

Mohammad Akhlaghi

Diary of Paris,

3rd of August 2005

After I woke up I had another thought of whether I should go to Versailles or not! After thinking a little I saw it is far, will cost a little too much and won't be fun alone! So I thought of confirming my coming back ticket to Tehran from Milan in the office of Iran Air in Champs-Élysées.

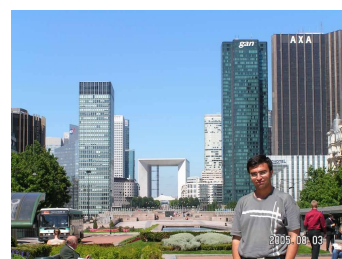
Since I thought of going down Champs-Élysées again and also I had forgot exactly what part of this road the office was so with metro I went to the Franklin D. Roosevelt metro station and walked up on the side of the road that I remembered the office was. As it is always with my memory! I had in mind that this office was more then half way to the Arc de triumph, so I wasn't looking until I thought it is necessary and ever since I did look, I didn't find it until I was nearly in the Palace de Charles de Gaulle étoile, So I turned around and walked down until I was nearly close to the place I had began That I found it, but as I got closer I saw a set of young people with red cloths sticking some things on the glass and shouting: "Liberez Gangi" meaing "Free Gangi" I said to my self that you have the most bad luck in the whole world!!! I had the hope that since it has not began seriously it might still be open so I got to the door and tried to open it but saw it is closed!



So I went and talked to one of the girls and asked what the story is, and she gave me a small English paper explaining the situation and explained that we are journalists without boundary and we are trying to show our anger to the story of Akbar Ganji. Then I told her that I have things to do in this office and thanks to you I can't! She said don't worry we will finish in a few minutes and then you can do your things. So I sat on a chair in front of the office waiting but I saw that it is hopeless, so I thought that instead of wasting my time I better go somewhere, but since I had gone everywhere except the La Deface district so I began walking to get to La Defanse. It was a really long walk and it took me over an hour to get to the Esplanade de la Defanse.

As Mr. Bourdeille had told me before the rich in Paris live in the west and I could easily see that as I walked up the Palace de Charles de Gaulle étoile towards the La Defanse, the roads were getting bigger, the building looked cleaner the population was lower and all together it was much better! I passed a huge office of Peugeot which had all the new models of this car and also a big motorcycle shop which had some really big and interesting motorcycles.

The strange thing was that as I got closer to the Arc, I saw that it is getting smaller! From the Arc de Triumph it looked close but as I got closer I felt it is farther! Close to the Esplanade my feet were really tired and I was getting board of walking and not reaching it! As I got to the Esplanade I really got hopeless specially that I saw a line one metro station down there. I packed my camera and the tripod in the hope of getting on the metro but then I don't know why I walked up and saw a really nice



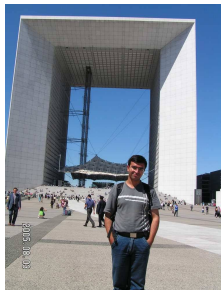
fountain and above it the Esplanade. It was nice and the view was like a long park in between some long sky scrapers.

So I went and sat in a place with some shade (I should say that the sun was really bad!) and had a tiny rest reading about this district of Paris from my Lonely Planet guide book, I got some view on the place and so I got some ambition again to continue my way! So I began walking again but I should say that again it seemed the Arc de la Defense was getting farther! So I tried to forget the Arc and look around the place.



The place was nice compared to the entire city. While walking in the streets of Paris most of the building looked old and the architecture was completely classic but here, everything was modern, the parks, the buildings the shops and everything (I should say the beginnings of this place reminded me more of Iran!) but as you got closer to the skyscrapers

you could easily feel like being in the center of New York (of course I have not been there yet but as I have seen in the films).



There were a lot of food shops and it was around 13:00 and I was a little hungry but as I had decided not to waste money on food! I just ate some of the cakes I had with me and some of the juice. From far the Arc looked much smaller than the skyscrapers around, but as I



got closer I could see its great size. Such that when I really got close I couldn't believe its size! It is 110 meters high and just huge! You can see in the pictures the people sitting on its stairs compared to the building. The interesting thing was that in the far distance you could easily see the Arc de Triumph but from here it didn't trick you in thinking the distance is short! I went up the stairs and under the arch, there were tiny places with pictures of the making of the arc and also places selling tickets to go up the arc, but since I had already gone up a lot of places and also in my guide book it had written it isn't worth it (it was 8 euros or so!) I didn't go!

