

The 2024 Alumni Study Tour of Northern Italy

April 23 – 29, 2024

David A Lamdin (Newport 2015, London 2017, Chicago 2018)

I was very fortunate and so grateful that I was able to participate in the Alumni Association's 2024 Study Tour to Northern Italy. It was nothing short of an extraordinary, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to discover the culture and cuisine of Bologna and Northern Italy; the spectacular mosaics of Ravenna located in 1,500 year old churches; the making of Balsamic vinegar in Modena; and the block-buster exhibit in Forli co-curated by own **Peter Trippi** who explained the genesis of the exhibit to us on our 1 hour bus ride to Fofli and then graciously provided us with a personalized tour of the extensive exhibit with over 300 works of art sharing his extensive knowledge of the art and artist of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood who were significantly influenced by the great artist of the Italian Renaissance. It was truly an amazing presentation that will inform the rest of my life.

Our tour began on Tuesday, April 23, with a Welcoming Cocktail Party at our hotel in Bologna for the week, The Royal Hotel Carlton. The very nice hotel was conveniently located within a few blocks walk of the train station and the historic center of Bologna, Piazza Maggiore. Most importantly, the excellent location provided easy access to the bus which we used for our day trips outside of Bologna and kept us in compliance with the local regulations which precluded tour buses operating in the center city.



The Welcome Party allowed us to catch-up with old friends and meet new ones. Following the party, we walked a few blocks to the Opening Night dinner where we enjoyed a lavish 4 or 5 course meal at a very good Italian restaurant, the Ristorante Diana, for our introduction to the wonders of Bolognese cuisine.

[Ristorante Diana a few steps from the heart of Bologna \(ristorante-diana.it\)](http://ristorante-diana.it)



We were able to take advantage of the Porticoes of Bologna, a World Heritage Site. The porticoes protect the pedestrians from the sun and the rain. Defined as private property for public use, the porticoes have become an expression and element of Bologna's urban identity. I don't understand why every city does not have them!



On Day 2, following our full breakfast buffet, which was available every day at the hotel, we set out on a walking tour of the historic center-city of Bologna with our first stop at **Piazza Maggiore**, the city's main square. In addition to our wonderful travel agent - Harry, our tour guide - Rudi (who was with us every step of the way during our stay in Italy), we had a local guide who escorted us on the walking tour around Bologna.



Neptune's Fountain

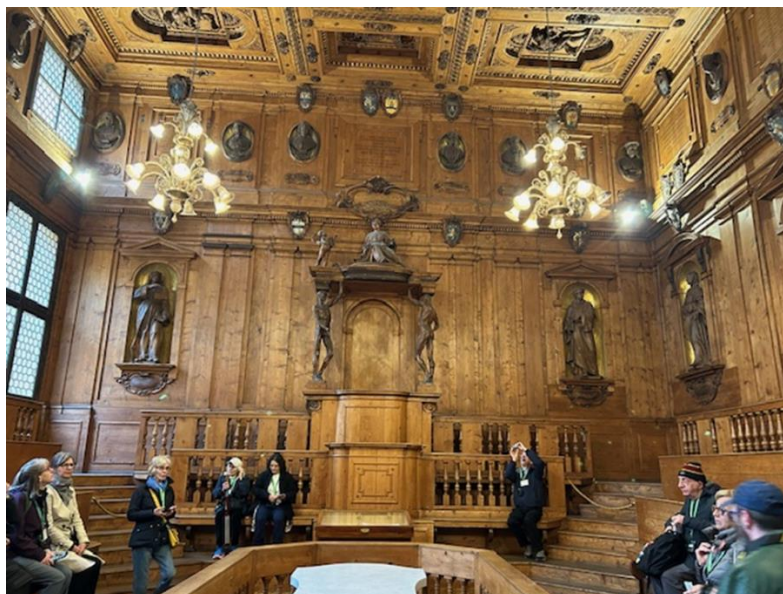
The last great fruit of Gothic architecture, the **Basilica of San Petronio** dedicated to San Petronio, patron saint of Bologna, of which he was bishop in the first half of the fifth century, raises its front on Piazza Maggiore, the political and historical center of the city. The construction of this basilica began in **1390** on a project by **Antonio di Vincenzo**, who died when the work had just begun. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, **Arduino Arriguzzi** devised a completion of colossal proportions and unparalleled in the whole world. The basilica, although unfinished, is 132 meters long, 60 meters wide and 45 meters high.



