

THE HERALD

MEREDITH

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A Meredith Student's Glimpse into Italian Culture



The Office of International Programs has a variety of study abroad opportunities, the semester-long Sansepolcro program being particularly notable. Students have had irreplaceable experiences of Italian culture while living in the 16th Century Palazzo Alberti, leased by Meredith College for over 20 years. Engaged by Meredith faculty in residence and the local com-

munity, students are presented with the opportunity to become seasoned international travelers, all while fulfilling the Meredith Foreign Language requirement. The following is an excerpt from the travel journal of Nancy Merritt, a current student of the Sansepolcro program

Jessica Feltner, Editor in Chief

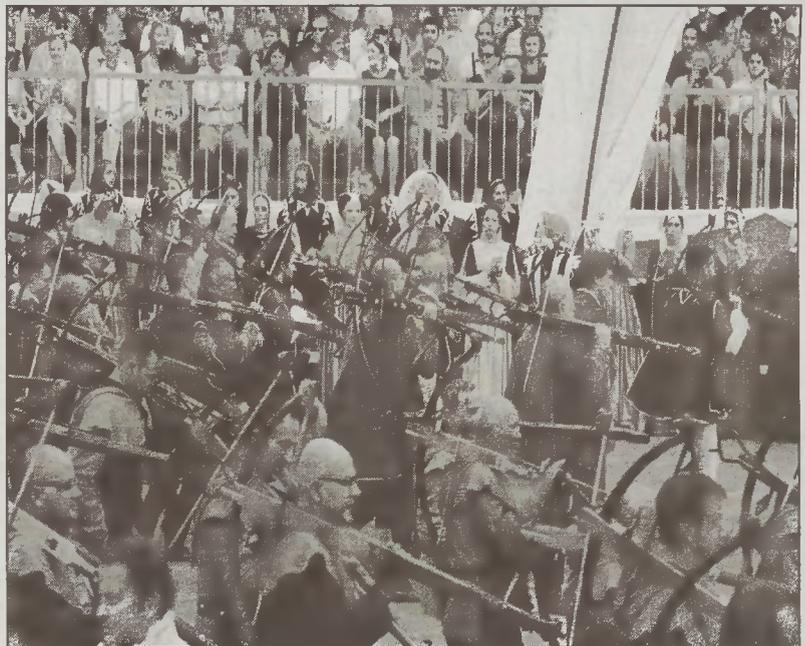
Nancy Merritt, contributing writer

As citizens of Sansepolcro, though only for a short time, we were invited to participate and to become immersed in the traditions of the Palio. Traditionally, Meredith College students have been asked to march in one of the many processions, but this year we were invited to dress up in Renaissance costumes at the traditional market held on the Saturday before the palio, where citizens sell or display traditional goods on the streets. It was truly a theatrical performance. Adorned in our Renaissance costumes, we greeted visitors at booths throughout the market. It was a culturally enriching experience to get a glimpse of the town as it once was, and it was a way for us to show our respect and enthusiasm for their culture and also practice our Italian with the help of the citizens of Sansepolcro.

One of our professors informed us that many people have lost enthusiasm for the palio in recent years, but that was hard to believe as seats in the Piazza filled up on Sunday afternoon. There was another long speech for the opening ceremony, the meaning of which was lost because it surpassed

our basic knowledge of the language, but we were delightfully overwhelmed by the brightly colored costumes, and performances before the competition began. The Piazza Torre del Berta overflowed with drummers, flags and characters in this theatrical display of cultural tradition and rivalry, as the two teams paraded into the piazza and the competition began. All that we know about the rules of the competition comes from what we interpreted on Sunday. Both teams shot arrows at one target once and when the target got full, arrows began falling to the ground and the piazza echoed with sounds of disappointment. There were several spectacular performances before they announced the winner of the palio, and though Gubbio came out on top, Sansepolcro paraded and celebrated into the night.

Last week we were surprised by how warmly Sansepolcro welcomed us into their home, but this week we are grateful that they have also welcomed us into their community. For many students, study abroad is a means to see more of the world, but for us, and in the true spirit of Meredith tradition: it's a means to "experience it."



Images courtesy of Office of International Programs

Interested in studying abroad?

Visit The Office of International Programs for information on the application process and eligibility. Located in 124 Joyner Hall.

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