

# VILLA I TATTI

THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR ITALIAN RENAISSANCE STUDIES

Volume I  
Spring 2017

Cover image: *The Cardsharps (detail)*, Caravaggio, c. 1594.  
Kimbell Art Museum. Visit our website to read about what our  
appointees are working on, including Deborah Loeb Brice Fellow  
John Hunt's project *Gaming and Sociability in Early Modern Rome*.

## Digital Humanities

Where traditional scholarship  
meets new possibilities

## From Ariosto to Africa

Uncovering new territory with  
Exploratory Seminars

## Remembering the Flood

An online exhibition investigates I Tatti's role  
in the recovery efforts following the  
Arno flood of 1966

## A Growing Community

New opportunities for Term  
Fellows at Villa I Tatti



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## 2016 / 2017 Villa I Tatti Appointees

### I Tatti Year Fellows

**Susanna Berger** Reflections on Narcissus: Art and Nature in Early Modern Europe **Marco Faini** ‘Always doubt, and live cautiously’: Doubt, Scepticism and Unbelief in Early Modern Italy (1500-1560) **Aileen A. Feng** Feminism’s First Paradox: Female Misogyny and Homosociality in Early Modern Italy and France **John Gagné** Milan Undone: Transcultural War in the Early Sixteenth Century **Cory Gavito** Guitar Song in Italy, 1580-1700 **Chriscinda Henry** The Visual Culture of Carnival in Florence and Rome under the Medici (1465-1534) **John Hunt** Gaming and Sociability in Early Modern Rome and Italy **Emanuele Lugli** The Fabrication of Borders: Tailoring, Triangulation, Territoriality in Italy and Beyond, 1340-1760 **Antonio Musarra** Genova e gli Ottomani nel Quattrocento **Giulia Perucchi** Petrarch and the Sciences **Renata Pieragostini** The Chancellor’s Musical World: Ideas of Music in Coluccio Salutati’s Florence **Cédric Quertier** I fallimenti fiorentini nel tribunale della Mercanzia (1333-1340): i precedenti di una crisi fiorentina, toscana ed europea **Pasquale Terracciano** Measuring Hell. A Florentine Debate **Viktoria von Hoffmann** The Anatomy of Touch. Anatomical Knowledge and Technologies of Touch in the Renaissance **Edward Wouk** The Agency of Impression: Domenicus Lampsonius, Giorgio Vasari, and the Rise of the Print from the Gutenberg Revolution to the Age of Discovery

### I Tatti Term Fellows

**Ruth Abbot** George Eliot, the Florentine Renaissance, and the History of Scholarship **Mabi Angar** Genoese Galata. The Topography and Urban Development of the Genoese Settlement in Galata/Pera in the Late Byzantine Period (1261-1453) **Irene Backus** Virile Roots, Generative Earth: Chinese Rhizomes in Florentine Fertility Treatments **Jaspreet Singh Boparai** From Politian to Poliziano: Giosué Carducci and the Creation of an Italian Poet **Sabine du Crest** “Border Objects”: the Florentine Case Study **Alexandra Enzensberger** Making Masterpieces. Art on Display in the Modern Museum **Ruth Ezra** Eliding Sculpture and Plane in German Renaissance Art **Ingrid Greenfiel** Cannibalism and Collecting: Material Cultures of Consumption in Italy and Africa, 1450-1650 **Thomas Gruber** Man as the Centre of the World: Ramon Sibiuda in the European Renaissance **Tracy Chapman Hamilton** Mapping the Medieval Woman **Andrew Hui** Confucius the Stoic: The Encounter between Western and Chinese Philosophy in the Age of Matteo Ricci **Jeffrey Levenberg** The Reception of Al-Farabi’s “Great Book of Music” in the Italian Renaissance **Florin-Stefan Morar** The Maps of Myriad Kingdoms: translation and the circulation of cartographic knowledge between East Asia and Early Modern Europe **Eda Ozel** The Politics of Piracy: Tunisian Pirates in the 17th-Century Mediterranean **Cara Rachele** Designing the Architect: The Function of the Drawing in Renaissance Architecture **Nimrod Reitman** Non-Finito: Michelangelo and Rilke **Catherine Walsh** Mapping Sculpture **Daniel Walden** Musica Prisca Caput: Looking For the Origins of Tuning and Temperament **Elizabeth Weckhurst** Milton on Causation: Theodicy & Noise

### Visiting Professors

**Albert Russell Ascoli** Petrarch’s Old Age: Re-reading the ‘Seniles’ **Marguerite Deslauriers** Equality and Superiority: Reconciling sameness and difference in Renaissance pro-woman works **Anne Dunlop** The Global Renaissance: a Survey **Bonnie Gordon** Voice Machines: The Castrato, The Cat Piano and Other Strange Sounds **Andrée Hayum** Aspects of the Role of Renaissance during the Fascist Period **Nevra Necipoglu** The Social Topography and Urban Development of 15th-Century Constantinople **Katharine Park** Mediterranean Encounters: Medieval Science between Latin and Arabic **Tony Sigel** Renaissance Terracotta Models from Michelangelo to the Baroque **Victor Stoichita** The Power of the Gaze in Renaissance Art and Culture **Kate van Orden** Musica Transalpina: French Music, Musicians, and Identity in Cinquecento Italy

## A Message from the Director

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first edition of our new-look Newsletter, which has been redesigned and reimagined to focus on the many scholarly initiatives and exciting projects currently underway at I Tatti. Going forward, we will continue to publish the Newsletter in the spring semester in order to share highlights of the academic year as it unfolds. I hope our readers, new and old, will enjoy this new format.

Here in Florence we are looking towards the future, with an eye firmly on the expansion and development of I Tatti as a dynamic intellectual destination for scholars working on the Renaissance. Our community has grown and continues to do so: earlier this year we received more applications than ever before for the 2017/2018 fellowships. In addition to our fifteen full-year Fellows and around thirty Term Fellows and Visiting Professors, throughout the year we host Harvard graduate students and Harvard interns who participate fully in the intellectual and social life of our center. We also welcome many visiting scholars who attend frequent conferences, and our recently introduced Exploratory Seminars and Thursday Seminar Series allow us to open our center to the local community of scholars as well as create a lively intellectual hub for our Fellows.

As our range of activities grows so must our facilities. In this digital age, we are aiming to accommodate the ever-increasing number of scholars whose projects engage the new and exciting area of the Digital Humanities. Plans are unfolding for the transformation of our Granaio building into a state-of-the-art digital lab, while work will soon be



underway to transform the Big Library space into a well-equipped Reading Room at the heart of the Villa. Finally, the recent acquisition of an adjacent property known as *Villa Linda* will allow us to expand our territory and provide a dedicated space where we can accommodate guest scholars and host workshops and other smaller events.

