

### Medieval Greek Program at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens

I am applying retroactively to be reimbursed for part of the travel expenses associated with my taking part in the Medieval Greek Program at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens this past summer of 2015.

This Medieval Greek Program is extremely competitive and is widely recognized as both the most rigorous and most prestigious program in Medieval Greek in the world. The coursework takes place over one month in the summer and includes three major components: the reading of printed Medieval Greek texts at diverse levels of linguistic and stylistic difficulty, training in paleography (to read ancient manuscripts, papyruses, and inscriptions), and one-on-one tutorials; these classroom activities are generously complemented by archeological excursions both around Athens and various parts of Greece (Sparta, Mystra, Thessaloniki, Corinth, Meteora, Hosios Loukas, etc.). This course is taught by Eustratios Papaioannou (Brown University) and Alexandros Alexakis (University of Ioannina), two of the world's foremost scholars in Medieval Greek. I was able to spend one month under the private tutelage of Professor Alexakis, studying in depth the Greek of my PhD dissertation figure, Maximos the Confessor, whose Greek style and conceptual content is also widely recognized as the most difficult exemplar of Medieval Greek available.

This summer program offers various opportunities to promote one's career. First, it increases one's fluency in the language, which is of fundamental importance when dealing with sources that may not exist in translation—or even if they do, they enable one to engage the text more responsibly by developing sound knowledge of the original. Second, it has in the past functioned as a leap-board for more prestigious awards and fellowships. For example, my

colleague, who took part in this program, was able to use his connections and skills acquired during this program to win a summer research fellowship at the Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Studies Research Center of Harvard University and, thereafter, a Fulbright-Mach scholarship to conduct further research at the Institute for Byzantine Studies in Vienna. Third, it prepares one to conduct highly sophisticated research with manuscripts in order to create what is known as a “critical edition,” which includes the comparison of the relevant existing manuscripts in order to determine as closely as possible what the original text might have been.

Although it is too early to tell what exact benefits I may still reap from this program beyond those listed above, I have, nevertheless, already enjoyed two immediate ones. First, Alexander Alexakis will favorably review my first book translation and publication (Maximos the Confessor, *Two Hundred Chapters on Theology*, Crestwood, NY: Saint Vladimir’s Seminar Press, 2015) in a prestigious academic journal (*Speculum* or *Saint Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*), which will obviously have a positive impact on my future career prospects. Second, upon hearing that I had taken part in this program, several Spanish scholars I met at a conference requested me to translate Maximos the Confessor’s *Ambigua*, his most difficult and important work, into Spanish (my native language), a project I have now begun. The expected publication of this lengthy work (over 120,000 words) will be 2017 with Editorial Ciudad Nueva, based in Madrid, the publishing house with the largest collection of early Christian texts in Spanish translation. My book will be volume 157.

The program itself provided accommodations and the travel within Greece was covered by the A.G. Leventis foundation, so I am only applying for reimbursement for money spent on travel to Greece. I took the cheapest route I could find, which meant avoiding the rather

expensive roundtrip from JFK to Athens (ca. \$1,350), but an admittedly roundabout (but much cheaper) route: JFK to Moscow, Moscow to Kiev, and Kiev to Athens. This whole arrangement only cost about \$870, although it did involve two somewhat odd days in Moscow waiting for the next flight, being stopped and interrogated for two hours at a commander's headquarters in Kiev, a canceled flight from Kiev to Athens due to protests in Greece, which resulted in an additional flight to get to Athens from Kiev via Thessaloniki. A friend of mine generously covered half of my JFK-Moscow flight, so I am only requesting half of that amount and the amount from Kiev to Athens. It may have taken me three days to get to Athens this way (and the worst jet lag/sleep deprivation of my life), but I saved nearly \$500 doing so.

Thank you kindly for reviewing my application