After refreshing my self a little by sitting on the stairs I went to the huge shopping center that you can see in the picture in the beginning of this page on the far left which had the shape of an arc of a circle. Inside it was just huge with a ton of empty space; to the right of me I saw an "Fnac" shop. Mehrdad had already told me that you can print pictures of copy them on CD from a digital camera in these shops, so I went in and after seeing the prices I just thought of looking around! Behind the photo part of the shop I saw entrances to a huge, just huge shopping center with everything to do with computers and all kinds of Multimedia things; CDs, TVs, DVDs, Cameras and just everything. I found some good games with good prices but I didn't buy them! Everything else was just too expensive. I was in the shop more than 40 minutes. After seeing everything I walked out and got in the La Defense metro station where I got on line one to go to the Franklin D. Roosevelt metro station so I can go to the Iran Air office properly this time.

Unlike the rest of the Paris metros that had separate wagons, line 1 was all connected and you could walk from the beginning of the train to the end with out any trouble. It was also really clean and much better than the rest

of the lines. After getting off this time I knew exactly where I should find the Iran Air office and luckily it was open and they had cleaned the walls and took off all the things, they had only kept one of the things the journalists had stuck.

Any way I went in and after a few minutes waiting one of the women called me and I confirmed my ticket. She didn't look Iranian and you could tell from her Persian accent that she wasn't Iranian but she spoke well! After I came out it was around 17:00 and I was tired. So I returned home (being on the way for around 40 minutes) and packed my things, watched TV, went to bath and by the time I came to go to sleep it was around midnight!!! (I watched a movie and some news)

4th of August 2005

The program Mr. Bourdeille had put for me this after noon was to see Dr. Heidari-Malayeri in the Observatory of Paris around 6:00 in the afternoon. While eating breakfast I was thinking a lot on what I should do until then (some how I was getting a little bored in Paris!!!) So I thought of going to the Pere-Lachaise grave yard which was less then 10 minutes walk from the house I was in (and everybody had said it is close and you should go).



In my guide book it had written this is the most visited cemetery in the world due to the really famous people graved here. I got in from the southern door and right after the entrance I saw a map on a board with all the famous people in the grave yard listed.



In the list of the famous people I could recognize were: Arago (one of the directors of the Paris Observatory), Balzac, Gay-Lussac (a Chemist) and Oscar Wilde (famous writer). To be honest I couldn't recognize any one else (out of the around 100 listed!) which made me feel stupid! In the guide book it had written they give maps but I didn't find any where that gave maps so I just used the picture you can see above (that I took of the entrance map) to find my way using the camera! The first one I visited was Arago's grave, which was really close to the entrance I came in from.

On the way this style of grave making was really interesting for me, for example there were graves with the grave tops being the statues of the owner of the grave asleep, or with the owner doing something! It was really interesting (and somehow scary! Especially when you imagined how it would be to walk in between the graves in the night).



I then found my way to the grave of Balzac and finally it was really hard to find the grave of Oscar Wilde (since it was on the other end of the grave yard). As I was getting closer I could see that everyone was searching for his grave, and I somehow felt in a race as to who can find his grave first!!! It was a Thursday and so not too populated but as I got closer I saw one of

the streets that more people went in and after checking my digital map! I saw it is the right place to go.



The interesting thing about this grave was that it was big and had a lot of kisses on it! From far I couldn't tell what these red signs on the grave were, but as I got closer I saw they are kisses and their different colors showed which ones were newer and which older! I really

loved his "The mirror of Dorian Gray" book which I had even tried to translate while in high school. Let me confess that I had forgot Oscar Wilde had written that book such that when I took this picture beside his statue in Madame Teussod's in London, I knew he was a famous writer, but not that he had written this book. It was actually thanks to the old boyfriend of Christine (the girl who had given me a room) who had left the book in my room, and after seeing him we both talked about how much we admired it! I really respected his grave much more than the rest and felt nice to see his grave, and be close to him!



For leaving the graveyard I checked the Paris map in the end of my guide book and saw one of the entrances has a metro station beside it, so I tried to find my way there! It was a little far but this time I used the big streets in the middle of the graves, not the small ones. It was interesting that while I was passing a corner I suddenly saw a woman talking to her husband and child in Persian (telling them to come this way)!!! I suddenly felt so strange! I guess she had no idea I understood what she said! But it was interesting.