It is a privilege to serve as I Tatti’s Director at such an exciting time, and to introduce you to some of our current initiatives and our vision for the future. With the support of our wonderful staff, scholars, and friends, I Tatti is leading the way in Italian Renaissance scholarship. As we approach the end of this academic year I look forward with confidence to 2017/18, which promises to be equally fulfilling.

Alina Payne

Paul E. Geier Director  
Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies

Alexander P. Misheff Professor of History of Art and Architecture,  
Harvard University



Alina Payne (second from right) in Pisa with students from Harvard University who attended a workshop at I Tatti in spring 2016.



# Music at I Tatti

Since the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies was established in 1961, musical programs at I Tatti have included public concerts, intimate recitals for the community, and performances by musicians in residence. Musician and musicologist Daniel Walden was a Graduate Fellow at Villa I Tatti during fall 2016. Here, he talks of his experience as an appointee and of how music and musicologists make a vital contribution to scholarly life at I Tatti.

As any musician can tell you, finding a good practice space when away from home is a challenging task. Most are rather dreary places: windowless basement rooms with beaten-down chairs, music stands, and instruments. Not so at Villa I Tatti. Where else can you practice on piano while glancing up at paintings by Giotto and Veneziano, or out through the window over spectacular gardens and vineyards? When I arrived last August and sat down at the Steinway in the studiolo for the first time, I quickly realized that the richness of my musical experience at I Tatti would extend well beyond ideas encountered in the extensive musical collections at the library or exchanged between scholars at daily repasts or more formal talks and conferences. It would also be found in the more intimate moments of a daily life enjoyed in this graceful and inspiring setting for work, study, and performance.

I spent this past fall semester as a Graduate Fellow at I Tatti pursuing research into the early modern genesis of a new “enharmonic” branch of music theory whose protagonists proposed that lost ancient Greek musical practices could be revived through the melodic incorporation of intervals smaller than the semitone. Sixteenth-century enharmonic composers and musicians at the court of Ippolito II d’Este invented new musical technologies for the investigation and performance of these new microtonal intervals; these included monochords and keyboard

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instruments with as many as thirty-six divisions of the octave, rather than the conventional twelve that can still be found on most Western keyboards today. My research brought me to Florence, Rome, and Bologna, where I consulted the archives for treatises, unpublished manuscripts, keyboard instruments, and monochords related to this area of musical practice. My main focus was on how Vitruvian commentaries played an important role in the transmission of ancient Aristoxenian theories that inspired pursuit of this type of music, as well as a revived interest in an experimental culture of mechanical innovation that saw instrument building and design as an essential component of its field of inquiry.

This year, I was one of five musical appointees. Each of us presented our topics in a wide-ranging series of Fellows’ Presentations, focused on the cultural history of the guitar in Seicento Italy (Cory Gavito); the musical theories of Coluccio Salutati and their intellectual context in fifteenth-century Florence (Renata Pieragostini); the castrato as a lens through which to investigate historical intersections between sound, voice and technology (Bonnie Gordon); and the transalpine migrations of composers, performers, and musical ideas (Kate van Orden). On May 18-19, over a dozen musicologists, theorists, ethnomusicologists, and performers from across Europe and the United States will also



Musicians of the ensemble Concerto di Margherita perform during the concert *Dolci Mieì Sospiri*, October 2016.





century, and an intimate recital by violinist Dorian Komanoff Bandy in the Berenson Reading Room that I had the pleasure of accompanying on the harpsichord. Musical events such as these were special in that they attracted such a wide audience, introducing the broader Florentine community to take pleasure in the rich environment for musical inquiry, performance, and experimentation that is currently developing on Villa I Tatti's grounds.

All this represents just a small piece of the rich context for musical studies at I Tatti. For the strength of the scholarly community here also resides in its interdisciplinary spirit, manifest at everything from the lectures to friendly and informal conversations between Fellows at the lunch table, after concerts, and in the city. This spirit is vital for encouraging new scholarly approaches that can locate musical topics within a broader history of early modern culture and ideas. And in my experience, the tremendous intellectual value of this spirit for the study of music and sound was nowhere more evident than one evening when two dozen Fellows from the full spectrum of disciplines represented at I Tatti gathered for a close reading of Niall Atkinson's *The Noisy Renaissance: Sound, Architecture, and Florentine Urban Life*. It was also, of course, pure fun to share such a lively exchange about music with good friends over delicious wine produced from the I Tatti vineyards gracing the hillsides.

This May, I will look forward to returning to I Tatti with a cohort of my graduate colleagues from the Music Department at Harvard as part of a seminar directed by Alexander Rehding and focused on early modern reception of Ancient Greek music. It will be such a pleasure to spend another week based at I Tatti, where the study of early modern musical culture is so vibrant and thriving — and where I can visit my favorite “practice room” once again.

gather at I Tatti for a conference entitled “Music in the Mediterranean Diaspora,” examining patterns of migration and displacement amid the circulation of music and musicians throughout the region during the early modern era. Organized by Kate van Orden, the event will bring back a number of former *Tattiani* to Florence, including Pedro Memelsdorff (VIT’04), Philippe Canguilhem (VIT’06), and Guido Guerzoni (VIT’04).

This conference will also feature a performance by Jordi Savall and his ensemble Hespèrion XXI, focused on the interwoven Sephardic, Ottoman, and Armenian musical traditions in Dimitrie Cantemir’s “The Book of the Science of Music.” Savall’s concert caps off an exciting season of concerts at I Tatti that also included an October 17 presentation of madrigals by the Ensemble *Concerto di Margherita* entitled “Dolci miei sospiri — tra Ferrara e Venezia,” focused on the legacy of the famously virtuosic *concerto delle donne* of the sixteenth-



**Daniel Walden** is a PhD Candidate and Presidential Scholar in Music Theory at Harvard University. He received the MPhil in Music Studies with Distinction at the University of Cambridge as a Gates Cambridge Scholar, and is also a pianist and harpsichordist and a recipient of a 2016 Leonore Annenberg Arts Fellowship. He was a Graduate Fellow at I Tatti during fall 2016.

# Villa Linda

## A New Dimension for I Tatti



Considerable construction work is required to transform Villa Linda into the facility we now require so urgently in order to accommodate our expanding community. To find out more, please consult the dedicated page on our website: [itatti.harvard.edu/villalinda](http://itatti.harvard.edu/villalinda)

Our scholarly community at I Tatti has grown steadily over the years and the Harvard Center now welcome up to fifty appointees annually, including full-year Fellows, Term Fellows, and Visiting Professors, in addition to Harvard interns. We host and organize more scholarly events than ever before, and in an effort to engage younger scholars with the Renaissance and promote Early Modern studies, we have begun to host intensive workshops for talented undergraduate and graduate students. While this growth has been enormously beneficial for the life of our academic community, it also means that our current facilities are no longer adequate.

