

I TATTI

THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY CENTER
FOR ITALIAN RENAISSANCE STUDIES

Volume 7 *2023*

DRAWN TO LAW

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BETWEEN MADRID AND FLORENCE

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22/23 VILLA I TATTI APPOINTEES

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a MESSAGE from the DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

One of the things that makes I Tatti such a vibrant intellectual environment is the fact that our academic community constantly evolves as the months go on. Over sixty years ago the Harvard Center in Florence welcomed a handful of scholars each year: **now, our academic community is a lively cohort of over seventy appointees from all over the world.** While some of these scholars remain for the full academic year, others join the I Tatti community for as little as a few months, making for an exciting and stimulating intellectual environment in constant flux.

I Tatti's term fellowship offerings have grown significantly as we strive to create opportunities for scholars exploring the far corners of the Renaissance. In recent years we have increased our support of scholarship between Italy and the global world, with one example being our focus on the connections between Africa and the Mediterranean Basin (page 6). Other term fellowship opportunities are run in collaboration with partner institutions, such as our successful I Tatti / Museo Nacional del Prado Joint Fellowship. 2022/23 appointee Johannes Gebhardt discusses his own experience of working between Madrid and Florence on page 16.

While some I Tatti appointees examine the Renaissance and its geographical reach, others examine its repercussions throughout the ages. Earlier this year, Visiting Professor Clare Pettitt spent her time at I Tatti looking at how the civic humanism of Renaissance Florence was differently understood in nineteenth-century Britain and America. While residing on I Tatti's grounds she found herself thinking of the area's 19th and 20th century residents as represented by the *Macchiaioli* painters and their literary contemporaries, who were themselves so influenced by the masters of the Renaissance (page 19).

I Tatti's gardens and the hills of Settignano provide an ideal setting for our scholars in residence, including 2022/23 Melville J Kahn Fellow Maria Gabriella Matarazzo, who found that the I Tatti landscape provides a way for scholars to almost experience the Renaissance (page 12). During her Fellowship she was often reminded of Cicero's words that **"if you have a garden and a library, you have everything"**.

One of the benefits of such a dynamic institution is that inspiration and mentorship can come from many places.



▲ *I Tatti scholars and staff in the Salone Sassetta at the end of semester, June 2023*

Graduate Fellow Linda Mueller found her time here greatly enriched by I Tatti's international community, and gained a great deal from engaging in discussions with appointees from all over the world including Ethiopia, Norway, Israel, Senegal, and Italy (page 4). Indeed, our Center has become remarkably cosmopolitan: during the current academic year, for example, we have welcomed scholars from eighteen countries.

I Tatti also gives particular attention to supporting mid-career scholars, who are rarely targeted when it comes to Fellowship opportunities. Sometimes, a scholar might even experience an I Tatti fellowship at different stages of their career, as was the case with Adam Jasienski (page 10) who first came to I Tatti over ten years ago as a Graduate Fellow and returned in 2022 as a Berenson Fellow.

In recent months, the world has often seemed an uncertain, confusing, and frightening place. As former I Tatti director Lino Pertile argues in the recently published volume "Ulysses and the Limits of Dante's Humanism", **"we must keep our intelligence under the restraint of moral values if we want it to work for the good of humanity"**. The study of the Humanities gives us perspective and allows us to understand the complexities and nuances of human emotion, and for this reason the work being carried out by I Tatti's scholars is vitally important and piercingly relevant. More than ever, I am grateful to all those who acknowledge the importance of the Humanities by so generously sustaining the work we do, year after year.

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

DRAWN *to* LAW

Linda Mueller is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University. She was a Harvard Graduate Fellow at I Tatti in Spring 2023. Her work engages with the visual legal cultures of early modern Italy, the Spanish Empire, and the Atlantic world.

I arrived at I Tatti this past spring on a Harvard Graduate Fellowship, and one of the initial steps in preparing for my arrival was to sign a fellowship contract. In our daily lives, we often overlook seemingly routine and mundane acts like signing contracts. However, as someone deeply immersed in the early modern period and sharing a profound passion for drawings with I Tatti's founder, Mr. Berenson, contracts hold a special significance in my research.

Ever since I discovered that drawings occasionally formed part in various legal transactions and court proceedings during the early modern period, filed by notaries alongside the corresponding legal records, I knew I wanted to explore the micropolitics of these images and the visual literacy and material knowledge of notaries and legal practitioners who dealt with them. My dissertation examines both artistic and notarial drawings and pictographs present in legal and juridical documents, and the significance that these visuals held in legal decision-making processes in early modern Italy. **I am specifically interested in those areas**

of jurisdiction where local and imperial-global legal and administrative customs and cultures intertwined, such as in Italy's shared territories with the Spanish Empire and Spain's colonial jurisdictions in the Americas, where the Roman Law tradition was actively enforced and blended with Indigenous legal knowledge, material cultures, and visual traditions. When put into dialogue, what valuable insights do these visuals offer into the sensory realm of the legal worlds at the edges of the polycentric Spanish Empire? Which reciprocal dynamics can be observed, and what do they reveal about the status and contestation of images and pictorial writing within these early modern legal spheres?

With its interdisciplinary and panoramic holdings, encompassing specialist local and global literature in both art history and legal history, including a growing body of books on the Atlantic world and the history of empires, the Biblioteca Berenson proved to be an ideal *studiolo* to advance my research during my residency. While my time at the Villa was primarily dedicated to writing, I also embarked on a deeper exploration of the two former Reali Udienze (Royal Audiencias) or supreme courts established in the sixteenth century under Philipp II in the Italian domains of Sardinia (1564) and Kingdom of Sicily (1569). Much like the Spanish Audiencias in the Americas, these two high courts were part of a broader effort to rationalize the Spanish state apparatus through new bureaucratic techniques and administrative procedures, leaving behind a substantial paper trail created by meticulous notarial quill drivers.

