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Motivations of the Getty Villa (In English)

My visit to the Getty Villa was a beautiful and educational surprise. Going into the trip, I did not know what to expect in terms of the beauty and information that I would be presented with that day. However, upon arrival at the Getty Villa, I was taken aback by the beauty of the landscape. We walked up to the guest information desk and I picked up a copy of the “Map and Highlights” pamphlet written in English. Then I walked a bit farther and chose another version of the pamphlet that was translated into Italian, titled “Mappa e punti salienti”. When I opened it and started reading, I was filled with excitement simply because I understood it. Within those first few minutes, I was processing information in Italian rather than in English. Spending the day at the villa, being immersed in a sea of Italian culture, opened my eyes to many civilizations in Italy. This has solidified art as one key point of my Italian education and has also further motivated me to become fluent in the Italian language.

The small “Mappa e punti salienti” pamphlet that I picked up when we arrived at the Getty Villa may seem insignificant to some; however, it represents something very important to me. It is a reminder that I have the potential to think in Italian, instead of always thinking in English. This is an additional reason as to why I want to achieve fluency in Italian. I believe that I can read Italian at a rather decent level now, but I know that I can be and will be much better in the future. The day that I can read this entire pamphlet without any pauses is the day I know that I have reached another level in my Italian reading comprehension. In other words, this informational booklet encouraged me to set goals and to challenge myself to improve my reading skills. I now work even harder to retain Italian vocabulary words from class and new words that I come across while reading.

Beyond advancing my Italian language education, my visit to the Getty Villa allowed me to expand my knowledge on Italian art and the different civilizations that occupied the region. The Etruscans, Greeks, and Romans were the three civilizations that we discussed during our tour; however, the Etruscans were the civilization that intrigued me most. Dr. Lyons explained that the Etruscans have their own language that is distinctive from other ancient languages, as they were receptive to the materials that they found from around the Mediterranean. This resonated with me and I developed an admiration for how the Etruscans fused different elements into their language. Also as someone who enjoys learning about other cultures, I was especially pleased to see the Storage Jar with Polyphemos. The jar indicates a characteristic of the Etruscan culture—that of telling stories during occasions of communal drinking—while recounting a well-known Greek tale. Dr. Lyons’ comment, and pieces of art like that one are what encourage me to dive further into the subject of Italian art and language.

To put it concisely, being exposed to this museum’s resources and ancient Italian art gave me more insight into the history of Italy’s civilizations and language. I am more motivated to learn about Italy and its language because of the trip, and I am a better learner because of this added motivation.