In 2016, Villa I Tatti acquired *Villa Linda*, a property adjacent to I Tatti on the Settignano Hills above Florence. This important new addition to our physical and cultural landscape adds a new dimension to our campus and programs and will allow us to expand our scholarly offerings while providing much-needed additional housing.

Villa Linda will be used to provide accommodation not only for appointees, but for guest scholars and visitors to our center, making I Tatti more accessible while at the same time allowing us to increase the presence of scholars at the Harvard Center. Villa Linda will also feature a dedicated area for workshops and seminars, while we will use the space to host frequent smaller events that complement our academic schedule without disrupting the tranquility of Villa I Tatti so appreciated by our Fellows. Community is central to our ethos and Villa Linda is perfectly situated within easy walking distance of the main villa building.

The image to the left shows I Tatti in the foreground with Villa Linda and Florence beyond.







# New Fellowship Opportunities

**Term Fellows - who spend between four and six months at I Tatti - now account for more than fifty per cent of I Tatti's annual appointees.**

This past October, I Tatti Term Fellow Ruth Abbott read aloud Percy Bysshe Shelley's lyric poem "Ode to the West Wind" to appointees gathered in the Salone Sassetta. With his wife Mary, Percy Shelley had moved to Florence in 1818, and he composed this piece on that very October day in 1819, after an autumn storm trapped him by a fountain in a park by the Arno. You'll agree that it was seasonally appropriate, but why, you may be asking yourself, were we honoring a nineteenth-century English poet, in a room hung with gold-ground paintings by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Siennese and Florentine artists, at a research center devoted to Italian Renaissance studies?

Ruth, a specialist in nineteenth-century English literature, was one of two Wallace Fellows this past fall. The Wallace Fellowships are designed for scholars who explore the historiography and impact of the Italian Renaissance in the Modern Era (19th-21st c.), and Ruth's project considered the influence of Florentine Renaissance scholarship on the novelist George Eliot, who conducted research in Florence herself while preparing to write her historical novel *Romola* (1862-63). Ruth's work on nineteenth-century writers' compositional and research practices, and her interest in their notebooks and manuscripts, resonated with many of us who page through fifteenth- and sixteenth-century documents in the Archivio di Stato or the Biblioteca Nazionale, hoping to better understand the foreignness of the past and sharpen our historical perspective from the fragments of writing that we find. This reconstruction work, no matter the period, can be frustrating — we rarely feel a sense of completion (and rightly so) — but Nimrod Reitman, a Wallace Fellow whose project meditates on fragments and the nature of the non-finito in the oeuvres of Michelangelo Buonarroti and Rainer Maria Rilke, reminded us that we're in good company.

For Fellows looking at the modernity of the Renaissance, the work of Jacob Burckhardt is often a primary point of departure. The Swiss historian's influential text *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*

(1860) located the beginning of the modern world in Italian city-states during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Burckhardt's nineteenth-century vision of the Renaissance, in which creative geniuses like Michelangelo exemplified the individual freedom of modernity, focused squarely on the Italian peninsula, and continues to provoke reflection on Italy's centrality in historical discourses. In recent years, Italian Renaissance studies — whether art historical, economic, religious, musicological, or literary — have begun to recognize the impact of extensive cultural exchange during the period. Anticipating the field's continued growth in the direction of a global conception of the Renaissance, I Tatti now offers up to four Berenson Fellowships annually, for scholars who explore Italy's relationship with the world beyond the peninsula. These projects address transnational dialogues between Italy and other cultures in the Mediterranean basin, Africa, the Americas, and Asia. My research as a Berenson Fellow this fall focused on objects from sub-Saharan Africa that entered the collections of the Medici family during the sixteenth century. The Medici also acquired many goods from China, and Irene Backus used her time as a Berenson Fellow to investigate the use of Chinese-grown herbal drugs and medical fertility treatments in late sixteenth-century Florence. Irene is a specialist in Medici porcelain, but her work on porcelain as a precious commodity made of earth and associated with the abundance of China has led to her research on the root galangal (similar to ginger), prized for its generative effects.

Galangal is a rhizome, a plant that sends out roots and shoots from nodes to create an underground network. Since arriving at I Tatti in September, I can't help but think about networks. Every day, I'm aware of the connections we forge here: the commonalities that come to light, the collaborations that ensue, the conversations that can grow in any direction, organic and fluid, exciting in their unpredictability. The work done by Term Fellows is an indispensable component of our Renaissance network, injecting more variety and complexity, and adding nodes that bring our fields of knowledge closer together, even as our conceptualization of the Renaissance continues to expand. In that sense, I Tatti recognizes the density of interactions that characterize Italy in the Renaissance, and draws inspiration from it.

**Ingrid Greenfield** joined I Tatti as a Term Fellow in fall 2016. Since then, she has taken on a more permanent role at the center as *Post-Doctoral Fellow and Assistant to the Director for Academic Programs*. Ingrid's research focuses on the visual and material connections between Italy and sub-Saharan Africa in the early modern period.





# I Tatti's Granaio Project

2016/2017 Digital Humanities  
Fellows Tracy Chapman Hamilton  
and Catherine Walsh

The Digital Humanities opens scholarship to new and exciting possibilities. It cuts across traditional disciplinary boundaries, enables new research questions to be posed, and offers unprecedented opportunities for scholarly collaboration.

I Tatti first embarked into the field of the digital humanities in 2016, offering two new dedicated fellowships each year. The Villa's involvement in this novel and growing field brings with it new challenges and opportunities for the center. While our Digital Humanities scholars still require access to traditional research tools such as books, special collections, and archival material, they also require a dedicated, technically equipped lab and staff support to carry out their research.

The renovation of the building on I Tatti's property known as the Granaio (the barn) and its surrounding area is central to our growing involvement in the Digital Humanities. Soon, the Granaio building will become a multi purpose and state-of-the-art hub at the heart of our center. A Digital Humanities lab, an area for Information Technology,

and much-needed additional study space will occupy the first floor, while the ground floor will be transformed to accommodate a café and common area for the benefit of all members of the community and our many scholarly visitors. Finally, a thermostatically controlled area for rare books will occupy the remaining area on that floor. Work is scheduled to begin in 2018 and will continue over several months. When complete, the area comprising a café and courtyard will be known as the *Roberta Pellegrino Cortile* in honor of one of I Tatti's most generous supporters.

