

PICTURES AND STORIES OF OUR STUDY TRIP TO ITALY 2015



PAOLA BASILE

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“IT IS GOOD TO HAVE AN END TO JOURNEY TOWARD; BUT IT IS THE JOURNEY
THAT MATTERS, IN THE END.”

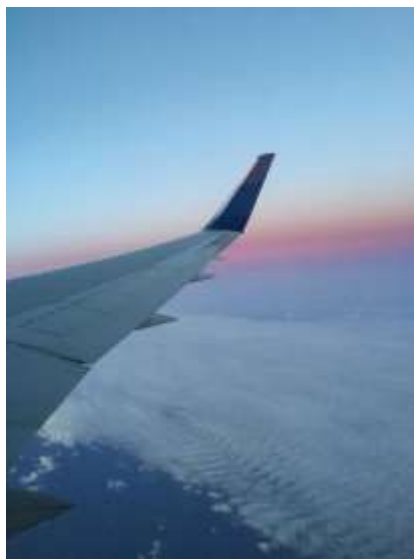
“ONE'S DESTINATION IS NEVER A PLACE, BUT A NEW WAY OF SEEING THINGS”

“TRAVEL IS INTENSIFIED LIVING”

“IT IS THE RICHEST EXPERIENCE”

“IT BROADENS PERSPECTIVES AND TEACHES NEW WAYS TO MEASURE
QUALITY OF LIFE”

“THOUGHTFUL TRAVEL ENGAGES YOU WITH THE WORLD”



DEPARTURE: On May 14th 2015 we all met at the airport of Cleveland for our study-trip to Italy. We are fifteen, and our adventure is about to start. Here we are: *Erika Ginn, Mary Graziano, David Bojalad, Cristina Suarez, Joe Munaretto, Becca Dietz, Jace Compton, Thom Falk, Kaleb Brown, Alex Orlando, Eric Beck, Tracey Lynch, Audryana Lucha, Brenda Allen, and Dr. Paola Basile (organizer, professor, and guide).*



After a long flight we finally arrive at the airport of Rome, we are quite tired but so excited! Students cannot wait to take a “walk” in Italy. Well... first we have to line up at the

airport with people from all over the world! It is fascinating to listen to the many languages spoken here and to watch all the “different” persons in a room, a “sea” of people, of smiles, of excitements, of complaints... And then we walk outside, under the sky of Italy! Our private bus is here and will take us to our first destination: **TIVOLI: VILLA D'ESTE (ROME, LAZIO)**. First we stop for a pizza and a drink in Tivoli, afterwards we walk to Villa d'Este. The gardens of the Villa d'Este are among the earliest and finest of the *giardini delle meraviglie* and symbolize the flowering of Renaissance culture. With its impressive concentration of fountains (500!), nymphs, grottoes, troughs and pools, cascades, plays of water, and music, it constitutes a much-copied model for European gardens in the mannerist and baroque styles. A magic place filled with beauty, myths, genius, and peace. One fountain periodically surges to splash unsuspecting visitors; a water organ fountain plays music at set times; a long row of 100 different “face” fountains offers an intimate place to take a stroll... The masterpiece Italian-style garden with its innovative and tasteful landscaping launched a new era, wherein entertainment and engagement, as well as beauty and respite, were incorporated into garden design. The rooms of the Palace d'Este built on the ruins of an ancient Roman villa (absolutely gorgeous!) were ambitiously decorated under the tutelage of the stars of the late Roman Mannerism, such as Livio Agresti, Federico Zuccari, Durante Alberti, Girolamo Muziano, Cesare Nebbia and Antonio Tempesta.















A student: *Beautiful Villa D'Este. Walking through the estate, up the stairs and looking over the rolling, green hills. I felt so at ease and calm. The lush gardens were so meticulously kept. The Renaissance inspired architecture was gorgeous and I tried to imagine the immense project to build such an estate on the slanted hillside. Bringing in water to supply the numerous fountains must have been quite a task. The frescos were stunning and must have taken years to create. What an experience it would have been to be a child raised in these surroundings. I enjoyed my first gelato of Italy in the plaza outside the Villa. The vendors were so friendly and accommodating.*





With the eyes still filled up with the marvels of Villa D'Este, we walk back to our bus. On the road again until our hotel in **CORTONA (TOSCANA)**.



Tuscany is an exciting journey along which one discovers the history of the civilizations that have populated this magic territory, making it what it is today, possibly the greatest repository of art in the world, from extraordinary paintings and sculpture to frescoes and architectural masterpieces. **Cortona** is one of the most famous Tuscan medieval hill towns (originally an Etruscan city) and consequently has many steep streets and lanes. Nevertheless, the sights of Cortona are definitely worth a good walk up to the hill! The main piazza of Cortona, *Piazza della Repubblica*, has a wonderful ambience and forms the focal center of Cortona. The highest point on the hill of Cortona is dominated by a huge Medicean fort from which we can admire the town and the entire Val di Chiana. Our first dinner is by the main piazza, and is amazing! Many delicious Tuscan appetizers, and then the “primo piatto”, “secondo piatto”, the “contorno”, and dessert, and of course Tuscan wine! The service is slow and allows us to eat slowly and to enjoy our time, to socialize, to relax, and to have good laughs accompanied with excellent food and wine. Yes, we are in Italy!







A student:

Every single corner of that town had a beautiful architecture, the little streets, the people and I am not allowed to forget about the food. I love that nature was everywhere and walking through those streets was so peaceful. Somehow it felt as if I'd been there before as crazy as that sounds, but it was the perfect opportunity to take a break from the world and appreciate the beauty of what Italians called "dolce far niente". The fact that I was able to sit down and enjoy the view while eating a delicious gelato was for sure a unique experience. It really showed me a part of what Italian life truly is and how important is to enjoy every moment of life.



Student: Cortona looked like all of the postcards and pictures I've looked at over the years. The movies and internet searches didn't do it justice. I sat on my bed in the hotel room and listened to the sounds of a lady talking to her dog, Italian news from across the roof tops and laughter from the room above. The terra cotta colors against the green hillside eased my tired eyes. I had hoped to see Frances Mayes' house, but was happy enough that I was in the area. Dinner that night was a blur. I was reeling from the flight and overwhelmed with sounds and people.



