

STUDY TRIP TO ROME



29TH SEPTEMBER – 04TH OCTOBER

Roma Tre University
Link Campus University



The story

This is the story written by the participants of the trip: an international collective writing experiment

SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2019

10h00 - 18h00: Arrival and reception of students,

transfer to the hotel in the Trastevere district in Rome

18h30: Team building: meeting and group building activities, to share objectives and participation methods

20h00 : Welcome dinner with all students and participants

We arrived in Rome on Sunday afternoon from all over the Mediterranean area and met for the first time in the evening, in the Caffè Letterario, for a team building moment. We could say, though, that the team was already building itself since the first eye contact between each other: the atmosphere was getting friendlier and friendlier at every moment and links, intellectual exchanges, connections were naturally arising between us, despite our different backgrounds in academic careers, cultures, religions.

We were all wondering how the dialogue would have started, once there, and we found ourselves in the middle of it: it's incredible how such different people can discover themselves dreaming the same future, made of hope, peace and simple, shared, fundamental values.

***" When we visit a place for the first time, we need ways to understand it.
The spontaneity of the meeting between us was strengthened by the
activities we did together, in little groups.***

We were asked to draw something which represented our past and something which represented our future. We worked laughing, discussing, asking each other about their drawings and lives – challenged by the difficulty to draw something so abstract and yet so concrete. This facilitated our entry into a new space, gradually built from spontaneous smiles, new names and multiple stories.

The result was simple, the simplicity of all the ever-repeated human experience, that is, when every person tries to understand the world of the other. But as simple as it was, it was deeply and enormously beautiful because everything became part of a cosmic space, through which we all crossed, with our peculiarities, but together in peace.

Despite the beautiful connection between us, the team building moment wasn't over yet. We had also to remember and understand the bigger picture that brought us all there in Rome, going beyond our individuality and reaching the overall problem of the meeting between cultures and religions, inhabitants and migrants, humans and humans. The professors then showed us the drawings of 'pasts' and 'futures' made by some migrants and war refugees in the camps around Europe. It was a shock both to see how horrifying and inhuman some of these 'pasts' were and find out, at the same time, how similar the hopes were to our ones for the 'futures'.

The comparison was helpful to remember how lucky we were to be there, how lucky to be free to travel legally and, most importantly, to remember that we should be more and more active to build a future which permits the same opportunities to everyone else. Then our evening together continued in a melting pot of questions, inspirations, debates, languages, music, food: a perfect way to introduce us, seriously but lightly, in the week of study and active participation that awaited us on the interreligious dialogue in the contemporary Mediterranean area.

We arrived in Rome from different countries, but all desiring to have one of the greatest experiences in this study trip; and we did, from the first night together. For many people of the group this was the first time to be in Rome – and in Italy, in general. For how serious or jolly, the atmosphere was always full of knowledge and communication. All people there were open minded and willing to listen to the other. Every one of us, personally, learned a lot: from curiosities on the Italian food, to the Ethnic one, from how to move around in the chaotic Rome, to how many people were engaged to make this project happen.

Everyone made new important friends and, as we discussed, we all felt we learned much more on ourselves by respecting the differences and judging people for their hearts and brains than from their religion or culture or appearance. From the first moments together, it was clear – as a common feeling – that each person deserves respect for his identity and that true courage lays in the step we make towards the other, to know, ask, listen, before judging. We can say that this first day opened the road to all the others in Rome, even if we didn't know what to expect yet: days full of opportunities and enrichment in a continuous building of new bridges between minds and hearts.



PHOTO 1 e 2 : Students at work in the group for Team Building the first day of arrival in Rome

MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

PRIMED 09h00 - 12h00

PRESENTATION CONFERENCE OF THE STUDY TRIP AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ROMA TRE:

SPEAKERS

Manfredi Merluzzi: Director of the Department of Humanities

Massimiliano Fiorucci: Director of the Department of Educational Sciences

Paolo Pascucci and Miranda Nera: Visiting Rome with PRIMED project

Maria Chiara Giorda: The super-diverse city of Rome

Gennaro Gervasio: The Mediterranean: Common Heritage and Hope for the Future

Cesare Giacomo Zucconi, Comunità di Sant'Egidio: "Corridoi Umani": a network of action and social

interaction on the topic of hospitality 13h00 : Lunch 14h00 - 19h00 : Visit to the Great Mosque of Rome Seat of the Islamic cultural center of Italy, the Great Mosque of Rome is the main place of worship of the Muslim community in Rome, the largest in Italy and in Europe.