A masterpiece of sculpture is the main portal, the work of **Jacopo della Quercia**, executed in the first half of the fifteenth century. In the lunette are the statues of the *Madonna and Child* between Saints Petronius and Ambrose. In the pillars episodes from the Old and New Testaments.



From there, it was on to the ANATOMICAL THEATRE. The hall, called the Theatre because of its characteristic amphitheater shape, was designed in 1637 for anatomical lessons by the Bolognese architect **Antonio Paolucci** known as **Levanti**, a pupil of the **Carracci** family. It was built in fir wood and decorated with two orders of statues depicting twelve famous doctors at the bottom (Hippocrates, Galen, Fabrizio Bartoletti, Girolamo Sbaraglia, Marcello Malpighi, Carlo Fracassati, Mondino de'Liuzzi, Bartolomeo da Varignana, Pietro d'Argelata, Costanzo Varolio, Giulio Cesare Aranzio, Gaspare Tagliacozzi) and at the top twenty of the most famous anatomists of the Bolognese Studio.



The lecturer's chair, which overlooks that of the demonstrator, is flanked by two statues called "Spellati", sculpted in 1734 to a design by **Ercole Lelli**, a famous ceroplast of the Institute of Sciences. Above the canopy a seated female figure, an allegory of the Anatomy, receives as a tribute from a winged putto not a flower, but a femur. The

anatomical room suffered serious damage in the bombing that destroyed this wing of the building on 29 January 1944 and was rebuilt in the immediate post-war period by reusing the original wooden sculptures, fortunately recovered from the ruins. The coffered ceiling, made in 1645 by **Antonio Levanti**, is decorated with symbolic figures representing fourteen constellations and in the center Apollo, the patron deity of medicine. The choice of the astrological chart dates back to the tradition of consulting the stars before proceeding with operations or administering drugs, according to a conception of medicine that is influenced throughout Europe by the science spread by the Arabs since the time of the conquest of Spain. Astrology was associated with medicine, and every part of the body was placed under the protection of a zodiac sign, after all Astrology continued to be a subject of study even at the University of Bologna until the end of the seventeenth century. The decoration of the ceiling reflects a certain way of conceiving man and his biological life in relation to nature and the cosmos.

Our walking tour of Bologna continued with a stroll through the **Quadrilatero**, Bologna Italy's oldest market. A walk down the narrow streets of this medieval city lined with shops, vendors, and places to eat is like stepping back in time. Located in the historic city center of Bologna adjacent to the Piazza Maggiore, the historic heart of Bologna is a mecca for foodies and historic architecture buffs. It's here where you'll taste some of the best street food in Italy, find local shopkeepers, tradespeople, fish mongers, bakers, and other food and retail vendors working at selling everything from fresh fish and produce to local meats, cheeses, regional wines, homemade tortellini pasta, fresh Italian breads, and other goods.



Our walking tour ended at a restaurant near the iconic symbol of Bologna, the **Two Towers**. Both were built in the early 12th Century and both are leaning. In October 2023, the taller tower was sealed off by the city of Bologna after fears the structure was tilting too far. Bologna officials noted that the tower has leaned since it was built; it had sustained additional damage in the medieval era when ironwork and bakery ovens were built inside. On 2 December 2023, the city announced that the tower was in danger of collapsing, and it began constructing a barrier to contain debris in the event of a fall. According to the city officials, work to prevent the collapse of the tower is expected to take at least 10 years and cost €20 million.



After another 3 or 4 course delicious lunch, we were on our own the rest of the day to discover

On Day 3, April 24, **Peter Trippi** joined us for the one-hour motorcoach ride to Forli, IT. Along the way, Peter described the genesis of the exhibit and what we could expect to see. This block-buster show would be worth the trip to Italy alone but having Peter with us as our guide through the most significant works of art in the exhibit made this truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience which I will never forget. From the website: [The name expresses the rejection of "Raphaelism" and the "Raphaelites", the criticism of all academic forms, the contestation of the formal rigorism of the Royal Academy, so linked to classicism after Raphael. In the mid-nineteenth century, in the fateful year of 1848, in Victorian England, at the height of the Industrial Revolution, some very young artists – **Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt** – gathered in a Confraternity, dared to change the course of art. If the programmatic thrust was brief – by 1853 it had already ended – the development of the models was pervasive, the success lasting.](#)