Whenever I escaped my desk and the archives, Florence offered welcome opportunities to contemplate the urban and architectural manifestations of the premodern Florentine judicial system and spaces dedicated to legal decision-making. I visited Palazzo Castellani at Piazza dei Giudici, which served as the headquarters for the Giudici di Ruata from 1574 onwards, a judiciary appointed to resolve civil cases (today it houses the Museo Galileo); wandered through the Church of Santa Maria Novella, where the Otto di Guardia convened (Florence's police force); explored the Baroque complex of San Firenze in Santa Croce, which had housed the Court of Justice (before its relocation to Novoli);



Jacopo di Cione, Allegory of Rhetoric (detail) in the Palazzo dell'Arte dei Giudici e Notai, Florence ▲



and strolled down Via Ghibellina, where the Stinche prison once stood (now replaced by the Teatro Verdi). My jaunts typically culminated in delightful little bites at the Fishing Lab, a restaurant nestled within the former Palazzo dell'Arte dei Giudici e Notai in Via del Proconsolo.

Whenever I escaped my desk and the archives, Florence offered welcome opportunities to contemplate the urban and architectural manifestations of the premodern Florentine judicial system and spaces dedicated to legal decision-making.

Joining I Tatti also meant entering a social contract with one's cohort. **I consider myself fortunate to have shared the Villa with an exceptionally generous and cosmopolitan cohort willing to offer mentorship.** Engaging in discussions about the state of the arts in early modern global legal history with Visiting Professor Tamar Herzog, early modern privileges and patent law with Visiting Professor Victor Plahte Tschudi, the contact zones of Roman and Islamic law within the Mediterranean mediascape, and the long durée of colonial law with scholars of African history and fellow Fellows Deresse Ayenachew Woldetsadik, Alebachew Belay

Birru, Matteo Salvatore, and Cheikh Sene, greatly nurtured my work. Moreover, taking part in daily debates on pressing issues involving legal and ethical aspects, such as current restitution politics, transformed I Tatti at lunch, tea, over Ethiopian dinner, or at the nearby Trattoria Osvaldo from a solitary, ascetic scriptorium into a pulsating training ground for contemporary cultural politics, international relations, cultural diplomacy, and global governance.

After my fellowship concluded in late June, a staggering 4700 miles away from the Villa, I had yet to discover another unwritten law of I Tatti's communal ethos. I relocated to Chicago to continue my work with the Italian, Spanish, and Latin American holdings at The Newberry Library. There, former Tattiani, Lia Markey (VIT'15), and Paul Gehl (VIT'94), immediately embraced me as part of their academic family. Thus, junior Tattiani depart from I Tatti not only with an additional dissertation chapter under their belts, a notebook brimming with ideas for further research, and a rich bouquet of new professional contacts and friendships, but also with the comforting reassurance that continuous cross-generational mentorship awaits them beyond the hills of Fiesole and Settignano.

▲ Linda Mueller (r) at The Newberry Library with former I Tatti Fellow Lia Markey, Summer 2023

AFRICA *and the* RENAISSANCE

In growing its Africa-focused programs, I Tatti recognizes the importance of exchange between scholars working in African regions and those in European and American institutions.



One of the principal desiderata of incoming director Alina Payne in 2015 was to expand I Tatti's horizons to include the wider "ecumenical world" that Bernard Berenson had so cherished, and look not only to the East and West, but also South. Out of this emerged the "Africa and the Renaissance" project, with its first iteration in the 2016 conference *Gold: The Universal Equivalent of Global Dreams, Desires, Arts, and Values in Early Modern History*. Organized by Thomas

Cummins (Dumbarton Oaks / Harvard University), the conference examined the economic and artistic values of gold and their place in global cultures. From this start, I Tatti has continued and expanded its support of scholarship on cultural exchange, in particular with the African continent. This began with the Exploratory Seminar *Crossroads Africa* in 2017, organized by Alina Payne (I Tatti), Gerhard Wolf (KHI-Florenz), and Suzanne Blier (Harvard University).

The follow-up conference in 2019 brought together an international panel of art historians, archeologists, curators and historians to discuss Africa's role in shaping global networks in the early modern period. In the same year, I Tatti and the Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien helped organize a conference in Cape Verde which focused more specifically on the historical interactions between Cape Verde, Africa, and the Mediterranean (see Newsletter Volume 6, Fall 2019).

More recently, new and exciting opportunities for these productive collaborations have been made possible through the support of foundations and individuals, and the collaboration of partner institutions.

In 2021, the generous award of funding from the Getty Foundation's Connecting Art Histories initiative allowed us to launch the project **Black Mediterranean/ Mediterraneo Nero - Artistic Encounters and Counter-narratives / Incontri artistici e contronarrazioni**. The project seeks to explore the role played by the African continent in shaping Mediterranean culture during the early modern period (14th - 17th centuries). This multi-year project in collaboration with Avinoam Shalem—Riggio Professor of the History of the Arts of Islam at Columbia University and former Visiting Professor at I Tatti—consists of Fellowships, Visiting Professorships, Exploratory Seminars, Workshops, and Masterclasses.

Following a call for applications, we welcomed the first of

the project's Fellows to our Center during the 2022/23 academic year. Alebachew Belay Birru, Assistant Professor of Archaeology and Heritage studies at Debre Berhan University, Ethiopia, worked on *The Shay Culture: Tumuli of traditional-religious people in Ethiopia and their artifactual relationship with the Mediterranean world (10th-16th c.)*. Deresse Ayenachew Woldetsadik, also from Ethiopia and former Assistant Professor of history and Dean for Postgraduate Studies of Debre Berhan University, is currently a Research Fellow at the Aix-Marseille University in the ERC Horn-East Program. He worked on a project examining *Medieval Ethiopian Royal Churches in Mediterranean styles (15th-16th century)*.

During the same year we also welcomed two I Tatti / Getty Foundation Visiting Professors. Shamil Jeppie, Associate Professor of History at the University of Cape Town, already knew I Tatti through his participation in the *Crossroads Africa* conference in 2019. He returned in 2022 as a Visiting Professor and explored a 16th century treatise by a Timbuktu intellectual that provides an insight into the political theory of the period as well as what books might have been held in his library or been accessible in that town on the desert's edge. Olivia Adankpo-Labadie, *Maître de conférences* in Medieval History at Grenoble Alpes University, was also a Visiting Professor in 2022/2023. Her project, entitled *The Ethiopian Mediterranean: The Mediterranean Holy Places and the Invention of Pilgrimage in Ethiopian Medieval Culture (14th -16th centuries)* focused on the importance of Ethiopian pilgrimage in the Mediterranean.