To find out more about I Tatti's Fellowship offerings in the Digital Humanities, please see [itatti.harvard.edu/fellowships](http://itatti.harvard.edu/fellowships). To find out more about the Granaio Project, or to lend your support, visit: [itatti.harvard.edu/granaioproject](http://itatti.harvard.edu/granaioproject)





A painting is restored following  
the 1966 flood of the River Arno

# CRIA:

## Committee to Rescue Italian Art

In the wake of the devastating flood of November 4, 1966, Villa I Tatti became the Florentine Headquarters of CRIA (Committee to Rescue Italian Art,) a task force made up of scholars and well-wishers anxious to preserve Florence's precious cultural heritage. Launched in November 2016 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Arno flood, the online exhibition **CRIA: Committee to Rescue Italian Art** explores the valiant efforts of CRIA during the aftermath of the flood, and examines how I Tatti's played a central role in the recovery.

During the night of November 4, 1966, the levels of the river Arno began to rise swiftly and with little warning. The Arno flows through the very center of the city of Florence and in perilous proximity to many of its most significant monuments. The river was already swollen, and the surrounding area saturated, by heavy rains that autumn. The Uffizi, the Accademia, the national library and state archives, the Duomo and the Ponte Vecchio are among the countless artistic and cultural treasures concentrated within Florence's historic center, and they all lay within the floodplain. Intense rainfall on the evening of November 3 continued into the small hours the following day, and the river level rose by six meters in as many hours. In Florence, the Arno soon overwhelmed

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its banks, its levels peaking after dawn on November 4 and showing no sign of receding until the evening. The historic center and the neighborhoods along the river were inundated in a very short time. Thousands of Florentines were forced to abandon their homes and take refuge on the highest floors of apartment buildings or even on the roofs of houses. The fire brigades and army answered thousands of calls to save people besieged by the high waters. Twenty-nine people died.

The flood, the most severe ever to strike Florence, swept away everything it found in its way. The explosion of heating oil tanks formed a slimy film on the current of water, smearing the walls of the city's houses and monuments and lingering even as the river settled back within its banks. The church of Santa Croce was submerged under three meters of water and very many works of art, including Cimabue's Crucifixion, had been irreparably damaged. Thousands of paintings and art objects housed in museums, churches, and private collections in the historic district had been destroyed. The deposits of the National Library of Florence were completely inundated, and millions of volumes and rare early printed books risked being lost forever. Untold numbers of manuscripts in the nearby State Archives faced the same fate.

In the hours following the flood, when the full extent of the catastrophe began to emerge, a massive show of solidarity erupted across the world. National and international committees to save the artworks sprang up spontaneously in many countries, and collections of funds and material goods began in many Italian cities.

As soon as news of the disaster reached the United States, concerned scholars of Italian art and culture leapt into action to help save the precious artistic heritage of Florence and other cities, especially Venice, ravaged by floods. Following the impulse given by Fred Licht and Bates Lowry, professors of art history at Brown University, and Licht's wife Meg, also an art historian, a group of distinguished scholars, curators, and conservators quickly joined forces to create the Committee to Rescue Italian Art. The group's aim was to raise money to support the emergency rescue operations already underway as well as provide effective long-term assistance for the huge task of restoration ahead.

Within a week of the flood, CRIA was already functioning nationwide and had secured large pledges for the recovery efforts. Under the honorary presidency of Jacqueline Kennedy, widow of the late president John F. Kennedy, CRIA eventually included over 200 members or affiliates from across the United States, comprising members of the advisory committee, the national executive committee, administrative staff, special consultants, and dozens of area representatives from one coast to the other. It set as its fund-raising goal the substantial sum of \$2.5 million – the rough equivalent of \$20 million today. The Committee raised money through direct mail requests, ads, special exhibits of Italian art, fashion shows and cocktail parties, video appeals by famous figures such as Ted Kennedy and Elizabeth Taylor, and screenings of Franco Zeffirelli's powerful documentary *Days of Destruction*, on which it had exclusive distribution rights in the U.S.

The money CRIA raised went to support a wide variety of initiatives in Italy. In Florence CRIA's activities were coordinated by an administrative office housed in Palazzo Pitti, and by Villa I Tatti, whose Director, historian Myron Gilmore, was on the advisory committee. CRIA purchased and shipped conservation equipment and supplies. It assembled teams of conservators and other specialists to send to Florence and Venice and paid their travel and living expenses. The advisory committee selected damaged monuments, museums, and works of art and allocated funds for their restoration. CRIA financed fellowships for students of restoration and for young scholars to assist with the recovery efforts onsite. It helped establish new centers for study and restoration – one at the Palazzo Davanzati, another at the National Library, and a third, in Venice, at San Gregorio.

After some years, once steady progress was being made on the restorations and the situations in both Florence and Venice had returned to normal, CRIA's original purposes had largely been achieved. Consequently, the executive office in New York closed in 1971, followed in the spring of 1973 by the Florentine administrative office. In its short lifetime, the Committee to Rescue Italian Art made a crucial contribution to the efforts to salvage and restore the cultural heritage of Florence and Venice, one whose significance has only recently started to come to light.

To mark the 50 year anniversary of the River Arno flood, I Tatti launched the online exhibition **CRIA: Committee to Rescue Italian Art**. Featuring a series of photographs and documents taken from I Tatti's archives, the exhibition explores I Tatti's role as a key player in CRIA's activities and shines a spotlight on the scholars and intellectuals involved in the salvage operations. **CRIA: Committee to Rescue Italian Art is a permanent exhibition and can be viewed by visiting:**

**[cria.itatti.harvard.edu](http://cria.itatti.harvard.edu)**





# From Ariosto to Africa: Discovering New Territory with Exploratory Seminars

Launched in 2015, Exploratory Seminars allow for free discussion and serve as an incubator for innovative ideas.

Innovative ideas require freedom and a protected setting for their exploration. In the business world, a young start-up will only survive if its innovative ideas are not only met with sufficient interest but with the freedom to try and err. Our new event format, the “Exploratory Seminar”, takes a similar approach.

These seminars are of a truly heuristic nature with a format that allows us to identify the most promising fields of further enquiry very early on – fields that may feed into the academic mainstream one day but as of now are situated off the trodden paths. With these events we aim to probe the intellectual potential that new directions in Renaissance research may hold for future events and publications - be they monographs or issues of correspondingly themed periodicals. The seminars thus support our constant endeavour to support risk-taking work and provide a forum for new questions and methodologies in all the academic fields that I Tatti supports.