While leaving I saw they were selling maps of the graveyard for 2euros each! (before I thought they were free and was always sorry why I didn't enter the right door) but after seeing these maps the people had were for sale, I felt more comfortable, since if I had entered from this door I would of felt bad of not buying a map and probably the idea of taking a picture of the map would not of come in my mind. Also out side the entrance they had postcards of some of the graves, all with dark colors. I thought to my self that what kind of an idiot would buy one of these only to remember death!

Any way I found the metro station and got on the metro. It was only midday and I had a lot of time left until six. I wanted to go to the Pantheon of Paris but after I got off in the Cardinal lemoine metro station, I saw signs showing ways to the "Institute du Monde Arabe" (Institute of the Arabic world), which Mehrdad had already told me about which is interesting and has nice exhibitions. So I decided to go there since I thought I didn't have enough time to visit the Pantheon. After a ton of trouble I found my way there but after I entered I just saw there is an open air cinema in the garden and an exhibition inside that had closed doors!!! I came out and took this picture from it since its glasses where made really nice and you really did feel bad that why Iran doesn't have such a center.



It was right beside the Seine River and so I just walked beside the river towards the islands in the Seine River. On the way I saw the Pont de Sully, which passed the river and would go straight to the Bastille square which I could easily get home from. So I sat on a chair and ate my cakes and juice

as lunch and then walked towards the Bastille square, on the other side of the river was the biggest of one of the strangest things I had seen in Paris; big places selling sexy magazines, pictures, CDs and DVDs (with cheap prices!) on the side of the walkway and in public!!!! It was really strange!

Any way I saw that if I want to walk this distance as soon as I get home I have to leave so I got in the Sully Morland metro station and got off in the Voltaire station which was really close to my house. I rested in the house for around 40 minutes and then by metro I went to the St-Jacques metro station where I was supposed to see Mr. Bourdeille. We walked to the building for Celestial mechanics of the observatory and then went to Dr. Malayeri's room.

He was thinner than the picture I had seen of him in his internet site! And after Mr. Bourdeille talked to him and he looked at me I said: "Salaam" but he suddenly looked strangely at me and replied with another "Salaam"! We then walked to the meeting room. There were already a few people there who got up after Dr. Malayeri told them this room is reserved. We began the talk with the educational system here in France and also about how it is exactly to study in the Paris Observatory.

After a few questions and answers we had an interview with him (thanks to Mr. Bourdeille who had brought a voice recording device made specially for interviews!) After the interview that you can read fully in my other files, I showed him my CV and asked him his idea on it. He was really happy that I have had so many activities and said he is willing to write me a recommendation when ever I need one from the Paris Observatory. He was a kind man but I should say after all this time he has become more of a French man than an Iranian! He had a lot of respect for the Iranian language theoretically.

In the ends of the talk Mr. Bourdeille's mobile phone rang a lot and it was after the talk that I found out it was Mehrdad behind the line wanting to talk to me, so after the talk finished he gave me the phone and I talked to him. Mehrdad invited me to their house for around 21:00 while it was around 19:30 and so I decided to go to the Astronomy Shop that Mr. Bourdeille had already told me about. So he showed me a bus that would go close to the shop, he showed me the stop I should get off in and told me to walk towards Hotel de Ville to find the shop, luckily it was there and I found it easily. It was big and had really nice things but as with nearly everywhere the prices were really high! On the second floor I found some books but none of them attracted my interest too much so I asked the person that exactly where can I find some good books, and he told me to go to the Fnac in Les Halles, he showed it to me on my map, it didn't seem too far so I went. Les Halles was really big, some how I can say it was the biggest shopping center I had seen. Its interesting thing was that it was underground such that the lowest ground could see the sky! It was huge and all different kinds of shops were inside it. It took me around half an hour to find a good book shop that in the end I found out was a part of Fnac. I searched everywhere inside it but it was all humanity books and engineering books, it took me another 20 minutes to find the one column of physics books in the whole huge book shop!

It had interesting physical books but the prices were crazy!!! One book of Feynman in French was around 35euros that was really expensive for me. I was looking at the books for around 40 minutes and finally didn't buy anything thanks to the really high price. So I left les Halles after searching

for its exit for a quarter of an hour and went to the St. Jacques metro station to see Mehrdad this time.