▲ Scholars with Rector Hailemikael Beraki Hasho at the Collegio Etiopico in Rome

A number of other Term Fellows with African-focused projects had the opportunity to work closely with and benefit from the presence of these scholars at I Tatti. This past year, these included Berenson Fellow Matteo Salvatore, an Associate Professor of History at the American University of Sharjah whose research focuses on life histories of diasporic Ethiopians in the early modern Mediterranean and Indian Ocean worlds; and Cheikh Sene, whose project considers the local forms of measurement and trade regulations developed in the early modern Senegambian states, and their adaptation to growing Atlantic trades. Sene was a recipient of the I Tatti/DHI Rom Joint Fellow for African Studies: a Joint Fellowship with the German Historical Institute in Rome established in 2020 with the aim of supporting increased scholarship on cultural exchange with the African continent during the period c. 1250-1700.

The group was also joined by Artist in Residence Yemane Demissie, an award-winning filmmaker and full professor at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Demissie's current film project *The Quantum Leapers* explores Ethiopian modernity and independence during the Emperor Haile Selassie era. Screenings of his work were held on several occasions and provided ample opportunity for I Tatti's community to explore and discuss a number of topics involving Italo-Ethiopian history.

Workshops bringing together international scholars are central to the Black Mediterranean project and take place both at I Tatti and in Africa. The workshop *Habsburgs in Tunis (1535-1574): The Conquest (Fatḥ) of Tunis and New*

Mediterranean Order was hosted at the Columbia University Global Center in Tunis in June 2022 and led by Professor Avinoam Shalem. A second *Habsburgs in Tunis* workshop took place at I Tatti in 2023. The workshops investigated north-south interactions in the Mediterranean during the mid 1500s, at the time of the Hafsid, Habsburgs', and Ottomans' struggle for control of the waters of the Mediterranean. Presenters examined the looted Hafsid Qurans and other treasures taken to Europe, portraits of Moulay Hasan and Moulay Ahmad made by artists like Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen and Peter Paul Rubens, fez production and trade in the Ottoman empire. Taking advantage of their locations, in Tunisia the group of scholars made visits to Ksar Saïd, Carthage and the medina quarter of Tunis; in Florence, they visited holdings from the Medici Collections at the Pitti Palace.

Another workshop took place at I Tatti in 2023, this time built around a fifteenth-century processional cross from Ethiopia, now in the collection of the Museo Bargello in Florence. In this workshop, Research Associate Ingrid Greenfield, I Tatti's Fellows and invited specialists analyzed materials and techniques used to make crosses; the invention and adaptation of motifs in Christian Ethiopian metalwork; artistic patronage in sacred and secular settings; and the embellishment of royal churches.

The workshop set the stage for the filming of I Tatti's Masterclass featuring an interdisciplinary analysis of the Bargello's Ethiopian cross. The Masterclass and onsite workshop took place thanks to the generosity of museum



Avinoam Shalem (second from right) at the Vatican Library with Shamil Jeppie (r), Deresse Ayenachew Woldetsadik(l) ▲ and Alebachew Belay Birru (second from left)



director Paola D'Agostino, who gave I Tatti's team of scholars special access to the museum and the cross. The group was also joined by two of the Bargello's curators, who benefited from and participated in the discussion around other objects that the museum holds.

Another important aspect of the *Black Mediterranean/ Mediterraneo Nero* project has been providing access to Italian archives pertinent to scholarship of African history. With a core group of scholars working on Ethiopian exchanges with Italy, I Tatti developed a mobile seminar to the Vatican in the summer of 2023 that highlighted its rich archival resources for the study of Ethiopia. The two-day itinerary included a visit to the Pontifical Ethiopian College where the scholars were welcomed by Rector Hailemikaël Beraki Hasho. Most importantly, it allowed time to consult Ethiopian manuscripts at the Vatican Library, where records dating back to the early modern period relate the experiences of Ethiopians in Rome in the 16th century.

The second year of the *Black Mediterranean/ Mediterraneo Nero* project is now underway, and we look forward to welcoming the next I Tatti/Getty Foundation Fellows to our center in early 2024. One of these will be Cheikh Sene, who returns to I Tatti with a project entitled *The Mediterranean: a space of entanglement of networks, material culture and Exchange between Europe and West Africa (15th-18th century)*.

The success of these recent initiatives underscored the need to provide a permanent research opportunity for scholars whose research interests focus on the relationship between Africa and the territories surrounding the Mediterranean in the early modern period. A significant donation from I Tatti Council member Avv. Paolo Fresco has endowed a Fellowship in African Studies. In January 2024, we will welcome the first *Marlene and Paolo Fresco Fellow for African Studies* Professor Sarah Guérin, whose innovative research reframes the significance of socio-political history of the Bilad al-Sudan in 13th-14th century Mediterranean power struggles, with particular attention to the trade in gold.

I Tatti's location in Italy is the perfect setting for scholars to address the often overlooked Afro-Mediterranean interactions that have shaped global history. Promoting the research of African history in a global Mediterranean context by bringing together art historians, archeologists, and cultural and social historians has both strengthened our academic community and expanded the reach of our research, and we look forward to fostering this dialogue in the years ahead.



Scan to watch the Masterclass "The Museo Bargello's Ethiopian Processional Cross"

▲ Fellows Alebachew Belay Birru (l) and Cheikh Sene at I Tatti

CLOSING *a* CHAPTER *and* OPENING ANOTHER

One of I Tatti's unique aspects is that it supports scholars at all stages of their careers, and each year our community is made up of Graduate Fellows, Full-Year Fellows, Term Fellows, and Visiting Professors. Adam Jasienski first came to I Tatti as a Graduate Fellow during academic year 2012/13, and recently returned as a Berenson Fellow.

Although I came to Florence to research a new project, I began my stay at I Tatti with closing the cover on an old one. It felt wonderfully fitting that the proofs of my book (*Praying to Portraits: Audience, Identity, and the Inquisition in the Early Modern Hispanic World* (Penn State University Press, 2023) reached me soon after arriving in Italy. After all, it was exactly ten years prior, as a Graduate Fellow, that I conceived of the dissertation project that culminated in the book. I found myself at my carrel in the same wing of the Berenson Library doing final edits and working on the index, just a few feet from where the exhibition catalog that had set me on my course (*Velázquez, Bernini, Luca Giordano: Le corti del Barroco*, 2004) was shelved. What's more, I Tatti generously supported the book's publication through the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Publications Subsidy.

