**The Hellenic Society: Dover Fund Report**

**Advanced Summer Course ‘Byzantine Epigraphy *in situ*’, Nessebar, Bulgaria, 12–15 September 2023**

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I am deeply grateful for the financial support provided by the Dover Fund, which enabled my participation in the Advanced Summer Course ‘Byzantine Epigraphy *in situ*’ held in Nessebar, Bulgaria, from 12 to 15 September 2023. This summer course, organised by leading Byzantine epigraphers, took place in Nessebar, a Bulgarian town rich in extant Byzantine inscriptions. The course brought together 19 postgraduate students and early career researchers from various countries. A comprehensive overview of the course can be found on the official website: <https://phd-edu.nasledstvo.bg/>

The summer course comprised a well-structured programme of activities, including lectures, field studies, and excursions. The lectures provided theoretical foundations and contextual information essential for understanding Byzantine epigraphy. For our field studies, we visited Byzantine churches, monasteries, and the archaeological museum in Nessebar’s old town to study inscriptions *in situ*. This hands-on experience was invaluable for developing practical skills in reading and interpreting Byzantine inscriptions. The course also included excursions to museums and archaeological sites in Byala and Sozopol, broadening our understanding of Byzantine epigraphy beyond Nessebar.

Following the course, I extended my stay to visit Sofia and Plovdiv, further enriching my understanding of Byzantine and Bulgarian cultural heritage. In Sofia, I visited the Cathedral of Saint Nedelya, the UNESCO World Heritage site of Boyana Church, and the National Museum of History. In Plovdiv (former Philippopolis), I explored the Regional Archaeological Museum, two basilicas with well-preserved mosaics, and ancient Roman sites.

This summer course has been immensely beneficial for my academic development. It highlighted the potential benefits of incorporating epigraphic insights into textual historical studies, broadening my methodological approach. It provided an opportunity to network with fellow early career researchers, fostering potential future collaborations. Moreover, it offered a deep dive into Bulgarian culture, this being my first visit to the country.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Dover Fund for making this invaluable experience possible. The knowledge and skills gained during this course will undoubtedly enhance my research in Byzantine studies and contribute significantly to my academic growth.