

## Internship Evaluation

### Research Internship

October 2020 to June 2021

I began my internship with Mr. Manolis Ulbricht in October 2021, and completed it at the end of the summer semester 2021. I first heard about the internship opportunity from a fellow student, and it piqued my interest because I had never come across something similar during my studies. I remembered Mr. Ulbricht from the lecture «Σημειώσεις για τις σχέσεις Μουσουλμάνων και Χριστιανών στη Μέση Ανατολή κατά τα Βυζαντινά χρόνια. Στιγμιότυπα, πηγές, συγγραφείς» [“Notes on the relations between Muslims and Christians in the Middle East during the Byzantine period. Snapshots, sources, authors”] he had delivered at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in 2019. At the time, I had no clear idea of what one was meant to do during a research internship, but I was fascinated by the subject area of Christian-Muslim relations. I was also starting to think about pursuing a career in academia, and was thrilled at the opportunity to learn from an established researcher and to begin making connections with the scientific community.

My two main goals were to build on the knowledge I had gained during my studies, but also to familiarize myself with the practical aspects of research outside of a classroom setting. Although I did not know what to expect concerning the type of work I would be exposed to, I was impressed by the broad range of tasks and activities, which allowed me to expand my skills in more areas than I could have anticipated. The philological aspect of the work I did has not only given me invaluable new knowledge relevant to my field of studies, but also a much better understanding of how to approach learning and research with efficiency. My work mentality has also changed, as I have seen first-hand the importance of good preparation and organization, as well as that of soft skills such as flexibility, clear communication and time management. In addition, I was able to develop my technical skills, being introduced to several programs I had little or no familiarity with, such as Classical Text Editor, Mellé and Bookends, which allow for a neater processing and presentation of the philological material. Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the internship was the introduction to the fast-rising field of Digital Humanities, of which I had previously known next to nothing. Altogether, the internship has expanded my horizons and has given me an invaluable glimpse into the workings of research and academia.

My expectations were exceeded in every way, as throughout the course of the internship Mr. Ulbricht continued to provide me with new tasks that both kept my academic interests in mind, and broadened them. He was always cognizant and helped me understand the purpose of each item and its potential usefulness to me. His encouragement to seek out solutions when struggling and to take initiative allowed me to improve much more than I otherwise would have. I mainly faced difficulty when dealing with environments and situations I had no previous experience with, in that I was unsure of how to approach them and insecure about my ability to come up with appropriate solutions and implement them. Thanks to Mr.

Ulbricht's guidance, I was able to build confidence and a mentality of "learning how to learn", thus gaining insight not only in how to handle the specific problems but in how to deal with challenges in general.

The working environment was one that I thoroughly enjoyed. Although the global outbreak of COVID-19 made regular, face-to-face meetings a difficulty for quite some time, Mr. Ulbricht was always in touch and checked in with all the frequency required to create an environment that felt involved and cooperative. His ability to connect with the interns and develop a working relationship of mutual trust impressed me. The feedback Mr. Ulbricht gave was frequent and always valuable, allowing me to evaluate myself and gain clarity in many aspects of my own working process, my strengths and my weaknesses. It was his continued support and faith in my abilities that allowed me to learn as much as I did.

My general impression of the internship experience would be that it is at once challenging and rewarding. Mr. Ulbricht's mindfulness of the variety of skills required, beyond the basics of philological knowledge, to thrive in academia and in our particular field of studies is something that has and will continue to deeply influence my own approach in the future. I would recommend the internship without reservation to anyone who is considering a life and career in academia: it is a deeply immersive experience, where you are faced with real-life scientific and practical questions, not hypothetical scenarios or busywork. It not only allows you a glimpse into the academic world, but prepares you for the plethora of challenges you are likely to face within it. For me, it has helped to solidify my conviction that this is the space where I want to make my career, and has built many of the foundations that I will need to do so. I am grateful for the opportunity and unique experience.