Thinking of the ten years that had passed since beginning my dissertation to seeing the book take its final form it was hard not to reflect on I Tatti's outsized role during this time. The number of Tattiani mentioned in the book's acknowledgments speaks to the power of that place, including Nadja Aksamija, who helped brainstorm the dissertation's general parameters and Philippa Jackson (both VIT'12), who guided me through the early stages of research at the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, my grad school confidants Francesca Borgo ('13), Daniel Zolli ('12) and Caitlin Henningsen ('14), previous director Lino Pertile and Anna Bensted, and I Tatti librarians Michael Rocke and Lukas Klic, who supported my research at various stages. Needless to say, I Tatti Director Alina Payne was a source of mentorship at various points during that period, both when I was a graduate student and then in particular during an exploratory seminar and conference in 2017 and 2018. Those two meetings not only helped me hone the arguments of my book chapters but also resulted in an essay that served as the basis for my application as a Berenson Fellow for the 2022-23 year. Hopefully, this might become a second book, but regardless of the shape it takes I Tatti will once again feature prominently in the acknowledgments, as the intellectual generosity of this year's fellows helped me



to find new directions for this work. For instance, Adrián Fernández-Almoguera suggested new sources on funerary architecture, Paolo Celi led me to Pietro Susini and his *poesie sulla puzza*, Grace Harpster gave new ideas about censorship, while Damiano Acciarino was a constant source of inspiration about the grotesque.

The Center's openness to the global nature of the Renaissance and its awareness of the interconnectedness of early modernity are exciting for scholars working on the vast Hispanic world, as is my case.

Much of my time in Florence proper was spent on secondary research into scholarship on the history of emotions. **It was particularly helpful to present my preliminary findings to the community of scholars in the Limonaia in December given that there was some skepticism about how we can reconstruct historical emotions without imposing our own modern perceptions onto the past.** This was valuable in that it forced me to rethink my framework and some of my claims. Not only is the argument not weaker for it, it now works better.

Adam Jasienski with Alina Payne during Fellows' Presentations, 2022 ▲

One part of my research on the historical emotion of disgust centers on the imagery of martyrdom and missionary activity that was produced in Rome to encourage young Jesuits to travel to the Americas. The church of Santo Stefano Rotondo is a crucial site, with its famous frescoes by Il Pomarancio, which depict some of the most gory martyrdoms imaginable, highlighting the specific type of "moving the passions" that the Jesuits in particular saw as an effective way of reinforcing the Catholic faith. Italian painters such as Bernardo Bitti and Mateo Pérez de Alessio (da Lecce), who were active in Peru, may have seen these works mid-completion immediately prior to their departures from Italy. Even if not, they would have almost certainly been aware of them through the printed images of the frescoes that circulated throughout the early modern Hispanic world. Interestingly, early responses to the Santo Stefano frescoes do not describe them in terms of disgust, but as provoking tears and compassion. Nevertheless, a constellation of period sources of early modern individuals who did experience revulsion at images leads me to believe that here, too, viewers would have felt more than just sadness or even fear at these gruesome images. In fact, the frescoes are so extreme that they may have meant to evoke revulsion by design.

Taking advantage of my time in Italy, I traveled to the southern Italian region of Puglia, where I visited the cities of Bari and Lecce (the hometown of Pérez de Alessio), and the town of Conversano, among others. I was particularly eager to visit Conversano, which houses the monumental

series of battle paintings by the Neapolitan painter Paolo Finoglio, given how they highly aestheticize death. They are in stark contrast to the religious imagery I describe above, and were an important reminder to me that the function of these images was entirely different than conversion and the strengthening of faith. Disgust would have been out of place here. Lecce was filled with images that were unfamiliar to me, entirely unstudied, and very relevant to the project. It will be a crucial site for my research on this project going forward. The four months I spent at I Tatti were intellectually challenging and full of discoveries and ideas for future projects and collaborations. I am beyond grateful to the Center for its support of these pursuits.

I Tatti has been a part of my scholarly journey for many years now and I am certain that it will continue to play an important role in my development as a researcher and writer. Indeed, the Center's openness to the global nature of the Renaissance and its awareness of the interconnectedness of early modernity are exciting for scholars working on the vast Hispanic world, as is my case. I hope to be back in the hills above Florence before too long!

Adam Jasienski is Assistant Professor of Art History in the Meadows School of the Arts at SMU in Dallas, Texas. He was a Berenson Fellow at I Tatti in Fall 2022. He received his PhD from Harvard University in 2016 and was a Graduate Fellow at I Tatti in 2012/13. His research focuses on early modern visual culture in Spain, Latin America, and Italy.



▲ Gregorio Vasquez de Arce y Ceballos, Joachim of Fiore shows the portraits of Saint Dominic de Guzmán and Saint Francis of Assisi, 1680

IF YOU HAVE *a* GARDEN *and a* LIBRARY, YOU HAVE EVERYTHING

“Experiencing” the Renaissance at the Harvard University Center in Florence

I have a vivid memory of my first encounter with Sassetta’s “Ecstasy of St. Francis.” As soon as I crossed the threshold of I Tatti’s *salone* and turned slightly to the left, I was taken in by the potency of the saint’s gesture. It was an overwhelming feeling: the spiritual force of “his face transfigured with ecstasy” and “his arms held out in his favorite attitude of the cross” (as described by Bernard Berenson in an article published in 1903) expressed an unattainable contact with the Divine. As the weeks went by and we gathered every day in the Sassetta *salone* at lunch and tea, such encounters became everyday experiences. It was then that those outstretched arms started to feel different: my awe developed into a sense of familiarity as, to my eyes, the saint’s hieratic pose gradually turned into a welcoming embrace.