In establishing this new format we include two core elements : the



**Thomas Gruber** joined I Tatti as Post-Doctoral Fellow and Assistant to the Director for Publications and Conferences in January 2017. His research interests include Renaissance anthropology, the historiography of the reception of ideas, and the history of unbelief. Before coming to I Tatti he pursued a career as a strategy consultant with McKinsey & Co. and BCG, and as a policy advisor to the German Federal Parliament.

identification of innovative ideas and their exploration through an incubator, allowing for speedy growth by trial and error. For each exploratory seminar, the event’s convenors will have set a wider strategic framework and ensured that the seminar brings together scholars from different disciplines representing different methods and foci, as well as a good representation of the interconnected worlds of Early Modern European, African, Asian and American cultures as they intersect with the Italian Renaissance. Drawing on the final comprehensive round-table discussion that is indispensable as the exploratory seminar’s final agenda item, the convenors also lead the discussion towards the next steps, that is, the event’s next level, which could in some cases be a fully fledged conference and a resulting publication in our Villa I Tatti series.

Our first exploratory seminar on “Ariosto and the Arabs: Contexts of the Orlando Furioso” fully embodies this ambition. Convened by M. Casari (VIT’09), Monica Preti-Hamard (VIT’13) and M. Wyatt (VIT’05) in February 2016, the seminar was inspired by Jorge Luis Borges’ observation that Ariosto “travelled the roads of Ferrara / And, at the same time, walked the moon”. Focusing on the role of the Muslim as the essential “Other” in Ariosto’s text and on the Islam in the poet’s world, the exploratory seminar identified the paths for further research that will now inform our two-day conference on the topic this coming October. This conference will assemble distinguished scholars from the US, Italy, Germany, Poland, and the UK, who explore the multitude of rays bundled in the prism of Ariosto - be they Islamic or Jewish, epic or poetic, Iberian or Egyptian, founded in Byzantine court

culture or inspiring the Renaissance studiolo. Adding the performative to the contemplative, the conference will culminate in a performance focused on the Orlando Furioso by one of today’s most famous puppet-theatre ensembles, I Figli d’Arte Cuticchio from Palermo.

In May 2016, our second exploratory seminar was dedicated to the Night. Convened by Cemal Kafadar, the seminar entitled “Embattled and Conquered: The History of the Night-Time in the Early Modern World” was at the same time an occasion for us to honour the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (1966) by the eminent historian, art historian, and theoretician, Carlo Ginzburg (VIT’67) who was one of the twelve participants. Early December 2016 then saw another truly global exploratory seminar on “The Mongols and the Writing of Global History”. Within the larger project of writing global history and art history structured around networks, contact, and exchange as motors of historical and aesthetic change, the Mongol rise has acquired relevance as “a point of departure for a new periodization–the first glimmering of an early modernity where this is defined as an ever-increasing acceleration in systems of contact and communication.” (convenor Anne Dunlop, VIT’10, ’17).

From Ariosto, the Night, and the Mongols we moved on to Africa in early January 2017. Partnering with Harvard University and the Max Planck Institute in Florence and convened by Suzanne Blier, Gerhard Wolf and Alina Payne, a group of international and interdisciplinary participants explored “Crossroads Africa: Networks and Global Exchange: 1250-1750”. Finally, our most recent Exploratory Seminar was held in early March and investigated “The Body Remade: Art, Nature, and Gender, 1300-1650”. Convened by Katharine Park, (VIT’01, ’05, ’17), this seminar addressed the history of science and the history of the human body with a focus on how its external surfaces were understood, experienced, and in some cases manipulated. Moving forward, we have more such events scheduled for this year and in the works for 2017/18. The next seminar is scheduled for late April 2017 and will examine “Sacrifice and Conversion between Europe and the New World” (convened by Maria Berbara from Rio di Janeiro State University).

By examining these topics through animated, collaborative discussion we are encouraging new research in promising new areas of scholarship, and we look forward to the many discoveries and discussions that future events will bring.





# Internships at I Tatti

A limited number of summer internships are available for Harvard students at Villa I Tatti. The primary goal is to allow students to spend two months in Florence to carry out a project that contributes to their academic development. During summer 2017, interns will work on a variety of projects, including I Tatti's catalogue of non-western art, the diaries of Mary Berenson, communications, mediterranean cookery and produce, and researching the role played by I Tatti in the aftermath of the River Arno flood of 1966 (see page 12.)

[itatti.harvard.edu/internships](http://itatti.harvard.edu/internships)

Nick Ackert spent summer 2016 as a Villa I Tatti intern. Here, he tells why the experience of an I Tatti internship was 'transformative' and speaks of the special moments he and his fellow interns shared with the Center's resident Fellows and staff.

A summer internship at Villa I Tatti offered me an unparalleled opportunity to experience professional academic research while enjoying a thrilling summer of cultural immersion in Florence. Although I have long been passionate about the humanities as concentrator in Greek and Latin literature, it was not until I spent two unforgettable months with the I Tatti community that I learned to think more critically about how the history of art, architecture, music, and literature could reveal important trends in human behavior which continue to drive us every day.



l-r: 2016 Interns Sylvie Rubin-Budick, Nicholas Ackert, Syeung Hee Oh, Andrew Troska, and Diana Ingerman  
spring 2017

During my summer at I Tatti, I served as an intern entrusted with cataloging the Villa's stunning collection of Asian and Islamic art – my very first experience in independent research. With over a hundred artifacts from almost a dozen countries to study, I had complete freedom to absorb myself in the worlds of enigmatic Chinese Ming Qj funeral figurines from dynasties long lost, richly-colored Tibetan Thangkas woven with delicate skill, and beautiful bronzes from Meiji Japan forged during the rebirth of a nation. By actually holding and measuring these artifacts, exploring I Tatti's archival documents, and perusing the library's peerless collection of digital and print resources, I worked to draft almost a dozen catalogue entries for this charmingly eclectic assemblage.

My favorite of all the pieces was a Kinrande Imari porcelain bowl from the early 18th century with a stunning cobalt blue underglaze painting of a mountain vista outlined in red and gold polychrome enamel. Although how this particular piece of Japan's fabled "white gold" ended up in the Villa's collection remained a mystery to me, I was moved by the story it told of how porcelain first came to Japan – a rich narrative of kidnapped Korean potters taken by the Japanese warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi during his 1592 and 1598 invasions of the Korean peninsula. Abducted from their home and forced to work for their captors in the Arita area of Hizen province (modern day Nagasaki and Saga) in Kyushu, these potters began to produce high quality ceramics that would set an international standard of breathlessly enviable quality for the next two centuries. Berenson's bowl is thus much more than a piece of art – it is a testament to human ingenuity in the face of hardship and a demonstration of how cross-cultural collisions create unique hybrids which transcend the forms of their parts.