20h00: Dinner and free evening

Mark Twain says "in twenty years you will not be disappointed by the things you have done but by those you have not done. Then raise the anchor, abandon safe havens, capture the wind in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover" and so we did: we have discovered Rome together.

Monday morning we had the chance to visit the Papal Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls, situated in the Ostiense neighborhood. By doing so we had the opportunity to appreciate its beauty and Italian students could enthusiastically explain their colleagues from OIC countries the very basic principles of the Catholic belief. During the same morning we moved from the Basilica to the University of Roma Tre to attend the first conference of the Primed project in Rome.

The lectures were extremely interesting and useful to better grasp and deepen the issue of the religious pluralism in Italy and particularly in Rome, in the framework of what we have defined the "super-diversity of Rome". Many students, according to our talks after the end of the

conference, were a little bit confused about the juridical position of Islam in Italy and would have liked to further this issue in order to know more about that. We all have found fairly remarkable the presentation of the Comunità di Sant'Egidio, an NGO that was unknown to the majority of students from OIC countries. The explanation of its work, namely the creation of humanitarian corridors to save people that flee from war zones, was really touching and inspirational.

In the afternoon, we visited the Great Mosque of Rome, situated in Roma North area. The experience provided many Italian students with the great opportunity to enter, and so visit, for the very first time in their life a mosque. Seeing Italian girls that tried to cover their head as a mark of respect was quite moving: they were helped by the muslim girls who were delighted to involve them in a meaningful daily ritual. This is just an instance of the various moment of dialogue and cultural exchange between the students who have, further and further, built intimate and deep links with each other through the sharing of their cultural uniquenesses.

Extremely interesting was the meeting with the president of the CO.RE.IS association, imam Yahya Sergio Yehe Pallavicini, who guided us in visiting the Great Mosque, replied with clarity to all of our questions and underlined the numerous similarities between Christianity and Islam.

The architectural style of the mosque notably impressed us: the architectural compromises that allowed to build one of the largest mosque in Europe in the same city in which the spiritual guide of Christianity resides were appreciated and understood by all of us. Helped by the imam Pallavicini, we observed and figured out how in concrete terms the cohabitation of different faiths is organised in the city.

Personally we all liked the idea of building a mosque plenty of a multitude of different architectural styles: the Ottoman one and the Moroccan one for instance, together with the typically Roman materials, made this visit an interesting experience also from the artistic point of view. The traditions' union is not only embedded in the structure of the building: many of use were marvelled by the fact that the mosque was projected by Paolo Portoghesi, a non muslim architect who won a contest opened to anyone, aside from personal beliefs.

At the end of that day we not only could better understand and know Islam as a religion actually present in the Italian territory and carried out by Italians, but also Christianity that, through a direct confrontation with other faiths, change itself by interacting and dialoguing. The second day of the Primed project allowed us to understand, inter alia, how much the interreligious dialogue can, if carried on in while respecting the parts and putting aside the claims of absolute universalism without keeping in mind the "hermeneutic dimension" of creeds, shape the faiths involved in function of a peaceful and serene cohabitation in which maintaining oneself peculiarities does not mean annihilating those of the "other".



PHOTO 3: Visit to the basilica of San Paolo, 30 september



PHOTO 4 and 5 : Conference at Roma Tre University, 30 september



PHOTO 6: Visit of the Grande Moschea of Rome, 30 settembre

TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER 2019

09h00 - 12h00 : Visit to the Vatican Museums

A crucial step for every trip to Rome, students will have the chance to admire some of the greatest masterpieces of world art.

13h00 : Free Lunch

14h00-19h00 : Free time

20h00 : Dinner and free evening

On Tuesday 1 October 2019 we visited the Vatican museums, where we divided into two groups and each of them with a guide. The first thing you notice when you start touring the museum is the shape of the stairs is different and distinctive it is a spiral from below until we go up.

