



## *From Bamberg to Cosmopolitanism*

*Students of the European Joint Master's Degree share their views on studying in World Heritage Sites*

by Susan Brähler

Last autumn, the Institute of English and American Studies was proud to welcome the largest and most heterogeneous group of students pursuing the European Joint Master's Degree in English and American Studies since the programme's inception in the 2007/08 winter semester. Over the past years, the Joint Master's has attracted an ever-growing number of students from countries as diverse as Albania, Bangladesh, China, Greece, Iran, Italy, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, the UK, the United States and, of course, Germany.

Being a truly international programme, the Joint Master's is offered by a consortium of six universities – Karl-Franzens-University Graz, the City College of the City University New York, the University Paris Diderot, the University of Pécs, the University of Roehampton London, Ca' Foscari University Venice and the University of Bamberg – which cooperate to provide an exclusively English-taught, international curriculum. MA students choose one of these schools as their home university and spend at least one obligatory mobility semester at one of the part-

ner universities. In addition, students are given the opportunity to participate in Graz International Summer School Seggau where they are surrounded by an international group of lecturers and students.

Experience has shown that, with English as their *lingua franca*, new students find it easy to connect, no matter how different their cultural backgrounds. By enabling an ongoing intercultural communication, the Joint Master's prepares students for living and working in a globalized world and strengthens their cosmopolitan mindset.

With Bamberg, Graz and Venice being World Heritage Sites, and including the major cities of New York and Paris, Joint Master's students find themselves in internationally recognized cultural centres and global metropolises.

Here is what some of our students had to say about their individual experiences in Bamberg and abroad.



Joint Master's students with Prof. Dr. Christoph Houswitschka and Johannes Weber during a weekend seminar on Shakespeare at Castle Feuerstein in November 2012

## via Venice and Graz



*“Before applying for the Joint Degree programme in Bamberg, one of the first things I came across was the fact that Bamberg is a World Heritage site. I was very much intrigued by that and the prospect of studying in Bamberg became incredibly appealing to me. In Bamberg, history is not something remote that only belongs in a museum; in Bamberg history is found on every street.*

*I was amazed by the town centre and its perfectly preserved medieval plan and surviving buildings, such as the Old Town Hall or Saint Martin’s church. What is more, I fell in love with Little Venice and its picturesque medieval buildings, as well as the New Residence and the breathtaking view of Bamberg from the Rose Garden. It is such an inspiration to study in a city where history is so harmoniously intertwined with modern life.”*

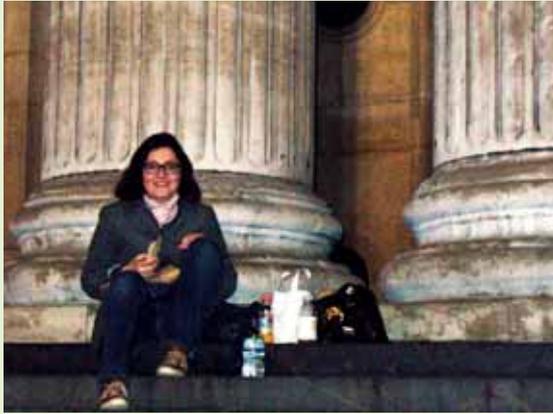
### **Iris Pikuli (Greece)**

is in her first semester as a Joint Degree student. Her mobility semester will take her to the City College of New York in August 2013.

*“It’s snowing in Bamberg. On the narrow alleys, on the old “Rathaus” and on the spires of the cathedral. It is also snowing in the infinite Luisenhain. At each step, the white trees of the boulevard frame the river and its inhabitants – ducks that once, in winter, used to fly far away from here but now, uncannily, do not want to leave. At the end a motionless lake collects the thoughts of the wanderers who have taken this road so far. And so Venice comes to mind. When out along the Fondamenta Nove, you can see the sun rising slowly above the lagoon. It lights up the islands of San Michele and San Marco and shines through the canals and churches. Following its path, you can see it running fast to the west, disappearing behind the Zattere. Now you feel somewhat sad but even sadness in Venice can warm your heart. After all, both your sadness and sense of well-being are emotions that in the end you are not even able to tell apart. In the meantime, however, you feel your horizon broaden even further.”*

### **Matteo Scotti (Italy)**

has just decided to prolong his mobility time at the University of Bamberg for one more semester. His home university is Ca’ Foscari University Venice.



