INTRODUCTION: NAPLES IN MYTH AND HISTORY

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NAPLES HOLDS A UNIQUE STATUS AMONG artistic centers of Italy and Europe, its identity grounded as much in its geography as in its culture, as much in myth as in history. The world views Naples in the interplay between these contrasting poles, and the resulting representations of the city as an artistic capital have remained contested around them since the Trecento. In many other ways, however, Naples remains a typical capital of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Its modes and forms of cultural expression are well known, familiar to students of the period: patronage; continuity and discontinuity; center and periphery; the arts as representations of power, legitimacy, and authority, as well as of deeper structures of spiritual and intellectual life. These approaches to Neapolitan cultural life have assumed two major forms: the diachronic, ones that emphasize the abrupt chronological shifts between dynasties and historical periods; and the synchronic, the constant – and simultaneous – tensions between the pan-Italian and European on the one hand and the local, the Neapolitan, and the Southern on the other.

All world capitals have their own meta-histories of legend, myth, historiography, and interpretive frames. But because those surrounding Naples have remained so consistently intractable, so uncritically accepted, they must first be deconstructed and analyzed more closely than in the normal course of historical and cultural interpretation so that these overlying assumptions can be exposed and understood more clearly. This approach is not meant to imply that Naples does not continue to have its own very real and sometimes debilitating structural problems, or conversely that these are merely issues of false representation, but to stress that this chapter deals only with such historical representations.

We will therefore survey and analyze the status of late medieval and Renaissance Naples in history and myth. We will trace the developing historiography of the arts and culture in the city and examine the long-enduring myth of Naples in popular and professional perspectives. We will first examine the "textbook" image of Naples, review the city's history during this period, and discuss Naples in modern and postmodern thought. We will next focus on our major diachronic theme: the myth of Naples, beginning with the Angevin period and moving forward into the twentieth century. We will conclude by surveying synchronic interpretations of Naples as "other" expressed in *meridionalismo* and the "Question of the South." In the end, amid many new strains of global reality and theory, we will find that Naples's uniqueness persists largely only within these historical representations and that its urban modes and cultural history share far more similarities than differences with other European and world capitals.

A TEXTBOOK VIEW OF RENAISSANCE ITALY

A review of current surveys used for teaching or scholarly introductions to the art history of the Renaissance[1] covers largely familiar ground.

Florence leads the way in both technical and intellectual innovations that presage and embody the Renaissance in architecture, sculpture, painting, and other visual arts. Attention then focuses on the other great centers of Renaissance culture – Venice, Milan, and Rome – with lesser centers, such as Urbino or Mantua, used to reinforce the overall schema. Naples, if included at all, is generally given the quick tour: Alfonso I's Triumphal Arch at Castel Nuovo and perhaps the Succorpo. A more thorough examination might include the Capella Pontano, Monteoliveto, and the Palazzi Como or Gravina. Only with specialized studies[2] does Naples sometimes come to the fore, not as a major factor in the artistic directions and monuments of Renaissance Italy or Europe but rather as a specialized case of a particular genre, patronage pattern, or theoretical frame.

With few exceptions, which seem to have produced no school of interpretation, this schema has remained largely unaltered for at least the past two generations of Anglophone scholarship. This neglect has affected not only art history but also the general cultural history of Naples in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Naples remains an uncanny mystery for many.[3] We will therefore begin with a brief historical narrative,[4] roughly from about 1250, the end of the Hohenstaufen period, to around 1550, through the reign of Spanish viceroy Pedro de Toledo. We will necessarily also discuss the urban development of the historical city, although this is dealt with in greater detail in the chapters that follow.

Historical Overview, circa 1250–circa 1550

The historical core of Naples,[5] most famously the straight line of streets known as "Spaccanapoli" that visitors use as synecdoche for the entire city, was first built by Greek colonists of the site around 474 BCE upon a clearly delineated platform of volcanic tufa, barely discernible today amid the wide and bustling boulevards and large institutional and commercial buildings of the modern city. But throughout the city's premodern history, this tufa plateau sharply defined its boundaries to the north and northwest. To the west, it declined less dramatically but still significantly, and to the south it dropped quickly to the sea. On the east, the Campus Neapolitanus marked a broad reach of marshland, river, and meadow that stretched away from the town. The Hippodamean grid plan that the original Greek colonists imposed on this platform was so successful that it outlasted the Greeks into the Roman republican and later imperial city.[6] It became the historical matrix that saw the decline of the town after the Gothic Wars and the Lombard invasions.[7] As part of the Norman kingdom, Naples was then inherited by the Hohenstaufen imperial family in 1194. Throughout, that core remained the rock-solid foundation upon which all later urban development had to take place. It has remained the fundamental historical datum of Naples even into the twenty-first century – a Greek grid plan so successful that Naples remains the best example of its type in Italy, and in fact in the western Mediterranean. Later urban developments would not radically alter this plan but would expand outward from it until the ancient center has now become one of many artistic and urbanistic nodes of the modern city.