La vita è quella cosa che comincia dopo il caffè -
Life is what starts after a good Italian coffee! Breakfast in Cortona with a breathtaking view!



On the bus again! Our first stop **SIENA (TOSCANA) AND THE CHIANTI VALLEY**



Chianti offers a unique landscape, with green, gentle hills covered with wide fields of vineyards and olive groves, small stone villages, characteristic parishes and countryside homes in stone. The Chianti landscapes are so beautiful and particular that they inspired, and still inspire today, many artists and photographers across the globe.

A student commented: Always what I had dreamed of. The grapes and olives groves fit together like puzzle pieces over the landscape. I met Diego and Francesco our hotel concierges early that morning. Very friendly and lovely men.

Siena is likely Italy's loveliest medieval city. Siena's heart is its central piazza known as *Il Campo*, known worldwide for the famous Palio, a horse race run around the piazza.



Siena is said to have been founded by Senius and probably his brother Aschius, son of Remus, one of the two legendary founders of Rome, thus Siena's emblem is the she-wolf who suckled Remus and Romulus - you'll find many statues throughout the city. The city sits over three hills with its heart the huge Piazza del Campo, where the Roman forum used to be. Rebuilt during the rule of the Council of Nine, a democratic group from 1287 to 1355, the nine sections of the fan-like brick pavement of the piazza represent the council and symbolizes the Madonna's cloak which shelters Siena. The Campo is dominated by the red Palazzo Pubblico and its tower, Torre del Mangia. Along with the Duomo (Cathedral) of Siena, the Palazzo Pubblico was also built during the same period of rule by the Council of Nine. The civic palace, built between 1297 and 1310, still houses the city's municipal offices much like Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. Its internal courtyard has entrances to the Torre (= tower) del Mangia and to the Civic Museum: a climb up with over 500 steps will reward you with a wonderful view of Siena and its surroundings. The Museum, on the other hand, offers some of the greatest of Sienese paintings. The *Sala del Concistoro* houses one of Domenico Beccafumi's best works, ceiling frescoes of allegories on the virtues of Siena's medieval government. But it is the *Sala del Mappamondo* and the *Sala della Pace* that hold the palace's highlights: Simone Martini's huge *Maestà* and Equestrian Portrait of Guidoriccio da Fogliano and Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Allegories of Good and Bad Government, once considered the most important cycle of secular paintings of the Middle Ages.





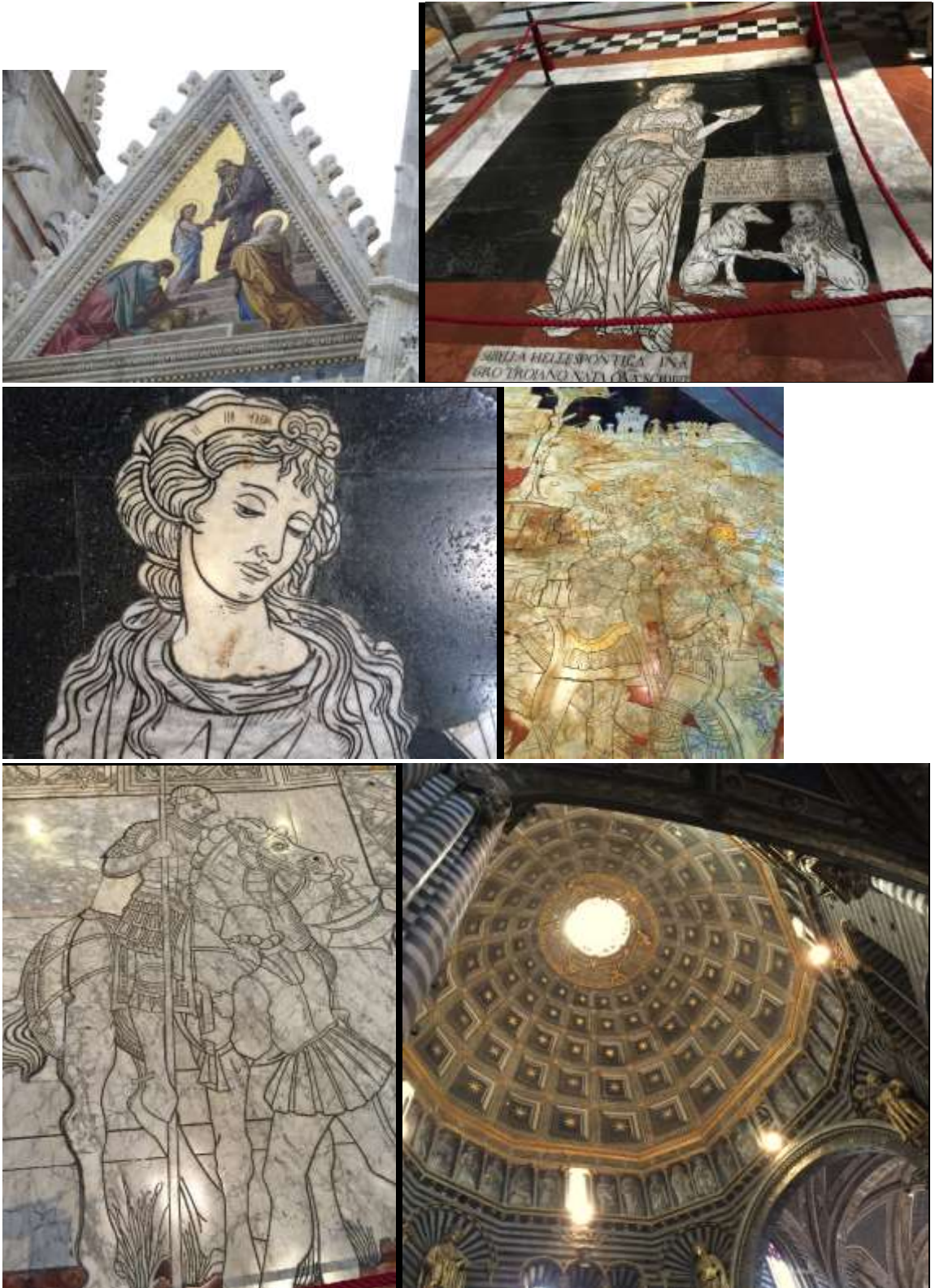
The magnificent complex of the Cathedral of Siena, its Duomo, named the “Divine Beauty” houses a series of some of the most important monuments of the European artistic panorama. With its more than one million visitors every year, the Cathedral without a doubt represents the fulcrum of the entire complex, while other significant elements include the Crypt, the Baptistery and the Museo dell'Opera, all part of the impressive mass formed by the "Duomo Vecchio" (Old Cathedral), and the "Duomo Nuovo" (New Cathedral). Visitors will travel along a memorable itinerary to the discovery of self and the truth of faith through culture and art, the result of more than a millennium of Western history. The cathedral itself was originally designed and completed between 1215 and 1263 on the site of an earlier structure. It has the form of a Latin cross with a slightly projecting transept, a dome and a bell tower. The dome rises from a hexagonal base with supporting columns. The nave is separated from the two aisles by semicircular arches. The exterior and interior are constructed of white and greenish-black marble in alternating stripes, with addition of red marble on the façade. Black and white are the symbolic colors of Siena, linked to black and white horses of the legendary city's founders, Senius and Aschius.





