

Internship Evaluation

Research Internship

July 2021 to September 2021

Overview

From July 5 to September 25 I had the honor to be part of the projects *E-Learning-Projekt „Digitale Erschließungs- und Editionsmethoden in den Philologien des Christlichen Orients: vom Handschriftendigitalisat zur Digitalen Edition and Corpus Coranicum Byzantinum* in the Freie Universität Berlin, in charge of Dr. Manolis Ulbricht as part of an scholarship from the program “Programa de Iniciación a la Investigación CNBBBJ-UNAM-2020”.

Even if an internship is not mandatory for my degree, I decided to apply for it because I wanted to know the German methodology for studying and working in the area of Byzantine philology. I found the *E-Learning-Projekt* on the website of the Institute of Greek and Latin Languages and Literatures of the University and was appealed by the description and the achievements they had already reached. I researched who Dr. Ulbricht was, read a pair of articles he had written about *Coranus Graecus* and decided to contact him via the e-mail address which was given on website of the department of Byzantine Studies.

My expectations before starting the internship

After this internship, my expectation was to have learned more about working closely with the manuscripts or early sources or editions of our main authors and have practiced more with software from digital humanities. I also wanted to have learned more vocabulary in German about philology. I expected a great experience in the field of researching digital humanities oriented to Byzantine Studies and the Greek language. Since I was going to be working in Germany, I thought I was going to be able to visit libraries, other universities in Berlin and across Germany and meet with other researchers and students on the campus.

Working experience and results of the internship

My main aim was to work with academics and students from classics and other fields from humanities and computer sciences. I worked with a variety of topics related to Greek philosophy and Arabic philology that truly complimented what I have learned in my University of Mexico (UNAM) because it was a new methodology of working and an innovative focus on the texts. For my studies, I learned here in the FU Berlin how to discuss with a text, based both on the *apparatus criticus* and in the interpretation given from a translation; as well I learned how to manage information from specific words and passages into Excel or into PDF, in order to organize and schematize it. In regard to mentality work, I understood that I should be focused on a specific assignment at a time and I should be committed to my time and the schedule of my colleagues. About technical knowledge, I never thought it could exist for my field, I used to believe that software beyond digital dictionaries or selected corpora from certain authors would not exist or would not be significant. Thanks to this internship I could

discover I had scientific skills, such as observation, analysis, and synthesis of information with the help of digital tools. Regarding soft skills, I can say I do have developed my character to be more comprehensive, responsible, and efficient with my own schedule and tasks. Definitely, when I worked both, soft and hard skills, I was able to come back to work harder and better. This experience was a great opportunity for working with sources from digital humanities (such as GitHub repositories and video tutorials from YouTube for specific software) and improving my technical skills with the computer and with the institutional databases and electronic tools.

I cannot say that my expectations failed, but they were absolutely over completed in other aspects that were more valuable for my professional life. Because of the short time I collaborated in these projects I experienced a quick knowledge process, related not only to the philological discipline but also with the use of technical computer skills. I could evaluate my learning process as solid and successful because I was guided and observed closely, so I could work and discuss my doubts.

The two main challenges I faced during the internship were learning how philology is studied in the host university (FU Berlin) and the lack of personal interaction: because of the Corona crisis, the internship was done on a remote virtual basis that brought me problems with the instructions. Even though I wanted to achieve every task on time and according to the plan, I decided to ask for help in all the cases I was stuck. Nevertheless, I knew that it was my internship and that I could research the solutions on the internet. By doing that I could develop my technical skills by experimenting alone with the software, and even if I was not able to see and talk face to face to solve some of my problems, I was independent to look for creative solutions. Even if it was exhausting at the beginning, I could work on my soft skills and control the stress to reach every aim. This virtual internship environment was not easy the first weeks because I was not familiarized with all the topics or I just needed more previous personal guidance with the use of computer and software, but as I understood and accept the rhythm of this project, I could adapt and give all my efforts for a satisfactory job.

The working atmosphere and the interpersonal contact with Dr. Ulbricht was constant and very open to discussion and explanation. Maybe the virtual environment was the best option because we could agree on specific times of the day for instructions and constant feedback. This mentioned feedback from my supervisor and colleagues was fundamental for my progress because it was objective, direct, polite, and clear. I always knew if I was working according to the plan and schedule or if I was doing something completely different from what I should have been done. Sometimes it was hard for me to hear that I was working too slow and not checking all my tasks on time, but maybe it was also the cultural difference between how I was used to being treated in my country and the extra careful manners we have to express our disconformity. I had to repeat to myself that it was not a personal attack, but an invitation for working harder and expressing my questions because I was capable to reach all of the objectives, just needed to be explained one more time and pay more attention. This is an attitude that I know I have to keep for my academic and professional development in every part of the world I want to stay in. In general, I learned that I have to pay more attention to the instructions, schedules, and objectives of my projects, also I understand that Philology is not an independent work, but teamwork, and in order to be successful, I must have clear all my questions and be fully committed with my supervisor and team. The research technics,

projects, and methodology are something that I would like to incorporate in my academic and professional life.

This internship experience was very satisfactory because it allowed me to travel out and far from my country Mexico into a very different culture and discipline in Germany. I could work with students from other parts of the world, especially Greek students, in a common language and could share with them the joy of having helped in these projects. This journey helped me to grow up as a student and as a person, because now I know I can face academic and daily challenges even if I was not born, raised, or educated in Europe. It may be harder, but it is worth it. I would totally recommend an internship under Dr. Manolis Ulbricht's guidance only if the person has the disposition of learning, working, and trust in the method and rigor it requires, especially if it is an international internship!

This time at the Freie Universität Berlin in Germany was life-changing for me because I could know myself better and could get an orientation on what I would like to do with my academic life, and now I know how hard I have to work in order to get it. I will be grateful to him all my life for accepting me in his projects and trusting in my capacities even in these turbulent times of humanity during the Corona pandemic.