

Eleonora Cattafi (MA in Classical Philology at the University of Pisa, Italy) about her internship in the EVWRIT project (2019)

As a master student at the University of Pisa, I had the opportunity to apply for an Erasmus+ traineeship abroad. Due to my interest in Greek linguistics and the academic reputation of UGent in this area, the choice to conduct my internship in the EVWRIT project was quite natural. More than a year later, I consider it one of the happiest decisions of my life.

I can say I learnt a lot from everyone in the Greek section, from professors to doctoral students. In particular, the EVWRIT group welcomed me since the first moments: I found an international and enthusiastic environment where interrelated aspects of documentary papyri (paleography, lexicology, multilingualism...) are investigated from an innovative perspective. This fosters a close collaboration within the team, that can develop in stimulating discussions both in and out the office; at the same time, due to the variety of topics analyzed, one can focus on the aspects they consider more interesting.

The internship complemented and enriched my formation from different point of views. While my academic training in Pisa was mostly theoretical, in Gent I had a great opportunity to get hands-on experience (or, as we say in Italy, 'mettere le mani in pasta') in the research work. The knowledge acquired during the stage, ranging from papyrology to sociolinguistics, was immediately put into practice with real texts, using editions of papyri and digital tools. I was involved in the database of the project, where I could contribute to the linguistic annotations of texts; besides, I took part in the EVWRIT reading group and was even in the backstage of the organization of a scientific conference!

The importance of this internship was also personally invaluable for my career: in fact, during that period I have written my PhD proposal and applied for funding, which allowed me to begin my doctoral research in Gent a few months later. However, I believe the things that one can learn in the EVWRIT project go far beyond research: soft skills such as teamworking and project management, as well as methodological rigor and positive communication, are crucial elements also in the world outside academia. And spending some months as a researcher can definitely help you understand in which direction you would like to take them!

Based on my experience, I can wholeheartedly recommend a stage in the EVWRIT project if you are already a UGent student as well as if you are an international student. You will find a vibrant research community, a lot of exciting papyri to work with and – why not – some unexpected opportunities for your future career!