A student: *I did not know that at one time Siena was larger than Paris. It was a major banking and trade center for all of Europe. The bubonic plague wiped out most of its population in the mid 1300's. It maintains its medieval charm. I loved all of the adorable brick and arched walkways. There were flowers everywhere asking to be photographed. Piazza del Campo had the best gelato that I've ever eaten before. I ate it unapologetically EVERY day. Delicious. Seriously, divine. "Vorrei un gelato, per favore." That was my favorite phrase on my trip. Il Duomo was gorgeous with its black*

and white marble striped columns. I had goosebumps when I looked at the ceiling, and at the floor!







Back on our bus for our next destination: **SAN GIMIGNANO**



San Gimignano is a small walled medieval hill town in the province of Siena. Known as *the Town of Fine Towers*, San Gimignano is famous for its medieval architecture, unique in the

preservation of about a dozen of its tower houses, which, with its hilltop setting and encircling walls form "an unforgettable skyline". Locals say they are the oldest towers in Europe! Within the walls, the well-preserved buildings include notable examples of both Romanesque and Gothic architecture, with outstanding examples of secular buildings as well as churches. The Palazzo Comunale, the Collegiate Church and Church of Sant' Agostino contain frescos, including cycles dating from the 14th and 15th centuries. The "Historic Centre of San Gimignano", is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The town also is known for the white wine, Vernaccia di San Gimignano, produced from the ancient variety of Vernaccia grape which is grown on the sandstone hillsides of the area. The foundation of San Gimignano dates back to ancient times. According to legend, in 63 B.C. two brothers, Muzio and Silvio, two young patricians escaping from Rome after their implication in the conspiracy of Catiline, sheltered in Valdelsa and built two castles: the Castle of Mucchio and the Castle of Silvia, which would develop in the future San Gimignano. The name of San Gimignano probably comes from the bishop of Modena. According to legend, during the barbaric invasions the saint appeared miraculously on the city walls, and saved the town from Barbarians' threat.

The locals are very friendly and extremely nice, the scent of roses is in the air, artists and musicians welcome the visitors with their art, children play soccer in the street...







Dinner by San Gimignano in the **AGRITURISMO POGGIO ALLORO** with a guided visit to the farm. Fattoria Poggio Alloro: *“Sharing is the basis of our philosophy. We like our guests to get familiar with old country traditions, to experience the beauty of nature, enjoy the genuine and organic products of our land, and fully appreciate the true spirit and essence of Tuscan culture and tradition”*.



A student: *When we arrived at Fattoria Poggio Alloro in San Gimignano, the first thing I noticed was the aroma of the lemon blossoms. The lemons were beautiful and a perfectly sunny shade of yellow. We were greeted by a small dog and a friendly face. The tour was interesting and I noticed you could stay at the farm. That is something I would want to do in the future. The wine was tasty and I could feel the fermentation in my mouth when I drank it. I tried a new kind of bruschetta, I noticed how delicious the olive oil was. I could have literally drank a glass of it. We enjoyed our meal and walking around the property at sunset. I took some of the most beautiful pictures of my trip there.*

I ended the evening by observing a group of older men sitting on the steps in the piazza. They were enjoying their evening and clearly enjoying each other's company. A few of us went to a local bar and had some fun with Diego and a round of limoncello. I could have stayed there a few days longer, but I knew The Cinque Terre was coming!!!









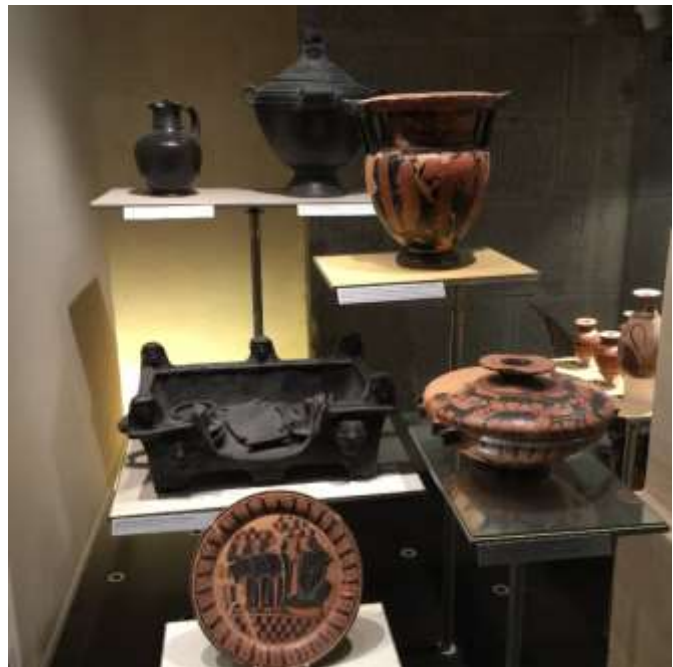


NIGHT LIFE IN CORTONA!!



The next morning we are leaving at 11:15 a.m. and we have time for shopping in Cortona or visit the [ETRUSCAN ACADEMY MUSEUM](#).

