

## **Antonia Kielkowska, language course in Naples, September 2018**

In September 2018, I visited Naples, Italy for a 2-week-long intensive language course. I have been learning Italian for several years now and it has been fantastic to be able to experience full immersion in the language and culture of Italy.

Every day, I had four hours of language lessons in a small group (of five people), practicing different aspects of grammar, speaking and learning vocabulary through reading both language textbooks as well as real newspaper and book excerpts.

Apart from the lessons, the stay in Naples was an opportunity to improve my language skills all the time, from reading the signs on the road, in shops, on the leaflets and menus, listening to Italian radio and of course talking to both Italians and other learners from the school – with whom I quickly made friends as almost every day we had lunch together and sometimes went sightseeing as a group.

I am doing my project on bilingualism and am taking a module on language this year, therefore it was fantastic to have a chance to talk to so many people learning a foreign language and appreciate the diversity of this group, in terms of nationality, ages, reasons to learn Italian and the methods of doing so.

Naples is a unique city of a rich culture, shaped by its geographical location and long history. It was wonderful to discover what this place has to offer. I received a great tour, organised by the school, of *Certosa di San Martino* – old monastery on a hill, now transformed into a museum, which included collections of *presepi* – characteristic for Naples nativity scenes, and models of ships from XIIIth century. I have also visited Botanical Gardens, numerous churches including the cathedral and *Pio Monte di Misericordia* which is the house of one of the most famous pictures by Caravaggio. One of the highlights of my time in Naples was visiting Museum of Capodimonte – an old royal summer residence, transformed into an art gallery. I could admire the pictures by painters like Titian, Raphael, Caravaggio, El Greco and Lotto as well as collections of sculptures, porcelain and armour in the beautiful surroundings of the palace chambers.

However, the biggest impression on me left visiting Pompeii and subsequently the Museum of Archaeology. I was amazed to see the beautiful mosaics, magnificent temples, forum and theatres, faint but still fascinating frescos that survived almost two thousand years, buried under several meters of volcano ashes.

My visit to Naples was an extremely enriching time, both linguistically and culturally and I would like to give my thanks to Pembroke College for making this possible.