## **"A remarkable two months of cultural immersion"**

Realizations like these made every day at I Tatti both an inspiration and a challenge; the sublime beauty of the Villa and the Tuscan countryside, not to mention the sense of purpose and excitement derived from actually handling and researching such rare works of art, were unlike anything I had ever experienced before. I soon developed a routine. I would begin the day by searching for a new project or new sources. The Villa, its art collection, and its library are one dynamic organism. Everything is on display for the eager explorer; I simply had to walk through the dazzling property and chose an uncatalogued piece which spoke to me, or books that looked the most useful to unravelling its story. After a break of fresh espresso and a slice (or several) of homebaked Italian *schiacciata*, salt-bread hot from the kitchen's ovens, I would work until lunch. After enjoying some of the best Italian food I've ever eaten, I continued work until the end of the day, when home-brewed ice tea and fresh cookies were always waiting. The Villa also has a beautiful conservatory, and when I felt like I needed a break from perusing archival records or writing my latest data entry, I could slip away and practice on Berenson's regal Steinway. The ultimate highlight of my time at I Tatti, however, were communal meals, teas, and conferences with



the Villa's kind staff and its resident Fellows. They all made us feel like family, and they were always willing to chat about their latest discoveries and teach us about the methods they used to develop them. As an aspiring academic, nothing meant more to me than the chance to speak with people who were pursuing my own dreams for a living.

The excitement of living in Florence made the trip especially memorable; each day went on long after work ended as I explored the city with the other interns Andy, Diana, Sylvie, and Syeung Hee. During my two months there, I felt the pulse of this magnificent city not as a tourist, but as a summer resident with the time to find local haunts – from the hidden wine bars and bustling farmer's markets to the quieter squares across the river. No other summer program can seamlessly blend access to one of Europe's most luxurious and beautiful libraries, the best minds in the field of Renaissance studies, and above all, the transformative excitement of living and travelling abroad into one perfect package. My time at I Tatti was a remarkable two months of cultural immersion coupled with moments of self-reflection which inspired me to think critically about how the humanities could play a role in my future. I recognized that no differently than economics, psychology, or government studies, the humanities could reveal much about human behavior and how we treat others. Berenson's collection – pieces from all of the world in dialogue with one another throughout the house, seemed like proof of our globalized, integrated and poly-cultural world. The summer was so transformative that it changed the way I view the Classics, and my work studying the treasures of the Berenson collection helped me contextualize my thesis about the spatial treatment of East and West frontiers of the Roman empire in the writing of Tacitus. For any undergraduate enthusiastic about the humanities, appreciative of access to virtually limitless resources, and above all, willing to embrace their sense of adventure, there is little more meaningful than a summer at Villa I Tatti.

Nick Ackert  
Classics  
Harvard University, Class of 2017



# The Walter Kaiser Reading Room

## A Project to Reevaluate and Revitalize one of I Tatti's Most Significant Space in Memory of Walter Kaiser

Walter Kaiser (1931–2016) was Director of I Tatti from 1988 until 2002. Born in Bellevue, Ohio, he won scholarships to Phillips Academy, Andover, and Harvard, remaining with Harvard until his retirement.

At I Tatti, Walter Kaiser was a devoted leader who left a remarkable legacy when he stepped down as Director in 2002. During fourteen years at the helm he was passionate about many things, none more so than the comfort and well-being of I Tatti's academic community. Indeed, in his own words, from the moment he arrived in 1988 he resolved that one of his "top priorities should be to improve the working conditions of the Fellows." Over the years he did just that, and many features of the center as we know it today are the result of Walter Kaiser's understanding of our scholars' needs and his tireless efforts on their behalf.

Of all I Tatti's spaces, Walter felt particularly strongly about the library and its role in the scholarly and social lives of our appointees. While our Fellows now have wonderful studies in the Deborah Loeb Brice Loggiato, the benefits of a reading room such as those of iconic libraries like the Vatican Library, The Widener Library, and the New York Public Library are numerous and significant. A well-equipped reading room will allow our Fellows to work in close proximity to the books as well as to each other, and connect with the many visiting scholars who make use of our library's excellent resources as they pass through Florence.

Today, Walter Kaiser's spirit lives on at I Tatti, the place where, in his own words, he was at his happiest. In honor of this Director to whom fellowship and the sharing of knowledge meant so much, the largest single space in our library will be renamed the 'Walter Kaiser Reading Room' and equipped to meet the needs of our Fellows and visiting scholars, becoming a comfortable, functional space at the heart of our Center.

Our library is a vital resource, and in order to cause minimum disruption to our appointees and library users, work is scheduled to begin in June 2017 and conclude before the start of the academic year in September. During this time the library will remain closed to all users while the room undergoes extensive refurbishment, including the installation of a new heating system to replace the bulky radiators that currently occupy much-needed space; the fitting of desks and work stations to accommodate numerous scholars; and the installation of adequate lighting, electrical outlets, and more.

This project would not have been possible without the enthusiastic support of so many kind individuals who have chosen to support I Tatti and remember Walter Kaiser by contributing to this initiative. Thanks to their generosity, our 'Big Library' will be transformed into a space that abounds with intellectual energy of the sort that can only be generated when scholars study and work together.

**How you can help:**

**[itatti.harvard.edu/walter-kaiser-reading-room-fund](http://itatti.harvard.edu/walter-kaiser-reading-room-fund)**

Music Librarian Attilio Bottegai in the Big Library - soon to become the Walter Kaiser Reading Room. Attilio joined the I Tatti staff in 2016.



# Gold: The Universal Equivalent of Global Dreams, Desires, Arts, and Values in Early Modern History

On June 9th and 10th 2016, scholars gathered at I Tatti for the international conference “GOLD: The Universal Equivalent of Global Dreams, Desires, Arts, and Values in Early Modern History.” Organized by Thomas Cummins (Harvard University), the conference brought together scholars from different disciplines to analyze the economic and artistic values of gold and their place in the interconnected world of Early Modern European, African, Asian and American cultures.

The focus of the conference was on articulating specific instances of the shifting uses, roles, and values of gold within the artistic, economic and symbolic arenas of world cultures. Changes as well as continuities in local cultures are in part conditioned by new global contacts that are sustained by gold’s importance within imperial ambitions and mercantile capitalism. The early modern world represents one of gold’s crucial transformative moments when its various meanings and roles were reaffirmed and/or transformed.