Just before the rise of Rome, the **ETRUSCAN** people, originally from central Italy (9th century B.C.), had their own Golden Age of peace and prosperity. Their culture helped a lay of foundation of civilization for the flourishing Rome. More technologically advanced than their neighbors, the Etruscans mined gold and crafted it into some of the finest jewelry in the known world and exported it around the Mediterranean. The Etruscan cities and trading ports dotted the coastline, included a small Latin-speaking tribe on their southern border: Rome, at the time a tiny village. Judging from the many luxury items that have survived, the Etruscans enjoyed the good life. Seven decades of wars with the Greeks (545-474 B.C.) drained the Etruscans, just as a new “Italian” power was emerging: Rome.







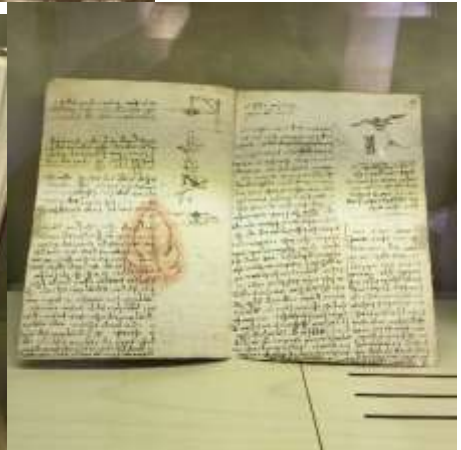
It is time to say good-bye to Cortona and to our new Italian friends, our bus is waiting for us. First stop is **VINCI** in Tuscany where the famous genius Leonardo was born in 1452. How incredible it is to be in his native house! And what a charming place is the town Vinci! A little Garden of Eden on the top of the hill! The air is fresh, clean, and crystal clear, and it smells so good! On the way to Vinci is the statue of the Italian comedian, actor and film director: **ROBERTO BENIGNI**, *La vita e' bella!*



A student: *I was amazed at all of the olive trees. I only wish I could have picked an olive from a*

tree. We met a sweet older man who harvested honey throughout Vinci. I tasted all of the flavors and chose a delicious citrus Miele (honey) to take home. Seeing Leonardo's childhood home was almost overwhelming. I walked slowly and made sure to be present of what I was experiencing. It was too much for me to comprehend. I walked along the same path as he most likely did...up the steps to the back of the house, around the gate. Out into the field of olives. It was mind boggling. The genius that was created there. The museum was very interesting. I wish we would have had more time. I wanted to read everything. David and I talked about how Leonardo created the templates of ideas for future generations. Nothing was before him. He created everything out of nothing...they must have thought he was insane. I'm always humbled by such genius.









Second stop: **PORTOVENERE, LIGURIA**, and this is our bus and hotel in front of the sea. Our first dinner by the sea is just beside our hotel. After dinner, we take a walk to the Doria castle, to the fortress and to the enchanting church (San Pietro) up on the cliff....

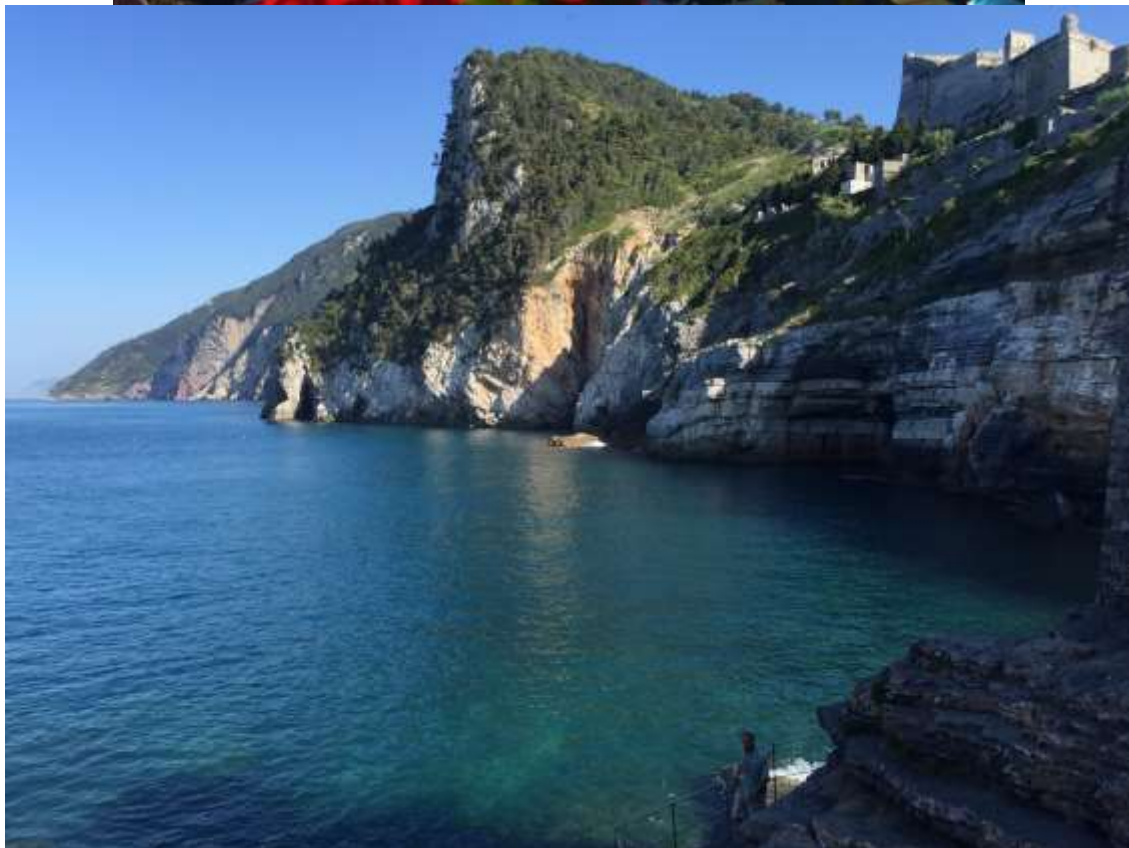






Portovenere sits on a rocky peninsula in the Gulf of Poets, an area in the Gulf of La Spezia once popular with writers such as Byron, Shelley and D.H. Lawrence, etc. The area has been occupied since prehistoric and Roman times. San Pietro Church sits on a site that is believed to have been a temple to Venus, *Venere* in Italian, from which Portovenere (or Porto Venere) gets its name.

Breakfast time with this incredible view (below)! It is a beautiful sunny day in Portovenere. Students are happy and ready to go on a boat ride to Cinque Terre!