[The Pre-Raphaelites sought fidelity to nature, a pure vision of the reality of things; Their colors were vivid and straightforward, as the coal from the chimneys blackened the sky and the houses. They sought in literary sources the inspiration for the absolute and the passion of love, while the economism of the Industrial Revolution showed a contradictory and socially unequal modernity. Yet they were not old-fashioned. Theirs was neither a conservative revolution nor a reactionary revolt. They opened up to Symbolism and Art Nouveau. They were the first avant-garde, the first movement that would pave the way for the experiences of the European twentieth century that were so different and even opposed.](#)

In their spring they dreamed of retracing the art of the Primitives, the ancient masters of the Italian fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Tuscan above all. As in a mirror, they looked to Cimabue, Giotto and the Giottoesque, to Beato Angelico and Benozzo Gozzoli, particularly to his cycle of frescoes in the Camposanto of Pisa, saved from the collective memory by the engravings of Lasinio at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Then Cosimo Rosselli, Verrocchio and the two Lippis, Ghirlandaio, Piero della Francesca, Signorelli, Botticelli. Above all, Botticelli, revealed again to the eyes of Europe.

In Botticelli, Adolfo Venturi would say in 1921, summing up what had been the form of feelings and the spiritual crisis of a century, "a fever of enjoyment and life, which conceals a bitter thought, is reflected in the agile, nervous forms, in the sudden languor of the subtlest creator of images that Florentine and Italian painting has had, of the most refined poet of the Tuscan fifteenth century. The enchanted world of Sandro's art, with the splendour of its velvet, gold and flower apparatuses, with the singular nostalgic charm of its human types and its rhythms of lines, encloses in itself the dreams of Florence on the sunset of the fifteenth century, on the splendid eve of days of passion, of Michelangelo's century". Everyone recognized themselves in that language. Later, their gaze broadened to include the entire sixteenth century in a rigorous formal reinterpretation. It was mainly the artists of the second generation who did it. **Rossetti, Morris, Burne-Jones, Leighton, Watts** and a whole host of painters and sculptors resumed synthesizing much of Italian art: from Michelangelo to Leonardo, Giorgione, Veronese, Titian.

The myth of Italy and the primacy of Florence lived on for a long time until a third generation of artists was involved, in a time span that embraced the early years of the twentieth century from the end of the nineteenth century. Some of the protagonists of that phase moved to Florence, giving life to the "Florentine Circles". Theirs was also a feminine painting. Women of enigmatic sensuality, sad passions, and elusive beauty inhabit Rossetti's visual and obsessive thinking, Leighton's crystallized images, Burne-Jones' enchanted stories. But there is also a large group of female protagonists of art, who contributed to giving life to the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic: from **Elizabeth Siddal to Evelyn De Morgan**.

The Pre-Raphaelite world was nourished by contemporary literary matrixes: from Wordsworth, to Keats, to Shelley, to Tennyson to Allan Poe; and absolute models: from Dante to Boccaccio to Shakespeare. Often set in a fantastic and legendary Middle Ages, their works echo a romantic and mythical world; A world that reinterprets the historical tradition and dialogues with a rediscovered or recreated past, such as to legitimize the present and its aspirations, dreams and protests, anxieties and nostalgia.

What Henry James said about Burne-Jones, after all, can be said for everyone: theirs was "**an art of culture, of intellectual pleasure, of aesthetic refinement, typical of those who look at the world and life not directly, but in the reflection or in the adorned portrait that arises from literature, poetry, history, erudition.**"

The 2024 Forlì exhibition is a unique event. With over 300 works, it is the largest exhibition dedicated to the Pre-Raphaelites ever held. It intends to reconstruct, through exceptional loans from the world's leading museums, the entire story of the three generations of artists who went directly under the name, or referred to the spirit, of the Pre-Raphaelites. A unique path, which goes from their nineteenth-century roots of the Nazarenes and Ruskin to their twentieth-century heritage. Central to the exhibition at the **San Domenico Museums** is the direct comparison between the Italian masters from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries and these modern artists. The comparison with the historical Renaissance determined this new Renaissance. The Forlì exhibition concludes by showing how the Italian painters and artists of the late nineteenth century – from De Carolis to Sartorio – have rediscovered the memories of their own history, renewing their identity also through the comparison with the long story of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Conceived and created by the Fondazione Cassa dei Risparmio di Forlì in collaboration with the Municipality of Forlì, the exhibition is curated by **Liz Prettejohn, Peter Trippi, Cristina Acidini and Francesco Parisi; by Gianfranco Brunelli** as general manager. The exhibition project, curated by Studio Lucchi & Biserni, brings masterpieces from the most important national and international institutions to Italy. The valuable catalogue that accompanies the exhibition is published by Dario Cimorelli Editore.