This time Mr. Bourdeille didn't come and only his wife came. I should say the distance between their house and Mehrdad's house (where he lived with his mother) was a 10 minutes walk. They were really kind and this time luckily they made a much better food that I was able to eat better (a circular Kebab) and not "Bademjooon"(or Eggplant)!!!

We talked a little about the "Khangah" they visited in Paris and Poopak visited often, and finally we decided to visit the khangah Friday (the day after) afternoon. We programmed to see each other (Poopak and I) in the St-Jacques metro station again to go there. We had some really nice talks and they all talked a lot about Rome and Italy.

I was there until around 00:30 (while the metros only worked until 1:00a.m) Mehrdad came to the entrance of their house and showed me the way back to the St-Jacques station where I got on a metro to the Nation station where I had to change to line 9 to go to the Voltaire station to go home from there. All the parts went good except the getting on the line 9 that kept me waiting in the Nation station for around 20 minutes for its last line to come!

I should also add that this day was the final of the second of my 5 day tickets, and since this special way of tickets was a little expensive, from the day after I got a packet of 10 tickets: thanks to Mehrdad who had introduced "un carnet de dix"(a packet of 10 tickets) which had 10 tickets for 10 euros I got one of them to last until my final day. Buying a whole three day ticket would be around 12 euros while this cost 10. In average I used the metro 4 times a day and so this was a more economic way!

Christine wasn't home that night and I just slept until the next day that I had to go and visit the office of the "Ciel et Espace" magazine. And again our meeting place was the St-Jacques station!

5th of August 2005

I woke up around 9:00 and went to see Mr. Bourdeille. We walked to a park that was around a 10 minute walk from the St. Jacques station and in the middle of the park he showed me two relatively small buildings and a room. He then said these are the office of "Ciel et espace" and also the center of the French Astronomy Association. It was really interesting that all these were right in the center of a park.

First we had a fast visit of the French Astronomy Association and had a better look after visiting the Ciel et Espace office. In the Ciel et Espace center I met Emilie Martin who was one of the editors of the magazine. She showed me all the place; rooms, people and things and then we went in her office that was with a few others. She then introduced them all to me and talked a lot about the way of the magazine. She was a really kind and active girl, who had an excellent American accent, she had lived in the US for some time and so was the only non-English speaking person I spoke English with comfortably during my stay in France and Italy!

After around 40 minutes in the center she gave me a few of the recent magazines and wished me a good trip. We then went to the Astronomy association (10 meters away!). There was a small shower while we were walking between the two buildings and so I used the umbrella I had bought on my first day of my stay in Paris, this was actually the only time I used it!

Finally I left it in Mr. Bourdeille's car and forgot to bring it with me. But luckily it didn't rain in Italy!

In the center of the astronomy association I saw some of the people. The next week they were suppose to have a national astronomy day and so both in the ciel et espace magazine and here in the association they were all busy finishing the things they had to do. They were distributing some CDs for all the groups so all the country would hold the program the same way.

They explained for Mr. Bourdeille how the CD is. It was a PowerPoint with lots of pictures and explanations inside it, this year they were celebrating this day to the honor of Joules Verne and so in nearly all the talk they related Joules Verne's talks to the astronomical facts we know today. It was interesting. Finally they gave me a tiny small book they gave to the kids as one of their last works.

After seeing this center we walked back to the St-Jacques metro station. I had got a box special for the magazines from the ciel et espace center so I can post my the magazines I had got, to Iran. Since caring such things along with me through all Italy seemed crazy! So I went home and put the box, then I decided to go to the Pantheon as my last chance in the time I had until 18:00 that I should of seen Poopak (Mr. Bourdeille's wife), so after changing around 3 metros I got off in the Cluny la Sorbonne metro station and just as I was going towards it I saw a book shop, It's name was Joseph Gibert and had some cheap books out side, after looking at them I went in to have a look and saw it is a huge (really huge) book shop with around 4 really big floors. I then saw it has a part for the sciences and physics which made me really happy so I went there. The prices were high here is well but here had a much bigger variety and there were books with more logical prices!

I was in the physics part for more then an hour searching the books one by one in the hope of a logically priced book!!! I finally found Leçons Sur La Gravitation by Feynman which was translated to French by Céline Laroche and printed in 2001 by Editions Odile Jacob. It was second hand with a price of 20euros! (Its original price was 30euros)

Then I went to the St.Jacques metro station to see Poopak. As soon as I closed the door to wait out side for her, I saw Mehrdad (her brother) and her mother, they said "Poopak just went in, go in through the door while someone is coming out so you don't have to use any of your tickets" so I did that fast and luckily no one saw me (except the person who I didn't let close his door when I went in!)