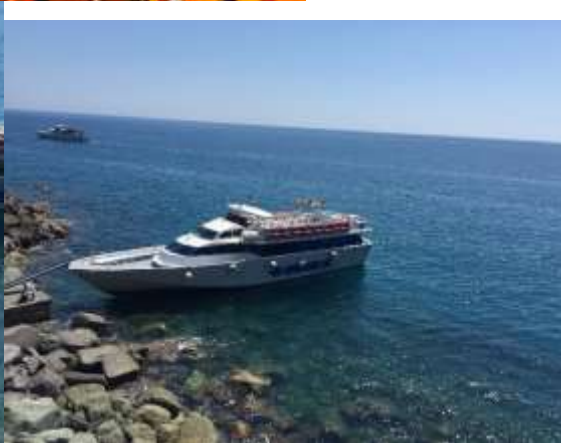
CINQUE TERRE (FIVE SEASIDE TOWNS). We tour by boat the charming five seaside towns of Manarola, Riomaggiore, Corniglia, Vernazza and Monterosso. 18 km (11.2 miles) of coast enclose and guard a little paradise: the rocks just a short drop from a limpid sea and the colors and scents of the earth combine harmoniously with the typical colorful buildings hugging the coast in order to create a unique scenery. We stop at Monterosso (= the *red mountain*). The weather is so beautiful that we cannot resist the call of the gorgeous sea water! Some students go kayaking and cliff jumping.... Other students prefer to swim, relax on the beach, explore...

A student: *The color of the water is just what I imagined it would be. It smelled so good. We stopped and listened to a man playing a harp. The music was beautiful. I looked off into the distance and took in the view. It was there I realized that every walk included some sort of incline. No wonder no one is fat in Italy! Wow... I fell asleep to the sound of the sea and the sweet smell... I thanked the universe for sending me on this trip.*

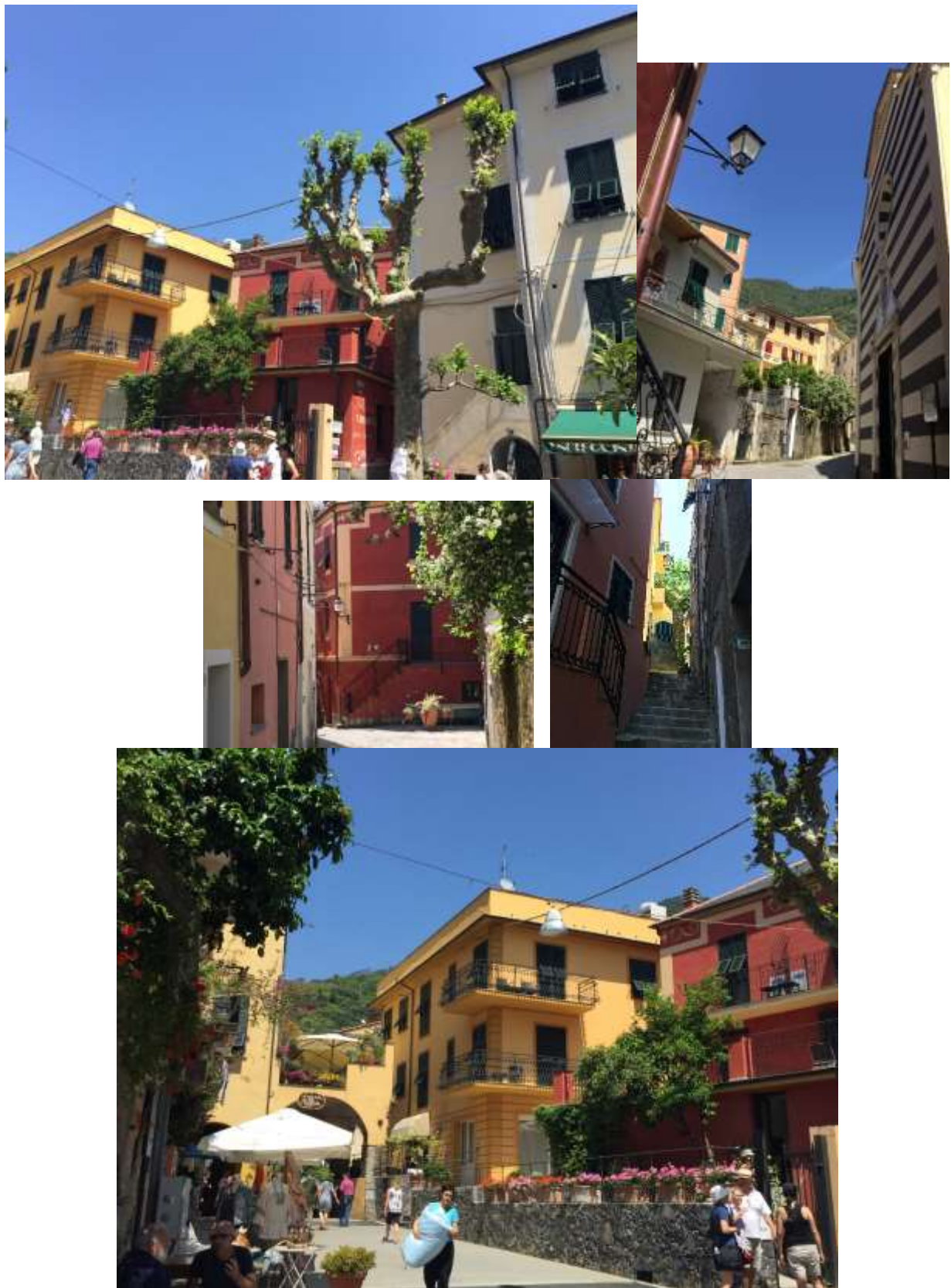
A student: *Boat ride to The Cinque Terre. The picture I had saved on my computer for years....the fantasy island of my dreams!!!! It was more than I could have imagined. I felt like a kid, I wanted to scream. When I saw the colors of the buildings around the ports, my stomach fluttered. Monterosso was gorgeous. I put my feet in the sea....IN ITALY. What?!? I walked the entire length of the beach. The sea was all shades of green and blue. I stood in the ocean and just stared off into space. I was the happiest I had been in a very long time. I took a lot of photos. The lemons were huge, almost cartoon-like. I bought some local Limoncello in a beautifully hand painted bottle. I walked through the tunnel to the other side and took pictures of the orange and blue decorated umbrellas. While we were eating local focaccia, I wondered what the Cinque Terre was used for prior to tourism and local living. I read in Rick Steves' travel guide that the Cinque Terre was a feudal era and watched over by castles...which we later discovered on our walks around the area and to Portofino. Turkish pirates used to raid the villages, take the locals and sell them into slavery. The ones who remained, built up each of their villages by prospering from fishing and cultivating grapes. Now, each village has their own distinct dialect and proud heritage.*