The Vatican Museum was one of the most wonderful and creative places with the surface area of 40 thousand square meters, 7 km of galleries and 11 thousand rooms, each room is painting to show the history of humanity Greco-roman art and Egyptian pieces passing through the renaissance to reach modern and contemporary art we saw many paintings and sculptures dating back to the Renaissance, from the fourteenth and fifteenth century AD, there we saw the magic of the past in the paintings of Michelangelo Buonarroti, who painted the bishop of the

Church of Sistina in 4 years to look like 3D view of the bottom, and we also saw the painting of creation of Adam or Also known in Italian Giudizio universale and in English Universal judgment it is one of the famous paintings, the most of his painting it was about anatomy of the human brain because Michelangelo was interested in the anatomy, and we saw also map of different Italian city and islands such as Sicily and Sardinia, there is also an old map of the island of Corsica of France and there are drawings carved on carpets seem very magnificent and beauty and there is also a Rafael room containing his drawings and it seems that he was very interested in the science of philosophy, as in the drawing of the Athens School shows Many philosophers including Plato, Socrates, Averroes and Archimedes .

All the paintings is exhibited in chronological order, thus allowing while visiting the rooms to follow the evolution of style of the Italian painting. We toured the Vatican Museums for 3 hours continuously, but we didn't seen half of what the museum contains. So it is one of the largest collections of art in the world as it displays the vast collection of works art including painting, sculptures.

After our visit to the Vatican museums, we went to have lunch because it was the free time and we can go where we want so we went to try the Italian pizza to see if there is really a difference between the Italian pizza and the pizza that we have in our countries. When we tasted it we all realized how wonderful and delicious it was.



PHOTO 7: Visit of Musei Vaticani, 1 october

After lunch, we went to one of the most famous and popular places in Rome that all the tourists want to see: the Colosseo. We walked on a way that take us to an old church called S. Sebastiano al Palatino where we meet sisters and they get happy when they saw us and told us about the history of this church and we talk about the importance of respect and dialogue between people to can live together in love and peace and they took a picture with us.

Then we went back to the restaurant because it was time for dinner; after dinner we went with the rest of our colleagues to the Colosseo again and we saw it at night illuminated with lights it was magical then we all went to Fontana di Trevi. It is possibly the most famous fountain in the world and certainly in Rome; its construction lasted at least from 1732 to 1762. The tradition is that one throws a coin in the fountain.

According to legend the person who throws the coin will return to Rome one day, and that's what we did hoping that we can return to Rome again. Finally we returned to the hotel at 2 am and ended our day which was full of adventures and joy.

The Colosseo is the largest amphitheater in Rome, where the greatest wrestling battles took place, as well as competitions that were taking place between the fighters or fighters and predators. The Colosseo is an architectural and engineering marvel and a testament to the greatness and development of Roman society. When we left the metro station and saw the Colosseo in front of us it was really like a dream for us we was so happy we took a lot of pictures and we saw also the Fori Romani: it is the main square of ancient Rome. Its historical, religious and political importance makes it the place around which all the life of the city is articulated and we took a picture for the both Colosseo and Fori Romani.



PHOTO 8 : *Students of Fontana di Trevi*



PHOTO 9: The sisters of St. Sebastiano to the palatine with the students of PriMED

WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER 2019

09h00 - 12h00

CONFERENCE AT THE LINK CAMPUS UNIVERSITY: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS OF THE VATICAN STATE FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE Coordination: Piero Schiavazzi, Professor of "geopolitica vaticana", Link Campus University.

13h00 : Lunch

14h00 - 19h00 : Visit to the "Tempio Maggiore" and the Jewish Quarter of Rome

Among the most characteristic places in Rome, the Jewish quarter has kept its charm intact and walking through its alleys means retracing the history of the Roman Jewish community.

20h00 : Dinner

The second day of our study trip in Rome could be subdivided into two parts, not only according to the thematic areas but also to the typology of the activities. In the morning, we attended seminar lessons, at the Link Campus University, held by academics as well as foreign students who attend the host institution. The main topic of the morning was geopolitics, in particular, the past and contemporary relationships between the West and the Islamic world. After a quick lunch at the Link Campus, we moved to the ancient Jewish Ghetto of Rome; there we learned about the history and the tradition of the Italian Jewish community, by visiting it. First, we went inside the 'Tempio Maggiore' (the Great Synagogue of Rome); then we walked around the district, stopping by the main historical spots. In the end we had an 'aperitivo' on site and, after that, a dinner at a peculiar kosher restaurant.

The first activity of the day was the conference at the Link Campus University Old Library. We went to the appointment by public transport, living an aspect of the daily life of the Roman population. During the morning there were the speeches of Maurizio Zandri, coordinator of the

PriMED project for the Link Campus University, of Piero Schiavazzi, Professor of Vatican Geopolitics and Representative of the Episcopal Conference of Italy, and of Maurizio Melani, Professor of Governance and International Economics. Through their interventions we were able to broaden our points of view, by deepening our knowledge of the history of relations between the countries in the Mediterranean Sea, with particular attention to the actions of Pope Francis towards the Arab countries and Islam. The most emphasized point was the role of universities and the importance of dialogue that takes place through exchange and mutual understanding. In this sense, young people have a fundamental impact.