2016 I Tatti intern Sylvie Rubin-Budick (Harvard University) was able to attend the conference during her time in Florence. Here she shares some highlights from the event:

As an undergraduate intern and a concentrator in History of Art and Architecture at Harvard College, attending the Gold conference was

an incredible opportunity to experience my first academic conference. My focus within History of Art is the Italian Renaissance, and it was eye-opening to learn more about the use of gold in both Italian and non-Western art. A repeating sentiment voiced by many of the scholars was the association between gold and youthful perfection. On the first day of the conference, Anne Dunlop (VIT’10,’17) said, “Gold is compared with wisdom because it is not weakened by the inertia of time.” Cecilia Frosinini (Opificio delle Pietre Dure) then spoke to the technical use of gold, and the interaction between goldsmiths and painters in the Renaissance. Craig Clunas (University of Oxford) brilliantly coined the term “Ming Bling” during his discussion of gold in the Ming dynasty as a sign of international prestige. Another highlight was when Kris Lane (Tulane Univeristy) passed out a vial containing a gold fishhook as he discussed the use of gold for jewelry in New Granada. On the second day, Yukio Lippit (Harvard University) described the development of gold screens in Japan, and how gold came to epitomize the significance of Japan’s interaction with the outside world. Cummins brought the conference to a close with his paper on the role of gold in the New World. He concluded the conference with these poignant words, “This cosmic battle for the soul is an ongoing issue that is argued through gold.”

These two days at the conference were a remarkably productive, splendidous fest of scholarship on the unique subject of gold. Many speakers remarked how they were thankful to have had the opportunity to visit I Tatti, since many of the scholars focused on fields outside of the Renaissance. The vast diversity of topics and cultures discussed at the conference represents I Tatti’s continued commitment to a global approach to Renaissance studies.



## A Trecento Forum Honoring Andrew Ladis (VIT’86,’98)

Holly Flora (VIT’16) is Associate Professor of Art History at Tulane University and was an I Tatti Fellow during 2015 / 2016. Several months have passed since she left Florence, but the experience of an I Tatti Fellowship continues to have positive repercussions on her scholarly life.

Over steaming bowls of seafood gumbo, I sat discussing Giotto’s relationship to Dante with Marvin Trachtenberg (VIT’75,’76), Anita Moskowitz (VIT’80), Claudia Bolgia (VIT’10), Wolfgang Loseries, and Giada Damen. The occasion was the gala dinner capping off the inaugural Andrew Ladis Memorial Trecento Conference, held at Tulane University on November 10-12, 2016 and my tablemates that evening represented exactly the kind of group the conference sought to bring together: senior, mid-career, and junior scholars from different countries, all united in their work on the early Renaissance.

My colleague Leslie Geddes (VIT’07) and I hosted this inaugural conference with generous support from the Lila Wallace—Reader’s Digest Special Projects fund at I Tatti, as well as the Kress Foundation, Tulane University, and the New Orleans Center for the Gulf South. More than sixty participants, including twenty-four speakers and eight session chairs, traveled to New Orleans from at least six different countries and from all over the United States. The event focused on new research on Italian art, architecture history, literature, religion, and culture during the “long” fourteenth century (circa 1300 – 1450).

Much of the initial planning for the conference took place while I was still a Fellow at I Tatti, working on a book on Cimabue (c. 1240-1302), an artist whose place in history has been defined by the sixteenth-century Renaissance narrative of Giorgio Vasari. Cimabue is most often discussed as the precursor to Giotto, who truly began the tradition of Renaissance naturalism. Given the luxury of time to reflect on my subject and discuss it with my fellow appointees, whose work spanned the fourteenth through seventeenth centuries, I became ever more convinced that the early centuries of the broadly defined “Renaissance” need their own scholarly platform. Although the Vasarian narrative has been thoroughly critiqued, it still informs the way the art of Cimabue, Giotto, and others is viewed. In reading my work, peer reviewers have questioned whether Cimabue was a “Renaissance” or “medieval” artist. It is that sort of persistent adherence to historical constructs of periodization, as opposed to a recognition of the fourteenth century on its own terms, that illustrates the need for a conference like the one held at Tulane.

The 2016 Ladis conference was the first in a newly established biannual forum for renewed and innovative discussion of the early Renaissance. The model for the Ladis conference comes from a series of small meetings on the Trecento first organized in Georgia in the late 1990s by Andrew Ladis (died 2007). A two-time I Tatti appointee, Ladis was a major scholar of fourteenth-century art, and a mentor and inspiration to many younger art historians; the title of the conference honors his legacy.

The 2016 conference began with a keynote lecture by Marvin Trachtenberg, entitled “Dante and the Moment of Florentine Art,” On the following two days, twenty-four speakers presented short papers on a wide range of topics. The speakers were chosen via an open call for papers, to which the response was tremendous; forty-three paper proposals were submitted. The committee selected papers with an eye to presenting work by scholars at all career stages. The sessions were then organized around a variety of methodological frameworks or related themes, such as materiality, eco-criticism, and phenomenology. Some of the paper topics addressed major Renaissance centers such as Rome, Florence, Siena and Venice, but a good number also treated lesser studied objects and monuments.

The feedback from the conference was overwhelmingly positive; all expressed their appreciation for the unique focus of the program on the often-overlooked period of the Trecento, and felt that the conference fostered a true dialogue and sense of community and conviviality. The conference proceedings will be published by Brepols in 2018 as part of a newly established series focused on the Trecento organized by the Trecento Forum. Holly Flora and Sarah Wilkins will edit the first volume, making the scholarly contributions of the conference available to a wide, international public via this peer-reviewed series.

In our current model, the conference will be staged every two years. The second conference, in 2018, will take place at the University of Houston, with the sustained support of the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund at I Tatti. I Tatti’s support is even more meaningful given its own history; Bernard Berenson was instrumental in encouraging the study and collection of many Trecento artists. I am so grateful to have been part of this venture, and see it as a way to extend the experiences of my fellowship, looking outward as I hope to promote the study of the Trecento in my life’s work.





## What are friends for?

Each year, Villa I Tatti welcomes fifteen gifted scholars, in addition to a significant number of Term Fellows and Visiting Professors. The center's location, nestled among the rolling hills of Florence, provides a stimulating and intellectually vibrant setting where appointees benefit from our resources, carry out their research, and interact with their peers and the wider academic community. While many of our scholars originate from the United States, I Tatti is a truly international institution with a community composed of scholars from all over the world. A financially independent institution, I Tatti exists thanks to the generous and vital support of enlightened individuals whose belief in the future of the humanities leads them to foster Renaissance scholarship.

Formed in 2013, the *Amici dei Tatti* is a group made up of some of our center's most dynamic and loyal supporters. While many of our members are based in the United States, others participate from France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. *Amici dei Tatti* contribute financially on an annual basis, and many also choose to offer programmatic support by hosting events that allow our *Amici* to come together and discuss all things I Tatti.