A student: *The place that I fell in love with was Cinque Terre, because everything was so colorful and full of life. The color of the sea, the cute color houses in the hills, the flowers and so much more. It was so much fun kayaking for two hours to a waterfall and swimming in the Mediterranean Sea with the group. The water was really cold at the beginning, but it was worth it. I wanted to go hiking there and take beautiful photos, but it is a place that I will go back to visit for sure. It is funny how I wanted to buy everything in Italy; it made me think that shopping might be like a sport for the Italians. There are so many brands and designers to choose from that you end up wanting to buy everything in all the stores.*











Back to Portovenere (below)...





Bus trip to **SANTA MARGHERITA**, afterwards challenging walk to **PORTOFINO**.

Lunch in Santa Margherita (below).







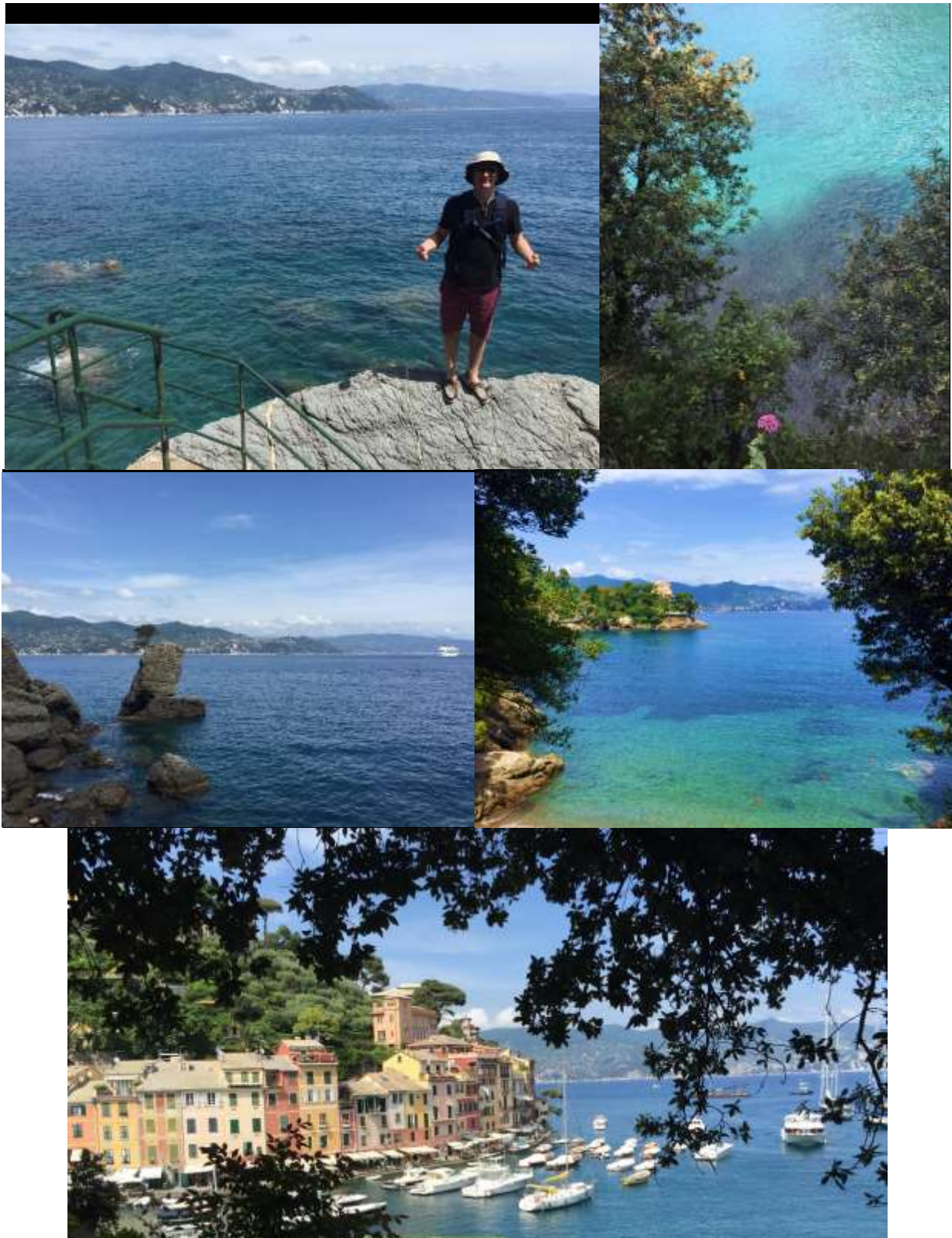




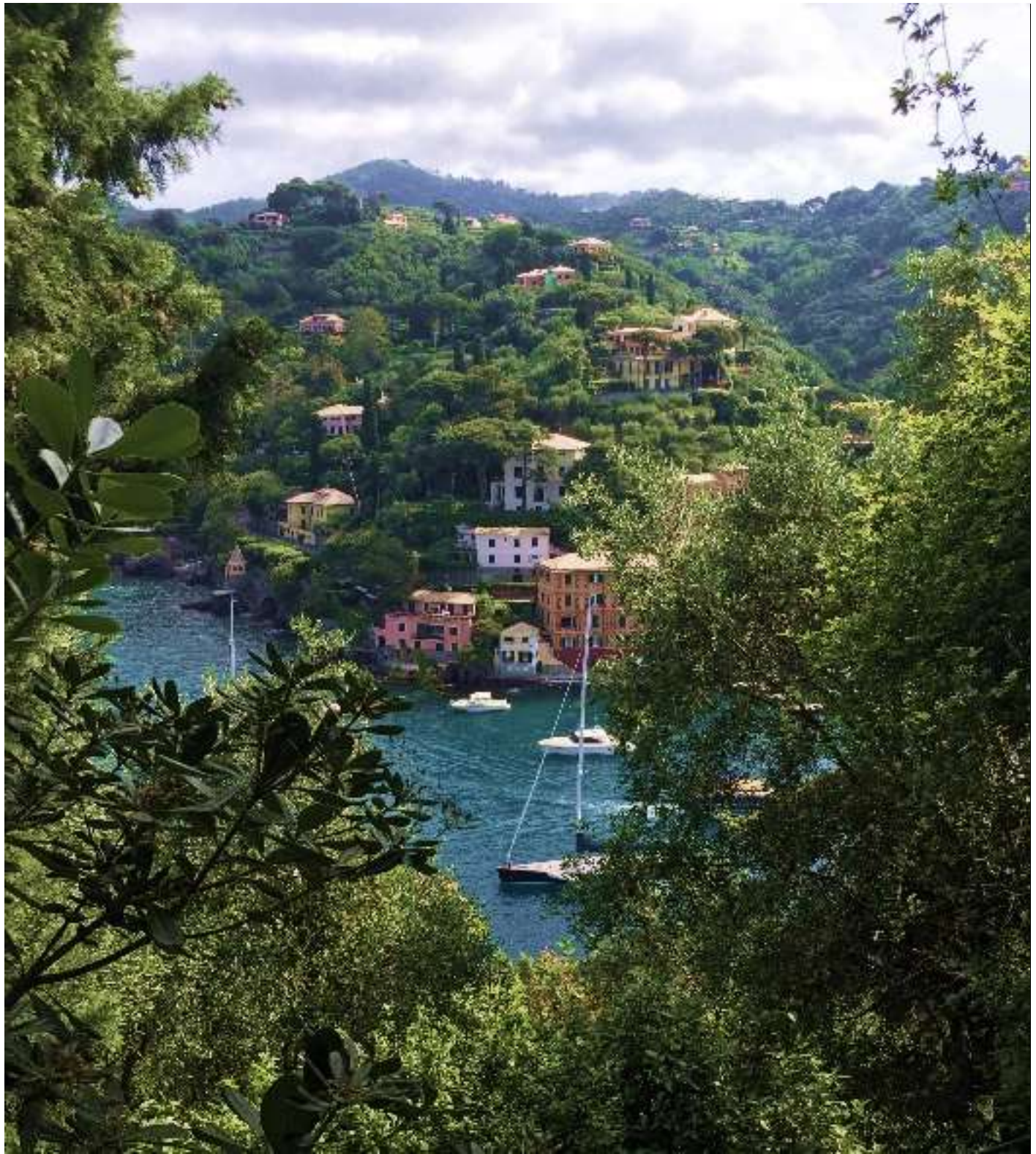
The statue of Christopher Columbus is pointing up the way... and here we are walking towards Portofino on a picturesque path along the coast with gorgeous houses, castles on the way. The students often stop to take photos. The walk is longer than what they told us, and it turns into a quite challenging hike for some students. In the end, we all meet in beautiful Portofino!

According to a legend, **PORTOFINO** was founded in 5,000,001BC by sentient dolphins who flopped up on the shore... The dolphins spoke (LOL) fluent Italian and gave the village its name, meaning "Port of the Dolphin." The brightly-colored houses are stacked one close to the other, as

though they were the tiles in a precious mosaic; they rest at the foot of the promontory and plunged in lush vegetation. The “Brown” castle on the top overlooks the harbor.











Back to Portovenere for our last delicious dinner. A student: *That night, we went back to Portovenere and ate Trofie al pesto and al pomodoro. The meal was the best of the trip. We drank basil mojitos again at the little local bar. We met Andrea the bartender. The locals were very generous and kind. I definitely want to return there in the future. I could stay there for weeks and weeks. Waking up by the sea is soothing to my mind.*



May 20th morning, on the bus again for a new journey towards the capital of Italy, once known as the *caput mundi*: **ROMA**, the ancient goddess of Force/Strength (see picture below). Roma is founded (according to a famous legend) in 753 BC, however the site has been inhabited for much longer, and it is regarded as the cradle of Western civilization.