Two students of the Link Campus University also shared their experiences as migrants and their current life in the city of Rome. One of the two stories was of particular interest, she is currently a cultural mediator, who, having experienced the value of integration, underlined the importance of cooperation both on the part of the origin and the host country. After an intense and interesting morning, we had lunch at the University during which we exchanged opinions on the topics of the conference, as well as some questions currently discussed in Italian media.

“Tempio Maggiore” is among the most beautiful and one of the greatest synagogues of Italy and it is situated in the Jewish quarter of Rome. It was constructed shortly after the unification of Italy in 1870, when the Kingdom of Italy captured Rome and the Papal State ceased to exist. Upon entering, we immediately spotted its squared dome ceiling. Looking up we could not miss the rainbow motif at the very top nor the stars that covered the second tier nor the massive white pillars that support the balcony seating area.

Women, according to Orthodox Jewish tradition, are mandated to sit separately. This tradition has been maintained in this community despite other deviations from Jewish traditions. Once seated, the guide gave us a tour about the history of the building; designed by Vincenzo Costa and Osvaldo Armanni, the eclectic style of the building makes it stand out even in a city known for notable buildings and structures. The “bimah” (stage) and the “aron hakodesh” (Holy Ark) have a churchlike appearance. The guide told us that the designers were Christians.

Inside the museum, we viewed the “aron hakodesh” (arks where the Torah scrolls were housed); numerous glass enclosed cases held stunning Torah covers with priceless fabrics and Rimonim (the ornaments) that adorn Torahs. Finally, the guide gave us an introduction about the “ketubah”, which is a Jewish prenuptial agreement. It is considered an integral part of a traditional Jewish marriage, and outlines the rights and responsibilities of the groom, in relation to the bride.

After our visit to the Great Synagogue, we made an interesting trip around the surrounding Jewish “Ghetto”. Until the XIX century this was the quarter where the Roman Jewish community was compelled to remain enclosed, separated from the rest of the town by a wall, whose gates had to be closed during the night. The obligation to live inside the Ghetto was only one of the discriminations which the Roman Jewish were forced to face. In fact, this minority had to deal

with many limitations, among which can be remembered the duties to wear specific visible signs and to practice only some kind of professional activities.

In 1848 the wall was demolished and the Roman Jewish became finally free to move their residence outside it. After this moment, the entire quarter went through a period of urban reorganization which has now deeply changed its original shape. However, even nowadays, there remain some ancient buildings which still carry on the memory of this historical place, like witnesses of another era.

Moving along the original narrow alleys and watching the several fascinating sights of this quarter, we felt the unique allure of this place but, at the same time, we were able to perceive the sense of oppression and separation that long time ago it might produce in its inhabitants. An everlasting symbol of the absurdity of racial and ethnic segregation.

After our visit at the Jewish Ghetto, we had a kosher dinner in a very cosy restaurant in Via del Portico D'Ottavia, the main pedestrian street of the Ghetto. The restaurant is very peculiar because it combines in its menu both Roman and Judaic culinary traditions, interpreted in a modern key, which is perfectly in line with its interior design: modern style with baroque details, along with Hebrew writings on the walls.

The menu proposes a very simple but tasty list of dishes, such as one of the most popular Jewish-Roman recipes, the fried artichoke typically found in the Ghetto area, also known as “*carciofo alla giuda*”, as well as Risotto with artichokes, pasta (carbonara) with dried meat, falafel with hummus and tender sheep brain. All in all, we spent a pleasant night surely in one of the most unique areas of the city, where we had the opportunity to get in touch with the not very-happy history of the Jewish population in Rome and with some basic principles of the kosher diet, which is more complex than one can think. Overall, we felt deeply absorbed in a place that is somehow suspended between past and present, a mosaic of the old and the new, of different cultures coming across each other and trying to find the best way of living together.

In conclusion, the day has been effective: the new notions learned have been fixed in our memory through a lovely experience.