The way in which my perception of Sassetta’s St. Francis evolved over the course of the year epitomizes my experience at I Tatti. My initial impression as I walked through the Villa’s gate for the first time was one of wonder and awe. I was astounded by the breathtaking views on the surrounding hills that the different terraces offer; the graceful geometries drawn by hedges and shrubs; the garden flecked with the vivid colors of innumerable varieties of flowers; the striking art collection displayed in the halls and corridors of the Villa. Then, when I met the other fellows in residence for the first time, I was amazed by their diverse backgrounds and the groundbreaking research that they were pursuing, as much as I was thrilled to have finally had the chance to talk in person with prominent scholars whose works had been among the most inspiring readings of my PhD years. As the weeks went on, the increasingly engaging and stimulating exchanges built profound communal bonds, so much so that I developed an increasing sense of ease and belonging.

Soon this was also accompanied by a feeling of contentment and plenitude that often called to my mind the well-known quote from a letter that Cicero addressed to his friend Varro: “If you have a garden and a library, you have everything” (“Si hortum in bibliotheca habes, deerit nihil.”) While perusing the exceptional bibliographic collection of the Berenson Library and feasting my eyes on the garden’s bright colors and the sinuous skyline of the Tuscan landscape, I could feel that sense of intellectual fulfilment described by Cicero grow stronger. **In this context, I Tatti did not just provide an idyllic framework, but actively structured our experience**, with its astonishing art objects always addressing us during luncheons and gatherings; the intense calendar centered on the cutting-edge research presented during lectures, seminars, and conferences; the offices located side by side in the *Loggiato*, where we would constantly bump into each other and engage in exciting conversations on current research and future projects, sharing ideas, readings, and advice.

Wild flowers in I Tatti’s gardens ►





I Tatti presented to us a completely different way to approach the study of the Renaissance – a way to almost experience it. It allowed us to listen to the harmonies produced by Nicola Vicentino's microtonal keyboard that the musicologist Johannes Keller reconstructed and played during a concert at the Villa Linda, but also to the sheer silence and sounds of nature in a way that urban life fails to do. It materialized before our eyes the hilly landscapes with which we were already familiar from studying Renaissance paintings. As he recalls in his *Praeterita*, John Ruskin had his guide and assistant, Joseph Marie Couttet, collect wild flowers for him in the surroundings of Fiesole to compare them with those found in paintings. Comparisons of this kind were taking place at I Tatti as well. When Spring arrived, I enjoyed venturing beyond the Azalea Terrace to explore one of the most exquisite corners of the garden, the field of wild anemonies, blooming in colors so vibrant as to recall a Botticelli painting. Indeed, wandering in and around the Villa inherently mobilizes the memory of the Renaissance, which is embedded in these lands. While walking along the Mensola torrent, for instance, I found myself revisiting the verses of Boccaccio's *Ninfale fiesolano*, which narrates the tragic destiny of the eponymous nymph, Mensola, and the shepherd who fell madly in love with her, Affrico. I also frequently imagined Leonardo da Vinci walking on those same paths while surveying the area for his projects in hydraulic and military engineering during the years in which he served the Florentine Republic, as recorded in a series

of topographical sketches, among which one that features the Affrico and the Mensola streams now held at Windsor Castle in the UK (RCIN 912679).

When Spring arrived, I enjoyed venturing beyond the Azalea Terrace to explore one of the most exquisite corners of the garden, the field of wild anemonies, blooming in colors so vibrant to recall a Botticelli painting.

My mind would often go to Leonardo. Every morning, while heading towards the Villa from my accommodation in San Martino, I would pass down a lane flanked by cypresses and turn my gaze toward the hilly distances of Settignano. The seasons succeeding one another offered the spectacle of ever-changing lighting and atmospheric conditions, which called to my mind Leonardo's studies in color and aerial perspective, and how these theoretical and formal concerns informed his preference for certain materials and techniques that would be the starting point of my research project on the use of oil in mural painting as opposed to fresco. The bluish, misty depth articulated by the receding hills made me reflect on the kind of stylistic values that Leonardo and later artists aimed at achieving by leaving fresco aside and experimenting with alternative binders, namely oil. In this respect, Florence has been the ideal location for me to develop my project on oil painting on wall,

as I could assess the formal potential of this technique against the great tradition of fresco painting that unfolded before my eyes on the walls of chapels, cloisters, and saloni.

One of these *Florentine Mornings* (to get back to Ruskin) devoted to the exploration of Tuscan wall painting was particularly memorable. On a crisp day in November, a group of fellows and visiting professors climbed up the scaffoldings erected for the restoration of Masolino, Masaccio and Filippino Lippi's frescoes of the Brancacci Chapel, in the Church of Santa Maria del Carmine. The close-up contact with the paint surface couldn't have been more rewarding. We took a close glimpse at the brushwork of the painters and their different stylistic personalities, and we perused details that are impossible to put into focus from afar, such as the branches of trees and shrubs roughed out by quick, stabbing touches of the brush in Masaccio's *Tribute Money*; the vast use of incisions and cord prints to design the architectural backgrounds; the different shapes and sizes of the *giornate*; the vigorous modeling of the Neophytes being baptized by St. Peter.

In the foreword of her classic study *The Mural Painters of Tuscany*, Eve Borsook hinted at her fond memories of the time spent doing field research for the book: "cool cloisters, busy street corners, and cypressed hills, where peace, good story-telling, and joy in the sheer beauty of nature and man-made things remain." These words deeply resonate with my experience at I Tatti, shaped by the wonders of Florentine wall painting; the ever-changing shades of the garden; the inspiring conversations with professors and fellows, forging new ideas and – even more importantly – real friendships.