A student: *Our driver switched part-way on our journey to Rome. Stefano was easy on the eyes. I enjoyed looking at all of the scenery once I woke up! The amount of history we were driving by and experiencing was astounding. America has nothing on European culture. There are thousands of years of history for us to discover and learn about. This was a recurring thought as I watched and listened. Roma! Bella chaos! It smelled like New York City....but then there was beauty all around us. Everywhere we turned, there was an ancient ruin- something to learn about and be appreciated. Rome is stunningly beautiful beyond the graffiti- which I found to be interesting. So much of it seems preserved. White marble, cobblestone streets and details over three thousand years old. It was almost too much to take in. The first landmark we saw was the Colosseum. I couldn't quite comprehend we were actually sitting in front of it. It always seemed like it would be far away, in some field and not right on a street corner. The Colosseum is an enduring symbol of ancient Rome. It was an amphitheatre built to hold up to 50,000 - 80,000 persons. I can't even fathom that amount of people all in one place. The textures and terrain of Rome are to be noticed. There are a lot of jumbled layers of the city. One needs a plan and a map to navigate such a forest of history. The side streets are filled with immigrant vendors from all over the world. I was particularly interested in the vendors from Africa. I've encountered many people from Africa in my travels and oddly enough from living in Colorado. They are a very interesting people filled with devastating stories about their home states and struggles for freedom. Most of them are very gracious and just as interested in what you might have to say. So many lovely faces to look at and appreciate. I wondered who they worked for. Where they all lived? Were they separated from their families? How did they get the goods they were selling? The first night in Rome I ate traditional minestrone soup and delicious bruschetta.... More gelato followed as I really started to feel the ache in my feet from the trek to Portofino. I was happy to visit Trevi fountain, although I was too tired to remember to throw a coin into the fountain to ensure my destiny included a return trip to Rome. I watched local artists paint and purchased some watercolors.*





Here we are in the “**MUSEI CAPITOLINI**” (from p. 66) in Rome. The museums' collection includes a large number of ancient Roman statues, inscriptions, paintings, and other artifacts, as well as collections of jewels, coins, and other items. It also houses the original statue of Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Many Roman statues were destroyed on the orders of Christian Church authorities in the medieval time; this statue was preserved in the erroneous belief that it depicted the Emperor Constantine, who made Christianity the official state religion of the Roman Empire! The “Venere Esquilina” (the *Esquiline Venus* statue below - a Roman nude marble sculpture of a female in a sandal and headdress) is the Roman goddess Venus and represents the essence of female Beauty that has inspired (and is still inspiring) many artists and poets from all over the world! In the next page are our photos of the original statue of Marcus Aurelius. The statue was erected in 175 AD, it is made of bronze and it is 4.24 meters tall.