I saw her in the platform of the trains going back to Nation. We went to one of the stations (I can't remember which one) and got on and RER (a special kind of metro that went to farther distances and was 2 euros not 1.4). Since all the ticket sellers were closed, we had to go to a machine to buy me a ticket, while in front of the machine she suddenly said "Do you want to not pay money!?" I said yes (with doubt) and she said come with me, she put her ticket in the machine and we passed it together! She just said there is a small chance of police coming to check. Luckily nobody checked the tickets but I was really afraid of this happening through out the trip!

The khangah was around 5 minutes walk from the metro station that we got off in and on the way suddenly Poopak's foot hit the foot of another woman in front of her and so she said "Bebakhshid". I thought that since

she was busy talking Persian with me she made a mistake and so I told her (while the older woman could hear me) that she doesn't understand Persian, why did you say "Bebakhshid". Poopak said "Yes she does!" with a smile and the old woman looked back and had a smile and went... later Poopak said that she is one of the ladies attending in the Khangah. I felt so stupid that moment!

The Khangah had separate doors for men and women (but finally everyone came in one saloon) and so Poopak showed me the door and went their own door. Inside everything was really clean and nice, there was a saloon kind of thing (in the same form of our Masjids) and most everybody was either wearing white clothes or light clothes. Since I was just a visitor they didn't say anything to me and let me in really politely. Everybody had white clothes which made everybody look really nice! Specially the girls!

They brought some tea and after I finished mine the person who talked came. I have forgotten his name but as soon as he came suddenly everybody put their heads on the ground just like "Sojdeh" in the Muslim pray. It was strange to me but I did it like everybody else. He then sat in front of there and began drinking his tea while everybody was waiting for him to talk. It was strange, he sat as if he is in a traditional Iranian "Gahve-Khane" and all he needed was a "Ghelyoon" to complete the scene!!!

He had a typical Iranian look and suddenly began speaking by ordering one of the people to read Ghoraan with translation. At that moment I suddenly saw around 40% of the population putting a headphone on, including the person sitting beside me! I could here from it that it was in French and exact translations of what the people said. After the Quran he began talking in a somehow unpolite way! Not that he used bad words; he used a bad way of addressing and telling the facts.

He talked about one of the mystique facts which I believe he could say much better way then the way he said. He acted like a king talking to slaves; it was interesting for me how these people also acted like slaves compared to a king! In a place, he asked a girl something, she was so shy to answer, that her voice was not straight and I felt she is ready to cry of shyness! One of the men also acted like that when he asked him a question. After around 1.5 hours he finished the program by telling one of the men to sing something that was really nice, then an old woman began singing on his voice that made it a really holy rhythm and song, it was a poet of one of the Persian poets. I think she was one of the singers or people working on Iranian TV before the revolution, her voice was excellent.

After the program we came out and with Mrs. Bourdeille (Poopak) waited for Mr. Bourdeille to come. Another one of the women who had attended also joined us since she always came back with them. After around 10 minutes Mr. Bourdeille came and we came back to Paris, after one road I suddenly saw the Grand Arc of the La Defanse district and found out where we were; we were behind it!

After that woman got off, Mrs. Bourdeille invited me to their house for dinner and I accepted and went there. We talked a little, then she brought dinner and when it was nearly finished she got up early and left the table, then Mr. Bourdeille followed. It seems she didn't feel too good around the heart, and had some pain. So Mr. Bourdeille called Mehrdad and his mother and they both came. Then they called their family doctor and he came is

well, I kept on insisting that I can go my self but Mr. Bourdeille said there is no trouble and he insisted that he will take me and finally he did that after the doctor left. He brought me to the house I was in and went back home.

It was around 00:00 when I got home and again Christine wasn't home. So I just watched some news and slept to wake up the day after as my second last day in Paris.

