities), Mr. Ulbricht is currently on research leave from May 2019 to October 2021 on the basis of a Feodor Lynen Research Fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. During the aforementioned period, he is a visiting scholar at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in the *Department of Byzantine Philology and Folkloristics* (School of Philosophy, Faculty of Philology).

In the 8th semester of my undergraduate studies, I had to make a choice among a number of byzantine courses. After I carefully read all the descriptions of the offered seminars, I found his course extremely interesting. Having realized that Mr. Ulbricht specializes on Christian-Muslim theological disputes and interreligious dialogues and having attended myself other courses in the past that examine the issue of *Otherness*, I was very curious to see his approach and find out more about how Christian writers saw Islam when it first appeared, as well as how certain stereotypes came up, stereotypes that were meant to be reproduced through time and even until today. Therefore, I gladly subscribed in his seminar, hoping to participate in lots of interesting discussions around this topic. During those months, I admired the way he was working, as well as how organized and focused he was. I gradually understood that Mr. Ulbricht did not care only for this specific course he had undertaken, but was also hoping to teach us something deeper, that had to do with the mentality of working as a researcher. He was always very willing to answer our questions, although he encouraged us to try and find a solution on our own when obstacles would show up. He also insisted very much on the importance of meeting a deadline as a sign of being professional and he wanted us to challenge ourselves and practice through small tasks he would assign to us. Therefore, when he asked me whether I would be interested in doing a research internship with him, I accepted without the slightest doubt. I was of course aware that, although I found Byzantine and Islamic Studies extremely interesting, the field I wanted to study more in the future was Modern Greek and Comparative Literature. Mr. Ulbricht knew that from the very beginning and has always been very supportive, encouraging me to follow it at any cost. Thus, during the academic year of 2020-2021 and while I have been studying and preparing myself

for the exams of the Master “Korais” that took place a few weeks ago, I gladly undertook the responsibility of assisting Mr. Ulbricht with the projects he was working on at the moment. After all, knowing him from the undergraduate course, I was certain that the knowledge I would gain would be invaluable, and I still firmly believe that up to now. During the total six-month internship, Mr. Ulbricht gave me the opportunity to challenge myself in a wide range of tasks and to be exposed to a variety of work methods and tools. In detail, I have participated in the following work areas:

- 1. Bibliographic Research:** I used the research tools operated by the Freie Universität Berlin (FU) and looked for research materials for him via the Library Portal Primo (<https://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/ub/literatursuche/primo/index.html>). I retrieved them online, ordered them and/or had them scanned. In addition, I have worked with the FU-hosted cloud server “Box.FU - Sync & Share” (<https://www.zedat.fu-berlin.de/BoxFU>) and with the relevant literature portals JSTOR, Academia.edu and Archive.org.
- 2. Manuscript Research and Catalogue Work:** I searched manuscript catalogues, library websites, online databases and other tools for information as well as bibliography on specific manuscripts and the exact contents of their folios. I especially dealt with manuscript archives of the Holy Mountain Athos (primarily of the Monasteries Vatopaidi and Pantocrator), the St. Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai, the National Library of Greece (EBE), Holy Monastery of Vlatadon (Thessalonice) and of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The manuscripts were related to Christian-Muslim theological disputes and interreligious dialogues. I made inquiries as to the availability and/or accessibility of the manuscripts themselves, whether in a digitized/digitalized edition or through scans.
- 3. Research Data Management:** I was responsible for organizing and structuring part of the research data of Mr. Ulbricht’s projects. My task was to consistently collect relevant studies and adequately archive them online in the projects’ big data library and to ensure its correct backup plan. I had to work out a plan of making easily accessible a big amount of catalogue and library information on around 120 manuscripts. I therefore got acquainted with the excel spreadsheet and its different automatic functions.
- 4. Digital Humanities (DH):** I attended the introductory course of Mr. Ulbricht’s E-Learning Project at FU Berlin on Digital Humanities, which this year were taught online. In the course of the Winter Semester 2020/21 “Working with Manuscripts in a Digital Age”, I gained a basic understanding of XML (eXtensible Markup Language) and TEI (Text Encoding Initiative). I was able to apply this knowledge in team work being part of Mr. Ulbricht’s research group.
- 5. Reference Management Software (Bookends):** I was responsible for the maintenance of Mr. Ulbricht’s bibliographic library using the software Bookends (<https://www.sonnysoftware.com/>). I added new titles, organized and tagged them according to their thematic.
- 7. Translation and Editing of Texts for publications:** I have supported Mr. Ulbricht in the completion of his publications by searching for secondary literature and primary sources.
8. In addition to my duties, from November onwards, I willingly undertook to guide three new members in order to ensure their smooth integration into the internship program.

After completing the internship, I can easily say that, not only did it fulfill my expectations, but it also exceeded them. Being a master student, I now realize that the experience I gained during this period was of high importance for everything I do henceforth. The tasks I performed broadened my horizons and familiarized me even more with the scientific tools and the technical skills needed in research. At the same time, the internship programme taught me a lot about the work mentality, which is something that I believe will help me in general with my career development. Whenever I was facing any kind of difficulty, Mr. Ulbricht was always there to guide me as far as he could. There were also lots of times when he very sincerely admitted that he had been facing a similar challenge. This gave me a priceless lesson, since it made me see that it is frequent for researchers to have certain kinds of issues when working on projects and that they should never be discouraged, but rather be persistent until they find the best solution.

Moreover, since new members joined our team from November onwards, I had the chance to work and interact with other students as well. We all had our personal tasks, but we were also working as a team, helping and advising each other. Mr. Ulbricht would always say to us that if we want to follow an academic career, but generally whatever we pursue as a career, it is very important to know that there are other partners whom we might consult and ask for a second opinion, so we are never really alone. As my exams for the master were getting closer and knowing that there was by then a number of colleagues in the internship who would assist Mr. Ulbricht with his duties, I explained to him that I would like to withdraw from the internship programme. Even then, Mr. Ulbricht kindly reassured me that he would be there for me whenever I need him in the future.

I would really like to thank him for the trust he put on me from the very first day, for the invaluable experience I gained thanks to him and of course for the excellent collaboration we had during these months. I wish him all the best for his future career and life as well as continued success.