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OUT OF THE DARK: ASTRONOMY AS UNIFYING THREAD FOR CULTURES.



Guided visit to the city of Madrid

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Introduction

Following our cultural activities, we presented our city to the partners, visiting a part of old Madrid, the Madrid of Austrias, and trying to make reference to the topic of astronomy.

We have the help of two official guides.

The visit started from the meeting point: Temple of Debod, a set of temples donated to the Spanish State and installed on the Prince Pío Mountain. The temples are oriented from east to west and are dedicated to the gods Isis and Amon.





Our first stop was Plaza de España. The height of the skyscrapers Torre de Madrid (142m) and Edificio España (117m) should be noted. We remember that the previous day at the Robledo de Chavela station (MDSCC NASA), the height of their respective antennas was similar to that of these buildings.



We continued towards Plaza de Oriente; in the centre of the square we highlighted the equestrian sculpture of Felipe IV, known as the Planet king. His daughter Maria Teresa married King Sun, Louis XIV. Inside the Royal Palace, in the throne room, bronze sculptures representing the planets, made in the 16th century by the Flemish sculptor Jonghelinck, are well known.



Our next stop was in the church of Santiago, where we saw a blue plaque with a yellow arrow, which indicates to the pilgrims the way of Santiago de Compostela. "Compostela" means "starfield", the pilgrims looked to the sky to follow the Milky Way, which led the direction to that city.



We arrived at the Plaza Mayor, old market and heart of the city. In the frescoes of the bakery house, we can observe Venus and the Earth. These frescoes were made in 1992, the year in which Madrid was named cultural capital of the European Union.



We finished at the Puerta del Sol, where we found the symbolic sculpture of the bear and the strawberry tree. This sculpture refers to the seven stars of the Big Dipper, easily visible in the night sky of Madrid, joining the shield of the city. The equestrian statue of Carlos III reminds us of his significant contribution to the beautification of the town.



The Cibeles, Apollo and Neptune fountains were built during his reign, as well as the Astronomical Observatory of Madrid.

Conclusions

After visiting the main cities of the countries to which we travelled, we are aware that each of them has their personality, but also that life in all of them has acquired many similarities during the last century, making possible to notice that we have many things in common.

Thanks

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