6th of August 2005

I got up around 10:00 while I had programmed to see Mehrdad at 11:00 around the St. Jacques metro station. The story goes back to the last day I was in their place. He said he knows a really good shop selling cosmetics with a really good price. So we had programmed to go there. I was there a few minutes earlier and saw Poopak, her mother and Mehrdad come together. They all accompanied me in buying some good souvenirs for my family. We walked a little (around 20 minutes) to the Paris Chinese district, actually the boundary of the Chinese district. He then showed me the shop and we all walked in. In the way Mehrdad's mother gave me a song she had said herself that I had asked her to bring for me, it was a really nice poem going like this:



شہلا ہیرید

به نهائتی که شاید
برسد به بی نهایت
به کرات و مهر هاشان
به هر آنچه نیست غایت

به زمین سخت لرزان
به ساچه های واران
به نبود بودهامان
به خدا به دین به ایران

که اگر به کهکشان
دگری تورا بینم
به تو رو کنم دوباره
که تویی، تو سرزمینم

به شکوفه بهاران
به ردای پاک باران
به تواضع بنفشه
به کنار جویباران

به درخت سالخورده
به پرنده ای که مرده
به خیال سبز جنگل
به رهی که کس نبرده

به حقیقتی که باشد
به نگاه کودکانه
به رسالتی که گندم
بودش زند جوانه

به سیاهچال کیهان
به مکان خفته در آن
به زمان سفر نمودن
به گذشته های انسان

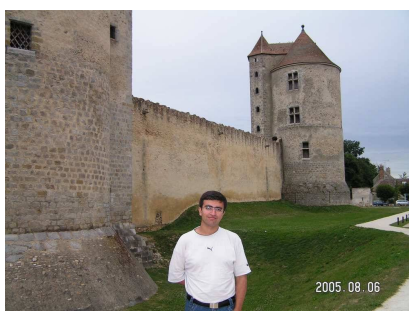
They all gave me some great information on buying perfumes for women! Somehow I could feel a competition between Poopak and her smaller brother (Mehrddad) on trying to introduce the best perfume for Mona and mum. Finally they talked a lot and after around half an hour in that really small shop I decided to give the choice to Poopak to choose a good perfume for Mona. Since I knew that mum used a special perfume and since I didn't know its name so I thought mum might not like it!

But the interesting thing was that when I told them I remember a sign of two birds on the perfume they found out what kind it is and showed me a good set that after thinking a little and still having doubt I didn't buy it, so I decided to buy mum a scarf.

After that we went to the shop of a Pakistani man who sold clothes and there I bought a tie for dad and a scarf for mum, for the tie Mehrddad helped me and for the scarf Poopak and her mother put a few good scarves that they said fits a woman of mum's age and told me to choose! I was supposed to see Mr. Bourdeille at 14:00 but we finished around 14:15 so Poopak called him and said I will be in St Jacques a little later, then we went to a hamburger shop and Mehrddad invited us for a lunch!

After lunch we walked back and I separated from them for reaching the St Jacques. There I saw Mr. Bourdeille and with his car we went to the Gretz district again (around 35km away from Paris on the Paris-Strasbourg road. But this time first we visited the "Vaux le Vicomte" which was built by the first accountancy minister of Louis XIV and was the reason Louis XIV built the Versailles castles since he was jealous that his minister was richer and had a better castle than himself he cut his head off and built Versailles!

It was a nice castle but we just visited its gardens since we got there late (at 17:00) and it was nearly closing, right now the management of this place is personal and it was really nice, they put candles on all the side walks and in the night turned them all on which gave the castle a real romantic view. There were also really nice gardens around it and an open-air theater.



We saw the place and then went to some other historical places I think most of the Parisians don't know, around this really beautiful district. Then we went towards the Uranoscope Observatory to see the members and work a little hopefully! Mr. Bourdeille had told me that tonight a woman from Alexandria will come also who is to talk to me about an observatory in Alexandria. When we got there she was waiting and came in with us. He then put a table and chairs outside and brought some food to eat, it was chicken, rice and cheese, with coke.

We were nearly finishing when slowly the members of the Uranoscope de l'île de France came one by one and everyone was talking about how to put the program for the astronomy day in the next week. Mr. Bourdeille showed them the CD they had given in the Astronomy association and explained all things that needed to be explained. They were interesting people and I talked a lot about different things with each one of them. They also warned

me about pickpockets in Italy after hearing I am going to Italy and we also talked about Iran and some political things as well.

The interesting thing about talking to one of the members (the first from left in the picture) was that I said I have just begun CCD photography, he said the same and asked me the CCD type I used; I said it's a Meade CCD, and well, Meade CCDs are the simplest of all! I then asked him what kind he uses he said a kind I didn't know, and then he said it is the best mark in the world and that he had bought it for 6000euros! I didn't say one more word of CCDs after that!