Maria Gabriella Matarazzo holds a PhD in Art History from the Scuola Normale Superiore. She was 2022/23 Melville J Kahn Fellow at I Tatti. She is currently Beinecke postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts in the National Gallery, Washington DC. Her current research project is titled "Beyond Buon Fresco: Experimenting with Oil in Wall Painting (c. 1500-1650)"



▲ (l) Leonardo da Vinci, A map of the Arno East of Florence, 1504, Royal Collection Trust
▲ (r) Maria Gabriella and other Fellows visiting the Brancacci Chapel, November 2022

BLOOD: DIMENSIONS *of* LIMINALITY *in* EARLY MODERN ITALIAN *and* HISPANIC ART



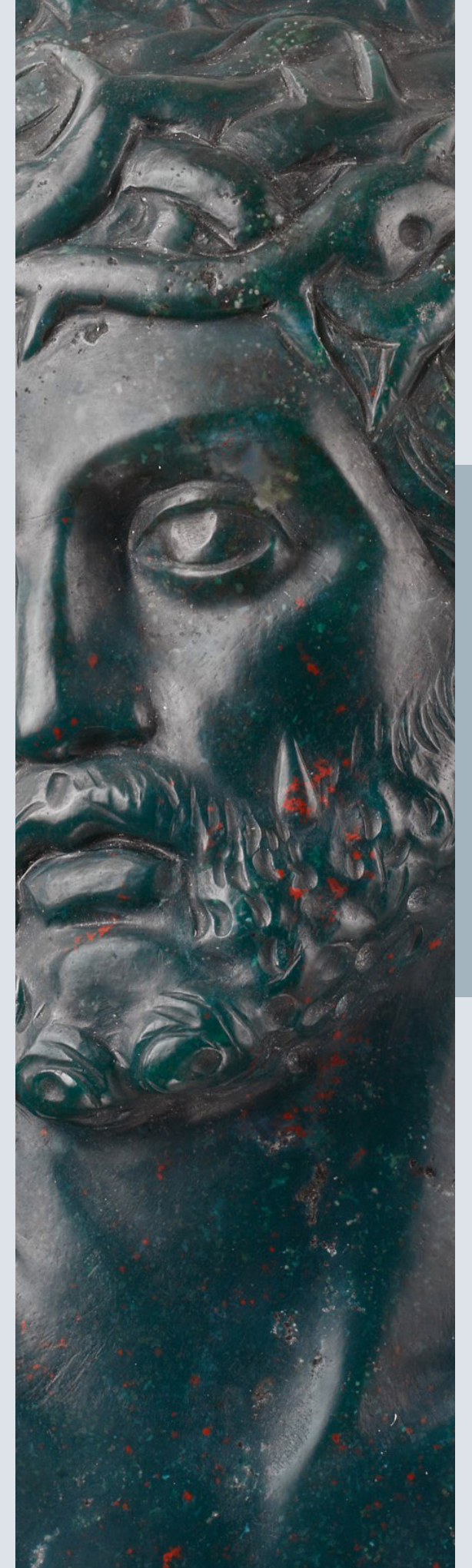
Four days after my arrival in Madrid as the recipient of the Villa I Tatti/Museo Nacional del Prado Joint Fellowship one of the most spectacular blood miracles in Christianity occurred in Naples. On 19 September 2022, the blood of Saint Januarius (San Gennaro), housed in a transparent ampoule in the Duomo di Napoli, changed from solid to liquid, attracting an international crowd of Christian worshippers to witness this extraordinary proof of the divine presence. Since the seventeenth century, this blood relic of the early Christian martyr has been venerated in a spectacular architectural setting, the Royal Chapel of the Treasure of Saint Januarius, adorned with magnificent

paintings and sculptures promoting the cult of the former Spanish Viceroyalty's patron saint. Yet to observe how the artistic staging of bodily fluids and the promotion of religious beliefs continue to be linked across national borders until the present day, it was not necessary to go to southern Italy. Madrid provides an event similar to the Neapolitan one—less known, perhaps, but equally important for Catholics around the globe. Every year, on 27 July, the miraculous liquefaction of Saint Pantaleon's blood, now venerated in a gilded bronze reliquary in Madrid's Monasterio de la Encarnación, is celebrated in Spain's capital.

The reliquary's setting in the Monasterio, under the administration of the Spanish Patrimonio Nacional, is normally closed to the public. Access to the reliquary was kindly arranged for me by the Museo Nacional del Prado, where I would be conducting research for the next three months. Analyzing Saint Pantaleon's relic thus became the point of departure for my project: an extensive study of the significance of blood in the context of current art historical discourses on the liminality, materiality, and artistic exchange processes between Italy, Iberia, and Latin America. Within this transnational framework, I have not only considered the artistic staging of blood relics as well as the representation and imitation of blood in polychrome sculpture and painting, but also researched the use of real blood and blood-like substances for artistic purposes. For example, in my geographic area of study, bleeding crucifixes are a category of objects that demonstrate blood's socio-cultural relevance to religious belief. These sacred sculptures—prevalent on the Iberian Peninsula and the Viceroyalty of New Spain—are characterized by special mechanical devices, built into the side wounds of the crucified Christ, that could be activated on certain occasions to make the statues “bleed.”

“The close networking and collaboration between an international research center such as I Tatti, and an institutional museum partner like the Prado, helps ensure that projects can be explored in the most comprehensive possible way, while meeting the highest standards of academic research.”

The fellowship provided the ideal conditions to realize my project through the study, comparison, and in-depth analysis of selected works from the Prado collection. Because the treasures relevant to my topic were literally buried underground in storage and inaccessible to the public, the access I was granted as a fellow allowed me to study fascinating artworks that suggested new directions I had not previously considered. At the center of my time at the Prado, however, was the lively and constructive exchange with Miguel Falomir Faus, the director of the Prado, and his (curatorial) team: I am indebted to Manuel Arias Martínez, Joan Molina Figueras, Javier Arnaldo, David García Cueto, Teresa Posada Kubissa, Javier Portús Pérez, and Andrés Úbeda for their openness to discussion. Thanks to numerous conversations in which they shared their knowledge of the early modern Hispanic world, I have been able to sharpen and deepen my topic. Each offered insights into discourses



Francisco Rizi, Profanation of a Crucifix, circa 1650 (Museo del Prado, Madrid) ▲

Bust of Christ Crowned with Thorns, mid-late 17th century, Italian (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) ►



The uniqueness of the I Tatti/Museo Nacional del Prado Joint Fellowship lies in these exchanges with this broad intellectual, multicultural spectrum of scholars from both museums and academia. The close networking and collaboration between an international research center such as I Tatti, and an institutional museum partner like the Prado, helps ensure that projects can be explored in the most comprehensive possible way, while meeting the highest standards of academic research. Ultimately, this fellowship—based on the transnational artistic exchange between Italy, Spain, and Latin America—embodies the spirit of I Tatti: connecting (art) histories across national boundaries. I hope that my history of blood in early modern Italian and Hispanic art will enrich this discourse.