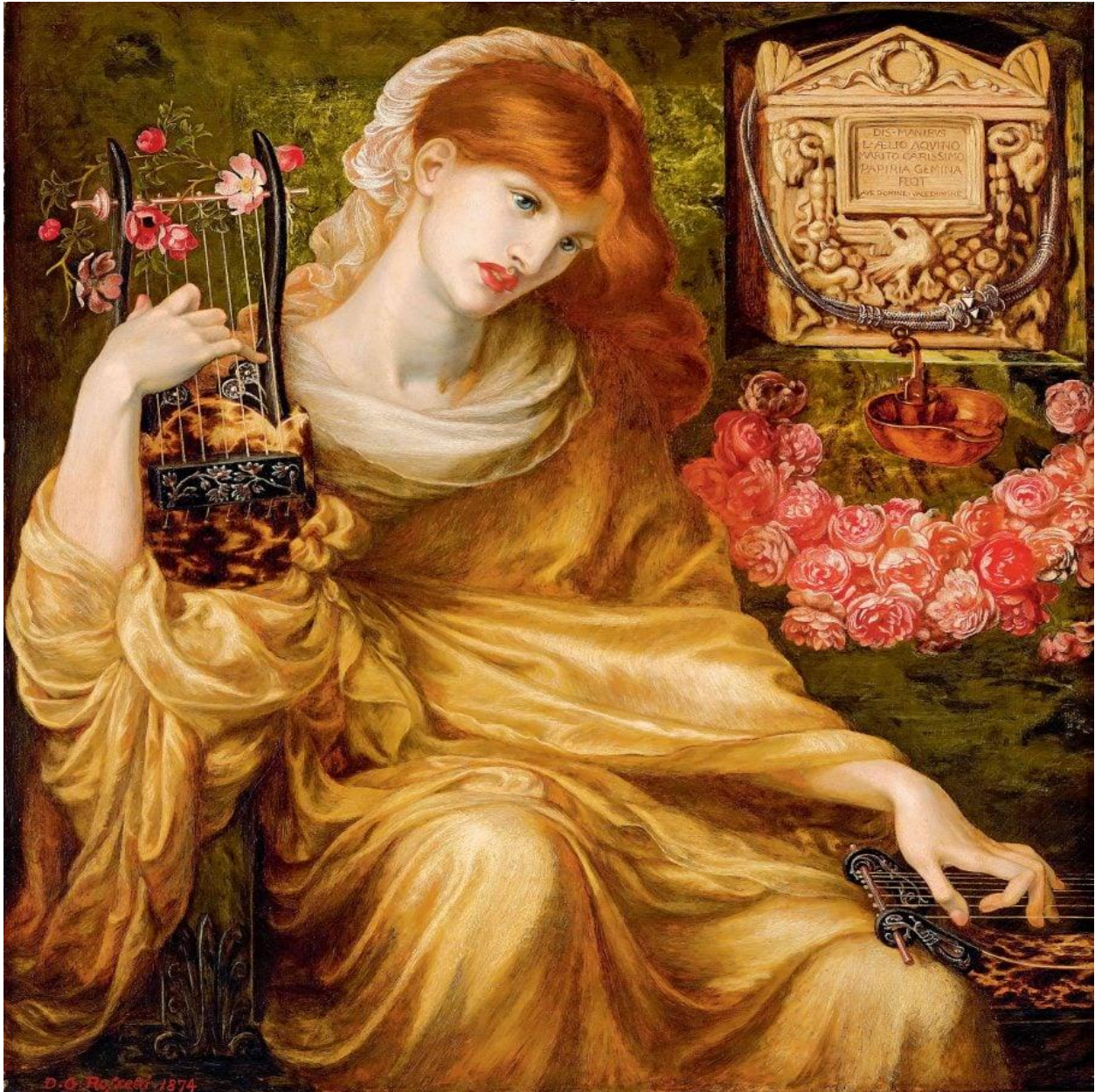


From: ARTNET

[Art & Exhibitions](#)

The British Pre-Raphaelites Meet the Italian Renaissance at This New Exhibition

The monumental exhibition traces the influence on English artists of their Italian forebears.



Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Roman Widow* (1874). Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico, The Luis A. Ferré Foundation, Inc.

by [Adnan Qiblawi](#)

March 29, 2024

The San Domenico Museum in Forlì, Italy, is hosting a monumental exhibition, “[Pre-Raphaelites: Modern Renaissance](#).” The show brings together 360 works of art, borrowed from major European, American,

and British museums, as well as private collections, foregrounding Italian masterpieces spanning from Cimabue to Veronese. The first multi-disciplinary exhibition of its kind in Italy, the show delves into the profound influence of Italian Renaissance art on the British Pre-Raphaelite movement of the mid-19th to early 20th centuries.



Frederic Leighton, Greek Girls Picking up Pebbles by the Sea (1871). Collection Pérez Simón, Mexico.

“Never before has there been an opportunity to put so many British works from this period in conversation with the Italian forerunners,” said Peter Trippi, a co-curator of the show. This is largely because borrowing Italian Renaissance and medieval art out of Italy is incredibly complicated due to the expense as well as the fragility and rarity of the works, which are typically cherished by the churches and museums in which they reside.

Among the highlights are celebrated works by Italian masters such as Cimabue, Botticelli, Michelangelo, and Titian, juxtaposed with major pieces by renowned British artists including Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais, Edward Burne-Jones, and William Morris. Notably, the exhibition spotlights often overlooked contributions of women artists like Evelyn De Morgan, Elizabeth Siddal, and Julia Margaret Cameron to the Pre-Raphaelite movement.



The installation was designed by Lucchi & Biserni. Photo: Emanuele Rambaldi.

Structured as a captivating visual dialogue across time, the exhibition traces three generations of Pre-Raphaelites, a group founded in 1848 with the mission to rejuvenate British art during the industrial age. Determined to recapture the spirit of medieval and Renaissance Italian artists who worked before the death of Raphael in 1520, Pre-Raphaelites rejected the academic conventions of their time by re-envisioning styles and themes from the past in strikingly modern ways. They drew on a dynamic array of

Italian precedents, embracing Venetian Gothic architecture, the “Primitive” paintings at London’s National Gallery, and the sophisticated sensuality of artists like Veronese and Titian.

The installation, designed by Lucchi & Biserni of Forli, showcases an array of works by prominent Pre-Raphaelite artists such as Burne-Jones, Frederic Leighton, and John Ruskin. More than 50 design objects, including four tremendous Holy Grail tapestries by Morris & Co. and a grand piano adorned by Burne-Jones, enrich the display. Additionally, the exhibition features bronzes by leaders of the “New Sculpture” movement and proto-Decadent works by Charles Ricketts and Aubrey Beardsley.



*Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris, and John Henry Dearle (designers), **Holy Grail Tapestries: The Arming of the Knights** (1890). Private collection.*

Trippi describes the exhibition’s display of Burne-Jones’ work, set in the church’s dining room, as “magical.”

“You look up and see a gorgeous medieval painting of flowers and leaves on the church’s ceiling, and you look down ahead of you and see Burne-Jones’ 19th-century paintings of flowers and leaves,” he said. On one wall of the room, a painting by Mantegna and another by Bellini are on display. In a vitrine, a drawing by Michelangelo can be found. Between all these works, the Burne-Jones Pre-Raphaelite paintings hang, in flirtation with the works of the old Italian masters. “It’s a love affair, really,” he says.



A view of the Edward Burne-Jones room, described by co-curator Peter Trippi as “a love affair.” Photo: Emanuele Rambaldi

The grand finale of the exhibition offers a fresh perspective on the Pre-Raphaelite legacy through 19th- and early 20th-century paintings by Italian artists including Adolfo de Carolis, Giovanni Costa, Giulio Aristide Sartorio, and Filadelfo Simi.

“Pre-Raphaelites: Modern Renaissance” is organized by the Fondazione Cassa dei Risparmi di Forlì in collaboration with the Municipality of Forlì. The Italian catalogue is published by Dario Cimorelli Editore (Milan).



A view of the **“Pre-Raphaelites: Modern Renaissance”** exhibition at the Museo Civico San Domenico in Italy. photo: Emanuele Rambaldi.

“Pre-Raphaelites: Modern Renaissance” is on view at the San Domenico Museum in Forlì, Italy, through June 30, 2024.

I am at the age where I need another catalogue like I need another hole in my head, but this show was so extraordinary, so comprehensive, and we were so enriched by having Peter along as our guide, that the catalogue is a must for my library --- **even in Italian!** But at 600 full-color pages, it was much too heavy. With Peter’s advice, I was able to purchase the catalogue from **AbeBooks** for about \$70 including shipping.

On Day 4, we were on the road again to Modena where we started the day with a visit to a small home where they made balsamic vinegar. We were shown how they made balsamic and enjoyed a tasting. The best, a 4 oz bottle over 25 years old, costs over \$300.