PHOTO 10: Student in the conference at the Link Campus University of Rome, 2 october



PHOTO 11: Student in the courtyard Link Campus University of Rome, 2 october



PHOTO 12: *Students in the Tempio Maggiore of Rome, 2 October*



PHOTO 13: *Students at dinner in the Jewish quarter of Rome, 2 October*

THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER 2019

10h00 - 12h00: Visit to the Tor Pignattara neighborhood and to «Casa Scalabrini»

Situated between Tor Pignattara and Centocelle, in via Casilina 634, this structure is a shelter for asylum seekers and refugees that offers its guests a path aimed at achieving a real autonomy.

13h00 : Lunch 14h00 - 19h00 : Visit of the small Mosque, the Hindu Temple and the Sanctuary of the Madonna della Capannuccia in Tor Pignattara neighborhood, to discover the super-diversity of Rome. Organized with Dott. Carmelo Russo (University la Sapienza) and Dott. Paolo Pascucci (University Roma Tre).

20h00 : Dinner and final evening

During the last day of the project (after getting to know more about the history of Christianity, Judaism and Islam in Italy) we had the opportunity to visit Casa Scalabrini 634 in Tor Pignattara District. The place has a program whose main mission is to promote the encounter, welcoming, autonomy and integration among refugees, migrants and the local community through dialogue and cultural relationships.

We heard the testimony of one of the refugees who used to live in the center. He arrived in Italy 7 years ago from Azad Kashmir. Due to the program, he had been able to find a job and a house. We've been impressed by his good knowledge of the Italian language and, in general, by his level of integration. He was very kind and opened in answering our questions about his journey and his life in Kashmir as well as in Italy, so that we could know and feel how difficult was leaving his beloved country and family behind to an unknown place; how hard was to live and to get used to the habits of a new society without any assistance (neither public nor private).

Then, we had a little tour inside the center, which is very similar to a house: bedrooms, kitchen and recreation room included! There is a little Church and a spot reserved for the Muslim prayers. They created two laboratories: a radio web station and tailoring classes - which both Italians and migrants can take part. The radio station, which is run by volunteers, is very useful to Casa Scalabrini 634 to promote and share its activities among the neighborhood.

After the tour, we went to a Neapolitan-Kurdish restaurant, 'Bazar Taverna Curdo Meticcia', near Casa Scalabrini, where it was possible to continue exchanging experiences and ideas in an intercultural place and eat Kurdish food (prepared with many Italians influences).

In the afternoon, we continued to explore the religious diversity in the district. We had the opportunity to visit another kind of mosque, smaller and simpler than the 'Grande Moschea', with its monumental architecture, but with the same symbolic references, and the Hindu temple, a small room of restricted dimensions, but very representative of the local complexity of this religion. The visit ended with a passage to the chapel of the popular saints, the Madonna della Capannuccia.



PHOTO 14 : Students at Casa Scalabrini, 3 october



PHOTO 15: Students at Casa Scalabrini, 3 october



PHOTO 16: Students at lunch of Curd-Curd Guagliò, tavern curdo-napoletana, 3 october



PHOTO 17: *students visiting the small mosque of Tor Pignattara district of Rome, 3 october*



PHOTO 18: *students visiting the Indù temple of Tor Pignattara distict of Rome, 3 october*

FRIDAY 4 OCTOBER 2019

Greetings and departure of the students

Abakar Walar Modou
Abbas Abakar Abbas
Abdelrazek Fawky Abdelrazek Eid
Adna Camdzic
Andrea Cesarini
Chaima Sbai
Chiama Eloujjaj
Chiara Bertoldi
Driss El Ghazouani
Elena Sacchi
Elisa Chianura
Esraa Alaa al Dein Ahmed Hamza
Fatma Melle Handi
Federica Pizzigotti
Federico Colombo
Giovanna Romeo
Imane Zakia Berkane
Jabrane Mourad
Khalil Arbi
Loris Botto
Luca Bossi
Majdouline Laouina
Mariana Fuzissaki
Marina Giori
Meryem Ouald Chaouia
Omar Jaafri
Paloma Messina
Salma Belhassine

Sandra El Abiad
Serena Finotelli
Shimaa Karem Mahmoud Sayed
Silvia Brocchi
Simona Dondo
Valerio Ambriola
Wiame Benlahbib
Yahya Lamghari

Tutors: Miranda Nera, Paolo Pascucci

Coordinators: Gennaro Gervasio and Maria Chiara Giorda

Professors and staff of Roma Tre and Link Campus University: Valentina Caferra, Letizia Cavaliere, Monica L'Erario, Caterina Moro, Paola Perucchini, Anna Radicetta, Roberta Rinaldi, Ilaria Sonnino, Maurizio Zandri

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