Johannes Gebhardt is Postdoctoral Researcher in the Department of Art History at the University of Leipzig and was 2022/2023 I Tatti/Museo Nacional del Prado Joint Fellow in Florence and Madrid. His research focuses on early modern art from a transcultural perspective, with a particular emphasis on cult images, art theory, materiality and, most recently, on blood.

on blood based on their area of collection, which opened up new perspectives beyond my own field of study, reflecting my conception of an art history that does not stop at geopolitical and temporal boundaries.

As a perfect complement to the object-based, primarily art-historical exploration of the Prado’s “bloody” artworks, in Florence I was surrounded by an international congregation of renowned scholars from various humanities disciplines.

I continued this transnational and trans-epochal dialogue when I began the second part of the fellowship at I Tatti in January of 2023. As a perfect complement to the object-based, primarily art-historical exploration of the Prado’s “bloody” artworks, in Florence I was surrounded by an international congregation of renowned scholars from various humanities disciplines. I was able to discuss a range of theoretical and methodological approaches with them—e.g. the art-theoretical topos of the devil as painter of bloody crucifixes—, contributing to the successful advancement of my project. **Regular conversations with Director Alina Payne’s team of researchers, junior and senior Fellows, artists in residence, and Visiting Professors created an interdisciplinary environment, encouraging the development of new ideas on an almost daily basis.**

Term Fellowships at I Tatti

The I Tatti / Museo Nacional del Prado Joint Fellowship is one of several Joint Fellowship opportunities at I Tatti. Others include the Warburg / I Tatti Joint Fellowship and the I Tatti / Dumbarton Oaks Joint Fellowship. For more information about Joint Fellowships and all I Tatti

Term Fellowships opportunities, please visit itatti.harvard.edu/term-fellowships



Johannes Gebhardt at I Tatti ▲

le RICAMATRICI di FIRENZE the Embroiderers of Florence

Unraveling the Histories and Traditions of the Women of I Tatti’s Hinterland



Just past Café Cesare in Coverciano, there is a tailor’s shop with an old sewing machine and a half-made-up shirt displayed on a dummy in the window. Every time I passed this window during my I Tatti appointment last year I thought of Teresa and Carolina, “le ricamatrici di Firenze” [the embroiderers of Florence] brought so poignantly to life by Aldo Palazzeschi in his 1934 novel, *Sorelle Materassi*. Set in “Santa Maria a Coverciano” where “the slanted village square is formed of a criss-crossing of roads where there is a Franciscan convent girdled with very high walls” and where “[t]he main road which cuts through these buildings which make up the square described, leads from Florence to Ponte a Mensola and to Settignano: for fellows at I Tatti today, this is the number 10 bus route. It is here in Coverciano in the early twentieth century that the sisters, Teresa and

Carolina Materassi, ply their trade. The *benestante borghesia Fiorentina* covet their fine work and the waiting list for orders is two years long. At the start of the story, the sisters are embroidering a cape as a gift for the Pope, “Carolina sketched a design of an austere beauty, which culminated on the right-hand side with Christ on the cross, and on the left with a Saint Peter in the act of consecrating the Host.”

I found Florentine women busy at their sewing once more when I went to an exhibition of paintings by *I Macchiaioli* at the Palazzo Blu in Pisa (8 October 2022 to 26 February 2023). There I saw Odoardo Borrani’s *Il 26 aprile 1859 in Firenze* (1861) and his 1863 *Le cucitrici di camicie rosse*. In the first, a woman is rethreading her needle, in the second a group of women sit around a table sewing shirts for the

▲ Odoardo Borrani, *Le cucitrici di camicie rosse*, 1863

Garibaldini. In 1859, the painter of these two pictures, Odoardo Borrani, together with fellow Macchiaioli artists Telemaco Signorini and Adriano Cecioni and the writer Diego Martelli, had enlisted in a Tuscan artillery unit fighting in the Lombardian campaign against the Austrians. Giuseppe Abbati lost his right eye in the 1860 Battle of Capua fighting with Garibaldi's *mille* (the thousand), or the 'redshirts', in Sicily. After Garibaldi's campaign, Mazzinian republicans felt betrayed by the unification project engineered by Cavour, and from the outskirts of Florence in Piagentina they began to paint rural and domestic subjects. In 1865, Cavour moved the capital of Italy from Turin to Florence, where it remained for five years, until Rome became part of the new Italian state. This made the Macchiaioli's self-exile from the city even more explicit as an act of dissent. The distance from Florence is therefore both spatial and temporal: a mapping of space onto revolutionary time. Their domestic scenes represent a revolution that had been suspended and interrupted.

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Windows feature often, offering blocked and partial views, simultaneously connecting inside and outside and obscuring



public space. The artists paint about the feeling of being pushed to the margins of the city and being forced inside and off the streets. The home becomes a place not just of patient political waiting but also of active political preparation. *Il 26 aprile 1859 in Firenze* (1861) is a picture about political preparation, and the work done in private for the remaking of the public sphere. The title refers to the day before the Tuscan 'rose-water' revolution, and the picture shows a well-dressed young woman, a Florentine citizen in a small attic room. The magazine *La nuova Europa* described her as 'seated on an arm-chair intent on threading a needle in order to sew a tricolor flag: Her gracious figure, the simplicity and the exquisite taste of her clothing, the work table, another completed flag, a window through which is perceived a neighbourhood roof below, are so masterfully illuminated that the surface of the canvas disappears and in its place we see a lovely stereoscopic view'. In that 'stereoscopic view', the spire of one of Florence's important churches is just visible, as a smudge on the horizon, hinting at the piazza below and the public space of revolutionary political activity.