We continued on to the center piazza of Modena, visited the local cathedral, and enjoyed another delicious Italian lunch.



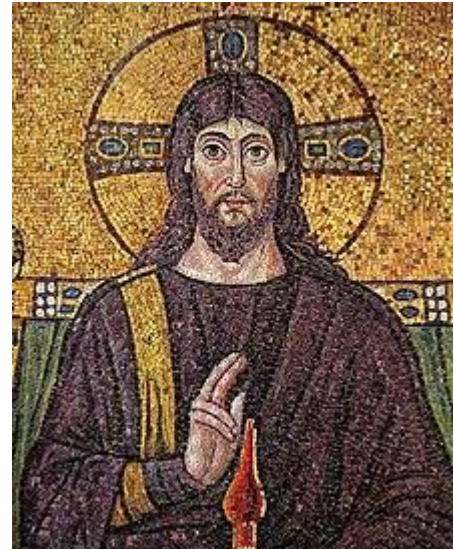
After lunch, we visited the home of Pavarotti, who lived in the Modena area. The Maestro's home was filled with interesting pictures, awards, manuscripts, sheet music, etc., all which highlighted his fantastic career in music.



Day 5 was another trip outside of Bologna to Ravenna, a little bit further but in the same southeasterly direction as our trip to Forli. We were met in Ravenna by a local guide who explained the history. In 49 BC, it was where Julius Caesar gathered his forces before crossing the Rubicon. Later Octavian, after his battle against Mark Antony in 31 BC, founded the military harbor of Classis. It was the capital city of the Western Roman Empire during the 5th century until its collapse in 476, after which it served as the capital of the Ostrogothic Kingdom and then the Byzantine Exarchate of Ravenna. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, in 540 Belisarius conquered Ravenna for the Byzantine Empire, and the city became the capital of Byzantine Italy. After a brief Lombard control, Ravenna came under the authority of the Papacy and, save for minor interruptions, remained part of the Papal States until the mid-19th century when it was incorporated into the newly unified Kingdom of Italy.

Ravenna is known for its well-preserved late Roman and Byzantine architecture, with eight buildings comprising the UNESCO World Heritage Site "Early Christian Monuments of Ravenna". Because of the high concentration of mosaics, the city has been associated with workshops and schools teaching mosaics and is often given titles like the "capital of mosaics".

Triumphal arch mosaics of the [Basilica of San Vitale](#)[Garden of Eden](#) mosaic in [mausoleum of Galla Placidia](#) (5th century CE) Arian Baptistery ceiling mosaic 6th-century [mosaic](#) in Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, portrays Jesus long-haired and bearded, dressed in Byzantine style.



The Arian Baptistery



Dante's tomb exterior and interior, built in 1780

Day 6, Sunday, April 28th, was the last day of our tour. Before our tour even began, Peter provided helpful hints for seeing all that was most important to experience in Bologna. Before our Farewell Dinner at the hotel restaurant, we had the last day free to get another taste of all the excitement that Bologna (a university town filled with beautiful churches and museums) had to offer and to prepare for our departure from Bologna on Monday,



Pauline Metcalf, Peter Trippi, Fred and Nancy Golden

It was so nice of Peter to break away from a personal event to join our Farewell Dinner. Peter's briefing on the executive bus ride to Forli was so interesting, giving us some insights into the historical context of the PRB, the genesis of the exhibit, and the incredible, collaborative process involved in going from concept to Opening Night. There is probably a book in there somewhere!

As he guided us through the highlights of the exhibit, my eyes were opened to compositions, symbols, names of people in the pics, etc, that I would never have seen without the assistance of his intellect, training, and eye. And he not only provided entry into the exhibit to us, but he also informed us about the spectacular venue that housed it. It was truly a once in a lifetime experience. His friendship and insights in the exhibit were truly priceless. Having access to Peter turned what otherwise would have been an interesting tour, into a great tour for the Alumni Association.

Many thanks to **Nancy Golden, John Martine, Sibyl Groff, Elizabeth Leckie, Robert Chapman, and Pauline Metcalf** all of whom helped plan this trip as we tried to fill the very large shows of **John Martine**, our recently retired Study Tour Director.

Thank to all those who were able to join us for this Study Tour for being such wonderful travel companions. I think we had a very compatible group and the bonds of friendship seemed to grow stronger as we went along.



Nancy Golden and David Lamdin (April 28, 2024) by Fred Golden