With bad luck, the sky didn't get clear and so after talking a lot with everybody we all came back home. It was this night that I forgot to pick up my umbrella (That I had brought out in Vaux le Vicomte since there was a small shower while we were in the gardens).

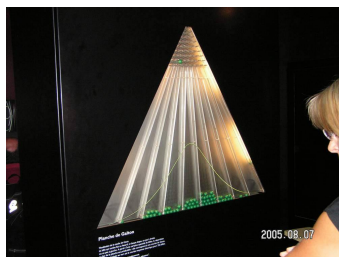
7th of August 2005

I had decided to buy a good tie for Hamed and maybe see the perfumes again so at 9:00. I left for the Tolbiac metro station (as long as I remember!) which was close to the place we bought the perfumes, but since it was Sunday everywhere was closed.

I was a little tired of Paris and just had nothing in my mind to do that suddenly it came to my mind that I have not gone to the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie. So I checked my metro tickets (to see if I have enough left) and left for the museum. It was a long way (nearly the length of Paris) but when I got there, I saw it is a nice district and there were signs showing the way to the museum.



My train to Venice was leaving at 18:00 from the Bercy train station in Paris (that had a metro station with the same name!) so I had to finish the museum by 14:00 to be home by 15:00 and see Mr. Bourdeille (who wanted to accompany me) at 16:00 so we go to the station.



After entering the Museum I first had a good look around and then went to buy tickets, luckily for me (as a student) the tickets were be 5.5 euros. They had a lot of space inside there such that there was a huge plane and submarine hanging from the roof! The entrance to the museum was a really long escalator that took you to the first floor, something like the Vatican museum that I later saw in Rome. I

began reading and looking closely at everything but slowly I saw it is not possible to see the whole place at this pace!

I saw all parts of the museum and the most interesting part of it for me was the mathematics part of it, it showed all the mathematical laws and



rules with really nice computer animations and devices controlled by you. It was really attractive. All its parts were really interesting but I really didn't have enough time to read everything and even see everything good! I would propose someone to be there early in the morning and leave as the last person to be able to see the whole place fully.

Out side the museum (on the other side of the entrance) was a really big mirror globe that was a really nice view but sadly I didn't even have time to get close to it. I just ran to the metro station to be home on time waiting for Mr. Bourdeille to come.

I was home around 14:00. I should just say that I had found a good coffee net around the house which wrote the pictures on CD with a really good price: 1.5euros. I had asked him (In fact the boy there also had an excellent American English!) that are you open on Sunday and he said yes. So as soon as I got home I went to copy the pictures on CD so I can go to Venice with an empty memory disk (and take as many pictures as I want) but when I got to its door I suddenly saw it had written it's closed on Sunday the 7th of August! I wanted to destroy the place!!! If he would have told me I would have wrote the pictures on CD earlier and not had any trouble but he didn't tell me. I got really angry and nervous (since I didn't have time to search for another shop and especially on Sunday!) so I came back to the house and hoped I can find a good place in Venice to write the pictures on CD.

I packed everything up, and waited for Mr. Bourdeille to come, he came at 16:20 and we left right after that! I was supposed to give Christine 20euros for every night in her house but in the last three nights I hadn't seen her to give her the money for my 11 days of stay! So I left a message on her bed with 220euros inside it and thanking her for everything.

Then with Mr. Bourdeille we went to the Bercy metro station, but before going to the Bercy train station he took me to line 14 which he said doesn't have any drivers and is a complete automatic metro train. We waited for the train to come and he showed me no driver in front of it, then after it stopped we got on the last part and sat looking behind the train (while there was no driver on this side either), in the next station we got off and got on another one and came back to the Bercy station.

Over there we followed the signs that passed a few streets to get to the Bercy Train Station. We were there around an hour early and done our final talks. Around 17:30 we found my cabin and my bed and he showed me how they can turn into beds then I put my things and we waited out side. He told me a few final points about Italy and Rome; places to see, how to act and their customs, calling Italy his second favorite country (after France of course)! While he was talking the worker of the train of our cabin was beside us and added to the things Mr. Bourdeille said (it was a nice



moment) then we gave him the camera and he took this picture of us and my train to Venice:

Mr. Bourdeille was waiting until the whole train left! I tried to shake hands for him but he didn't see me. He and his nice family were really kind to me during my stay...

Let me just mention that this day was his father's birthday but he still came to accompany me for leaving Paris...

Mohammad Akhlaghi
17th of September 2005