

## Academic Fund Statement Easter Term 2017

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The 16th of March 2017 I was awarded 250 pounds from the Girton College Academic Fund in order to participate in the Cambridge University Italian Department's Residential Course in Italian Language and Culture from the 27th March – 3rd April.

The course took place in Tuscany. Eight Part 1B students travelled with two professors from the Italian Department to Castello Di Ama, a vineyard in the Chianti district and one of the top producers of Chianti Classico in Tuscany. Castello di Ama also holds an important contemporary art collection with special-commissioned works by artists such as Louise Bourgeois and Anish Kapoor. The owners of the vineyard created a contemporary art project around year 2000 with an idea of reviving the ideals of art production during the Italian Renaissance; they invite the artists to live at their vineyard for a longer period of time and take inspiration from their surroundings. The piece they create during their stay is unique and not a reproduction of earlier work.

In this environment we partook in the one-week course programme designed around the theme 'Italian Renaissance'. The programme consisted of four days of seminars, workshops and language classes and two days of travelling the area, visiting cities and their art collections. Every day we tried out Tuscan specialities in the Ristoro di Ama, in addition to wine tastings and guided tours of the Castello di Ama collection.

The day trips went to the Medieval city of San Gimignano and to Siena. In San Gimignano we visited the Duomo and its circle of frescoes dedicated to the myths of the Old Testament and the Life of Christ. In the first year of the Italian course at Cambridge, the students all study Giotto's fresco circle in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua. With the visit to the Duomo we got to see Giotto's influence on the painting style of the early Renaissance. In Siena we visited the Museo Civico to see the Allegory of Good and Bad Government, the Pinacoteca of Siena and the Duomo.

The seminar days were spent at Castello di Ama. For language we did a lot of oral practice for our exam, in addition to practice in text composition. The day trips were put into historical context in our seminars, where we discussed the composition and significance of poetry, literature, art and architecture during the Italian Renaissance. One of the most interesting aspects of the seminars was the effort to bridge the gap

between the historical periods you have to study as an Italian student and the time we live in, discussing the state of poetry and art today in relation to the past.