Borrani's picture was a great hit at the September 1861 *Esposizione Nazionale* in Florence, and he followed it in 1863 with *Le cucitrici di camicie rosse*, another picture painted in 'exile' at Piagentina. The picture shows a group of four women in a bourgeois sitting room sewing red shirts for Garibaldi's military campaign. Again, the painting features a large window prominently placed in the composition, but this time it is entirely screened with fine white curtains, exquisitely fringed, so that there is no view outside, and only a quiet claustrophobia inside. The lack of view creates a suspended, almost timeless, atmosphere, but this is belied or contradicted by the curtain pole which is made in the form of an arrow. The arrow connects the domestic space with military action and challenges the stasis of the scene with a strong sign of a swift, forward-directed movement. A portrait of Garibaldi, a framed print of the Piazzetta in Venice, showing the Palazzo Ducale and San Marco, and, just visible to the left of the room, a framed collage of Garibaldian battles all make the political ideology more explicit. Venice and the Veneto had been left under Austrian rule by the Treaty of Villafranca of 1859, so were not yet part of a unified Italy: the adoptive Florentine, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, wrote sadly that year, '[w]hat weighs on my heart is Venetia'. The pictured picture also perhaps references the brief victory of the Venetian Republic of San Marco of 1848–9. The real 'windows' of the room are the pictures on its walls which show glimpses of the ongoing struggle. Outside, there is nothing to see, as the struggle is temporarily suspended, but work is under way for its resumption as the women are busy sewing. This is the time in between.



By the time the picture was painted, Garibaldi had abandoned the red shirt: so this is another picture of the past, a remembered revolution that never actually happened, or has not yet happened. Albert Boime says, 'Borrani's glimpses of feminine participation in the Risorgimento yield an unexpected insight into the way political life intruded into the ordinarily solemn sanctuary of the Italian family'; but this is a misunderstanding of the republican idea. Certainly, the enfranchisement of women was part of the radical republican programme, and Boime is right that '[u]ntil now this factor has not been given the attention it deserves'. But the Macchiaioli painters did not see political life as 'intruding into' domestic space. Instead, they saw it as emerging from that space. In Silvestro Lega's *Canto di uno stornello* (The Singing of a Ballad) (1867), for example, also painted at Piagentina, three young women are gathered around a piano by a window, singing a folk song of the people, or *stornello*, with a nationalist theme. The models for the painting were Virginia, Maria, and Isolina Batelli, the three daughters of Spirito Batelli, the son of Vincenzo Batelli, who had been the editor of the *Antologia di Vieusseux*, a series of publications that had been crucial to the transnational European revolutionary cause in the 1820s. These are, therefore, three educated and radical young women, and their home is not a 'solemn sanctuary' but a site of political mediation. Again, a window is prominent in the composition, and a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside is visible. The view across the fields is vague, and the blurriness of Florence in the distance contrasting with the sharpness of the interior creates a temporal grammar for the picture. The view from the window is a view of what should or might have been, and of what might yet come to be. The present is the ordinary domestic scene which offers a window onto the past and the future. The future is indicated in the song wafting

towards Florence across the fields, and in the genealogy of this rising generation of the revolutionary Batelli family. The past is encoded in the painting's 'Quattrocento' composition. Discussing *Canto di uno stornello*, Norma Broude directs us to Luca della Robbia's *Singing Boys* (1431–8) and Piero della Francesca's *The Queen of Sheba Discovering the Wood of the True Cross* (c.1452–7), both Tuscan Renaissance works admired by the Macchiaioli.

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In Palazzeschi's novel, the Materassi sisters' business is economically very successful, until the arrival of their bolder nephew. But Palazzeschi emphasizes that they are not merely tradeswomen but also artists: "embroidery is their real speciality". The novelist accords enormous respect to the aesthetic value of their work, and it is in this understanding of the beauty of their creations that the tragedy of the novel's ending inheres. Albert Boime has described Borrani's *Le cucitrici di camicie rosse* as "a kind of feminist collective". **This seems somewhat anachronistic and over-stated, but the representation of women's sewing in the painting of the Risorgimento and in Palazzeschi's novel set just outside the gates of I Tatti reminds us that the 'minor arts' have always had their politics too.** Long before they were allowed to vote, Florentine women were expressing their political principles and their creativity with their needles. How much I would have loved to take home to England some fine linen underwear exquisitely embroidered by Carolina as a souvenir of my time at I Tatti. But as it was, I had to settle instead for camisoles from *Intimissimi* in Via de' Cerretani.

Clare Pettitt holds the Grace 2 Chair in the Faculty of English at Cambridge University and was Robert Lehman Visiting Professor at I Tatti in Fall 2022. Clare has published numerous articles on nineteenth-century subjects and has a particular interest in print culture, technology and media forms. Her most recent book, *Serial Revolutions 1848: Writing, Politics, Form* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) was published in 2022.

▲ Clare Pettitt at I Tatti, Fall 2023
◀ Odoardo Borrani, *Il 26 aprile 1859*, 1861

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These past few years have been ones of tremendous expansion for I Tatti both in terms of our physical site and the intellectual geographies which are being investigated.

Thanks to the generosity of several individual donors we have been able to add space to our campus and renovate old buildings to facilitate more frequent conferences, add additional housing to allow more appointees, and even create an expansion of the Library - providing purpose-built facilities for the fototeca, the rare book collection and new offices for Library staff.

But perhaps an even more remarkable expansion has been in the geography included in I Tatti's scope of inquiry. While always taking the Italian Renaissance as the starting point, recent I Tatti projects have expanded beyond the boundaries of the Mediterranean, to consider the interrelationship between quattrocento southern Europe and the rest of the world. An ongoing five year project entitled *Mediterraneo Nero* seeks to call attention to the role played by the African continent in shaping Mediterranean aesthetics and ideas during the early modern period, allowing a new understanding of both worlds.

Another recent conference brought together experts in the early modern history of Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa to approach the account of the Florentine global traveler Francesco Carletti; and a two day conference and accompanying publication investigate the network of rivers which served as vital arteries connecting Italy and the Mediterranean world with the lands of Eastern Europe and Anatolia.

This expansion of I Tatti's horizons – both physical and philosophical – has been largely possible because of the generosity of individual donors. As has always been the case at I Tatti, it is gifts, both large and small, from individuals which allow us to pursue our mission at the highest level and provides the resources to continually strive towards a more complete geography, both in our facilities and our viewpoint.

We would like to ask you to give a gift to help us continue to explore new ideas and new territories, to open new scholarly horizons and to move towards a more complete understanding of the Italian Renaissance.



▲ The 2023/24 I Tatti community

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▲ Above and cover: Piero della Francesca, detail from the fresco cycle *The Legend of the True Cross*, Basilica of San Francesco, Arezzo

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