*“It has become commonplace that the architecture of our living space shapes us – for good as well as for bad. While room hunting in London at the beginning of my mobility term, this message was brought home to me with mighty force. Getting on the tube in a nice area in central London where my hostel was located and emerging out of it somewhere in the south east, it only took me a moment to feel oppressed by the dark buildings looming over me. I’m very glad I did not need to experience living there during the gloomy winter months as it was unpleasant enough on a sunny day; and what a relief to return to the city and be calmed by the splendour of St. Paul’s. With Bamberg my home university, I am grateful to study in a town that is a World Heritage Site, as its beautiful buildings shape my life.”*

**Ricarda Edelthammer** (Germany)

has graduated with a BA from the University of Bamberg and decided to stay on in Bamberg to begin the Joint Master’s. She has just completed her mobility semester at the University of Roehampton, London. The picture shows her sitting on the steps of St Paul’s Cathedral.

*“Looking back at my Joint Degree time, I keep admiring the harmonious atmosphere, created both by the universities of the Joint Master’s consortium and the cities where they are located. I am very proud of having earned my Joint Master’s in two World Heritage Sites – Bamberg, my Joint Master’s home, and Graz, where I spent my mobility semester. Both cities were selected as World Heritage Sites as outstanding traditional settlements which at the same time exhibit an important interchange of human values. This is what I experienced during my studies – the international spirit of the Joint Degree programme always interweaves harmoniously with the unique atmosphere of a time-honoured city. Cosy and cheerful, welcoming and inspiring, traditional and innovative – all these characteristics are true of the Joint Master’s programme itself and of the Joint Master’s cities.”*

**Aleksandra Miroshevskaya** (Russia)

graduated with the Joint Master’s in 2012 and is currently working on her PhD in English Linguistics at the University of Bamberg.



*“What does it feel like to study in Bamberg, a World Heritage Site? Well, it definitely has a very special ambience replete with history. The moment you go out of the door you can encounter history, be it an ancient building where your seminars take place or one of the numerous old statues lining the bridges, squares and alleys. The town’s unique history can be sensed in the smallest details of everyday life, from the cobblestones under your feet, the chime of church bells in the air, old-fashioned horse carriages spotted in the town centre along with the latest posh cabriolet. Altogether, this is a place where the past complements the present harmoniously to ensure a culturally conscious yet lively place to study.”*

**Valentina Zatsepina** (Russia)

graduated from the Joint Master’s in January 2013 and has just moved to Hungary. She spent the winter semester 2010/11 in Pécs, the 2010 European Capital of Culture. The photo shows her imitating Makris Agamemnon’s Niké statue high above Pécs.

*“The city of Bamberg has earned its place in the annals of World Heritage; not simply by having once housed the introspectively great writer, E.T.A. Hoffmann, but also from its wealth of beautiful, medieval architecture, and its attraction to a wide variety of international students and seekers of good beer. As a student in the Joint Degree programme, and as a native speaker of English, I’ve learned more about the hybrid nature of my mother tongue than I’d bargained for. The open community of people here who are learning together is complemented by magnificent surroundings, both natural and engineered, and many fine places to eat one’s cake and, in a manner of speaking, have it too. To quote an Italian friend: ‘It’s smaller than Paris, but Bamberg is a jewel.’”*

**Jason Cooke** (USA)

is in his third Joint Master’s semester and has just completed his mobility semester at the University Paris Diderot. In the picture, he is enjoying seafood in his favourite Parisian brasserie.