Marcus Aurelius born in 121 AD in Rome, is recognized as the last of the good emperors in that he placed the needs of the people before his own desires or visions of glory. He composed his famous philosophical work *The Meditations*, a kind of journal or diary in which he recorded his thoughts and feelings about life: here are some of his thoughts:

"DWELL ON THE BEAUTY OF LIFE." - "WHEN YOU ARISE IN THE MORNING THINK OF WHAT A PRIVILEGE IT IS TO BE ALIVE, TO THINK, TO ENJOY, TO LOVE ..." - "THE HAPPINESS OF YOUR LIFE DEPENDS UPON THE QUALITY OF YOUR THOUGHTS..." - "HUMAN HAPPINESS IS TO DO WHAT IS HUMANE" - "WASTE NO MORE TIME ARGUING ABOUT WHAT A GOOD MAN SHOULD BE. BE ONE!"



You have power over your mind
- not outside events. Realize
this, and you will find
strength.

Marcus Aurelius



He who lives in
HARMONY
with himself lives in
harmony with the
UNIVERSE.

marcus aurelius

(more great quotes at quotegeek.com)

[quotegeek](http://quotegeek.com)









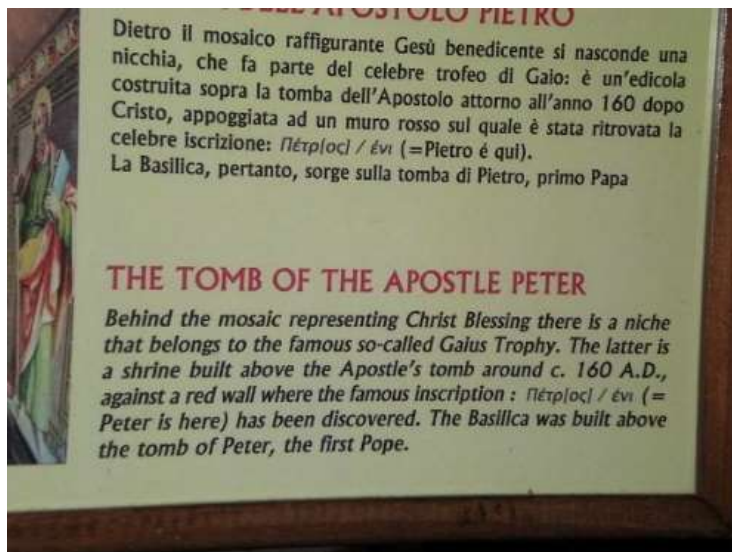


A student: *Our final day we discovered the Vatican and Roman Forum. I'm not religious by any means, but was in absolute awe of St. Peter's Basilica. I felt privileged to be in the crowd. St. Peter's tomb was remarkable. I did not understand its significance until I read about it. La Pieta` was beautiful and I was happy just to be able to take a picture of it. Michelangelo made a piece of history at only 24 years of age. That humbled feeling crept in again as I wandered around by myself. I was happy for the religious and faithful who were able to be there and*

celebrate.











Bus guided tour around Rome. A student: *I appreciated the bus tour although the cool breeze and classical music running through the headphones rocked me to sleep like a fussy child in need of a nap. I was aware of passing by Castel Sant'Angelo. The legend is the Archangel Michael once appeared on its roof. I think Puccini used it once for an opera. I wish I could have explored more on foot, but I was content with the comforts of the lofty bus ride. It was a great way to end the trip. I was content and restless at the same time. I wasn't ready to come home. Alas, all good things must come to an end.*











Our last delicious dinner and gelato in Rome...





Red *Ferrari* beside a *bicicletta*! And the melodic sound of a violin in a magic, peaceful, hidden corner of Rome. After dinner and shopping, we enjoy Rome at night! Last night in Italy!



Santa Maria Maggiore basilica in front of our hotel (in Rome), day and night time





ARRIVEDERCI ROMA!



BY THE STUDENTS

My experiences in Italy were more than I could have asked for or expected. I broadened my education and appreciation for a culture that I am blessed to be a part of. I can only hope I have the fortune of returning to Italy again and again to further my education and understanding of my heritage. I relish knowing I completed a journey my Grandmother started for me all those years ago. I so appreciate the ability to be aware and thankful of my surroundings and to be open to all of the opportunities Italy had in store for me. I am forever grateful to Dr. Basile for her patience and understanding. Thank you for taking the time to share knowledge and personal stories with me, with us.

I can honestly say that I had one of the best experiences of my life... Every single corner of that town had a beautiful architecture, the little streets, the people and I am not allowed to forget about the food. I love that nature was everywhere and walking through those streets was so peaceful. Somehow it felt as if I'd been there before as crazy as that sounds, but it was the perfect opportunity to take a break from the world and appreciate the beauty of what Italians called "dolce far niente". The fact that I was able to sit down and enjoy the view while eating a delicious gelato was for sure a unique experience. It really showed me a part of what Italian life truly is and how important is to enjoy every moment of life. Grazie mille!

Taking two semesters of Italian and one Italian culture & civilization class I fell in love. I loved attending class and it was one class I looked forward to each week.... The trip was the best I have ever made. It was a great experience for me and opened my eyes to how other countries are.

The best learning experience of my life!

The study trip to Italy was beyond what I expected... an eye-opening experience.

Thank you so much for giving me and other students the opportunity of a lifetime! It is greatly appreciated!

The whole dream to travelling to the place that my family originated was a fantasy to not only myself.... Well I made that dream a reality this past May and could not have had a better time....

This trip was an incredible experience and I am so grateful that I was able to go. Thank you so much Dr. Basile for everything, I really appreciate that you decided to take us in this trip. It was an incredible journey.

I will treasure these memories forever! Grazie Mille! Ci Vediamo!

I was the happiest I had been in a very long time. I thanked the universe for sending me on this trip.

