

EMCC student gives insights into his academic travel experience in January 2024

In January 2024, thanks to a financial grant by the *Santander Mobilitätsfonds* of the University of Münster, I was given the opportunity to travel to North America (Chicago, IL, and Montreal, Canada) for two great international experiences in the domain of classical studies that deeply enriched my EMCC studies in Europe.

In Chicago, together with EMCC Associate Director Professor Dr. Hans Beck and Dr. Marian Helm from the University of Münster, I visited the yearly joint conference of the *Society for Classical Studies* (SCS) and the *Archaeological Institute of America* (AIA), which forms the biggest conference for *Altertumswissenschaften* in North America. Apart from the opportunity to talk to many professors and students from universities across the anglophone world and thereby “network” a little outside the European context, I was glad to attend panels on a rich kaleidoscope of topics related to classical studies that I would probably have never encountered on a single conference anywhere else – I especially want to mention a panel concerning comparative historical studies of the ancient worlds of China and the Mediterranean organized by Dr. Jordan Christopher from Loyola Marymount University, LA. For anybody who is interested in getting a multiple days-long full-time experience of how classics are dealt with outside of continental Europe, the SCS conference is *the* occasion to go for.

Subsequently, thanks to an invitation by Marian Helm, I had the great opportunity to present first thoughts and ideas about my Master thesis (on ecocritical readings of Homer’s *Odyssey*) to a very interested student audience at the Department of History and Classical Studies at McGill University, Montreal. I was intrigued by their questions and really appreciated this opportunity for “practicing” for the EMCC summer school; additionally, I was able to discuss my ideas with local professors and, last but not least, enjoy the atmosphere of a North American university campus with its libraries and idiosyncratic historical architecture that can be so different from what we are used to in Europe.

To put it in a nutshell, I can only recommend to every EMCC student to not only travel the old continent – even though European cooperation is, of course, our daily bread, so to speak –, but also to move beyond Europe and visit a conference on classical studies in another part of the world, e.g. in America or Oceania, to gain further insights into different thematic and methodological approaches to well-established questions as well as to experience the diversity of the academic landscape outside of Europe. Many universities offer financial support for this kind of endeavour (such as *Santander* in Münster), and applying for these funds and planning a larger research trip is definitely worth the effort (and, at the same time, good practice for grant applications in later career phases). And to be honest, even the beer is not too bad outside our continent!

Lukas Duisen, University of Münster, 8th April 2024