*Amici dei Tatti* are invited to a vibrant calendar of events in New York and Boston, in addition to lectures, seminars and concerts at I Tatti. On request, *Amici dei Tatti* can visit the Villa and gardens where they can enjoy a tour of our unique art collection, then meet our scholars

and experience how a commitment to support Renaissance scholarship allows our center to thrive.

Recent events open to *Amici dei Tatti* have included a private concert of Baroque music introduced by Suzanne Cusick (VIT'02) Professor of Music at New York University and hosted by I Tatti Council Chairman Susan Roberts; an exclusive tour of the Metropolitan Museum's exhibition *Valentin du Boullogne: Beyond Caravaggio* led by Keith Christiansen, John Pope-Hennessy Chairman of the Department of European Drawings; and a concert of Baroque Music performed by the ensemble Concerto di Margherita and held in I Tatti's *Myron and Sheila Gilmore Limonaia*.

### Dear Friends,

In the years since I first became involved with Villa I Tatti, I have witnessed first-hand how the generous support of friends can benefit this unique center and its talented Fellows. By giving on an annual basis, members help to ensure that the study of the Italian Renaissance will continue to flourish wherever in the world our Fellows lecture, meet with students, open exhibitions, or engage the minds of those passionate about history, art, literature, music, economics, law, science, religion, and philosophy.

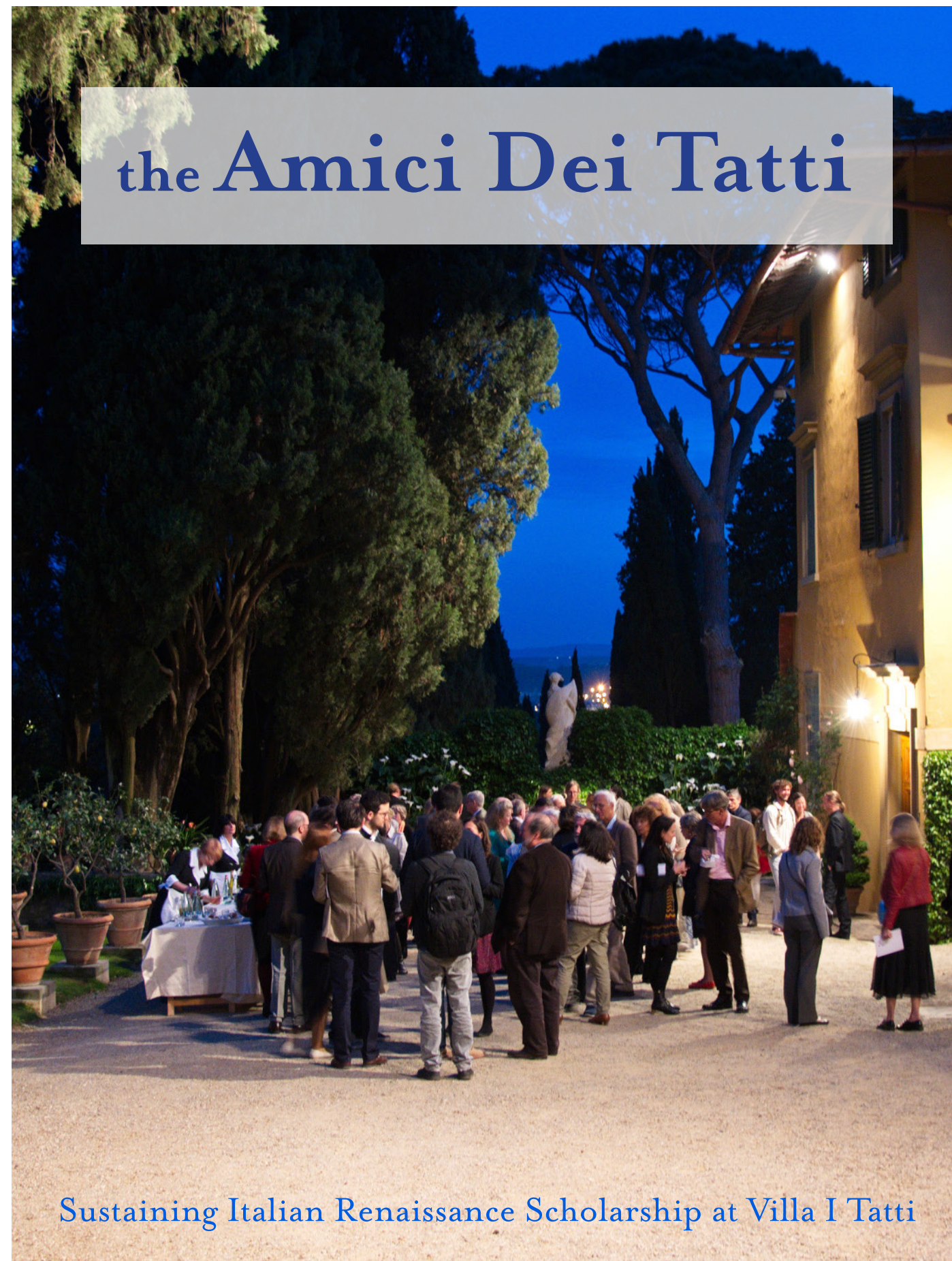
Membership begins at \$600 per year and includes access to a vibrant calendar of events in NYC, Boston, and Florence. I Tatti relies on philanthropic support in order to provide this invaluable experience to its Fellows. I hope that you will join me in support of Renaissance scholarship by joining the *Amici dei Tatti* today. With more than 1,000 Fellows scattered across the globe, I Tatti has truly become the international research institute envisioned by Mr. Berenson more than fifty years ago. But like all non-profit institutions engaged in historical studies, I Tatti must always look forward, even while focused on the illustrious past. With your help, we can continue to fulfill and broaden I Tatti's mission.



Julie Tobey  
Chair, *Amici dei Tatti*

To find out more, or to become a member of the *Amici dei Tatti*, visit [itatti.harvard.edu/amici-dei-tatti](http://itatti.harvard.edu/amici-dei-tatti)

## the Amici Dei Tatti



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Associate of Simone Martini and Lippo Memmi,  
Lateral panels of a polyptych: Saint Catherine of Alexandria & Saint Lucy (mid-1320s)  
Egg tempera and tooled gold and silver on poplar panel with vertical grain  
Berenson Collection, Villa I Tatti

These panels and other artworks from the Berenson Collection at I Tatti have already undergone conservation treatment at the restoration laboratories of the *Opificio delle Pietre Dure* thanks to the generous individuals and charitable foundations who contributed to the Art Conservation Fund in Honor of Lino Pertile and Anna Bensted in 2015. Over the coming years, the fund will allow us to restore many more damaged paintings and objects from the collection.