The Angevins, 1266–1442

In 1250,[8] Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen, the *stupor mundi* and excommunicated enemy of the papacy, died after a lingering illness. His enemies of the papal Guelph affinity immediately regrouped all over Italy to undo the hegemony he had temporarily established over the Italian peninsula. In 1251, Naples rose and, giving their ultimate fealty to the distant pope, formed a free commune. While Frederick's son, King Conrad IV, was absent fighting in Germany, his illegitimate son Manfred became *balio*, or regent, for both the Regno and the Hohenstaufen holdings in the north. Frederick's implacable enemy, Pope Innocent IV, now hoped to finally crush the Hohenstaufen in both Germany and Italy and raised up candidates among Europe's royal families to replace them. Conrad was able to reach the South in time, however, and consolidate his hold there.

The pope therefore looked for some candidate willing to depose the "heretics" by force of arms. Henry III of England was at first the leading papal

candidate for the throne but withdrew, and with Conrad IV's death in 1254, shortly after his capture of Naples, Innocent entered the Regno with his young charge Conrad V (Conradin) as a figurehead for his plans to annex the South to the papal state. By the time the pope had entered Naples, however, Manfred was able to rally the Hohenstaufen forces; Conradin had already defected to him, and in 1258 Manfred had himself crowned king of "Sicily," as the Regno of Naples would continue to be called into the modern era.

The Italian wars between Guelphs and Ghibellines, as the imperial faction was called, and the papal crusades against the Hohenstaufen continued to embroil the entire peninsula. Finally, with the accession of the French king Louis IX's ex-chancellor as Pope Clement IV in 1265, one of the original papal candidates for Frederick II's throne came to the fore again. Charles, duke of Anjou, Louis's younger brother, had also been Count of Provence since 1246. He now saw a means of combining papal policy, French resources, and his own ambitions to create an empire in the Mediterranean. He undertook a "crusade" against Manfred. Mortgaging all of his and his wife Beatrice of Provence's holdings to finance his war, Charles was crowned king of Sicily by the pope on Epiphany Day 1265 and marched south.[9] On February 26, 1266, at Benevento, Charles's army crushed that of Manfred, who fell while trying to rally his German forces after his Saracens and Italians had fled. Charles of Anjou entered Naples on March 7. Conradin, now a youth of fifteen, rallied an invasion force of Germans and Italian Ghibellines and entered the kingdom in August 1268. At Tagliacozzo, Charles destroyed Conradin's army, mercilessly massacring the captives. Conradin and several other Hohenstaufen nobles were brought to Naples, where on the site of the present Piazza Mercato they were publicly beheaded, an act that shocked all of Europe and led to the founding of the Angevin dynasty.

Charles of Anjou, now King Charles I (r. 1266–1285), quickly moved the capital from Palermo to Naples.[10] He began to transform the city. To expand its defenses he added a "new castle," the Castel Nuovo, which soon became the royal residence. He planned or consolidated the city's movement toward the southeast around the Campo Moricino (Piazza del Mercato), and he began the foundation of churches in the new Gothic style. Charles also dredged a new harbor and built the beacon tower on the Molo San Vincenzo, positioning Naples vis-à-vis Marseilles[11] and the South to support his goal of a wide-reaching Mediterranean empire. But, on March 30, 1282, in a conspiracy designed to end Angevin ambitions and win revenge for Conradin and Manfred, the revolt known as the Sicilian Vespers brought the Byzantine emperor, the king of Aragon (now married to the Hohenstaufen heiress), and former Hohenstaufen officials together to wrest Sicily from the Angevins. The twenty-year "War of the Vespers" that followed saw the capture and imprisonment of the future Charles II (r. 1285–1309) by the Aragonese and eventual Aragonese control of Sicily. By the time of Charles I's death in 1285, his great Mediterranean empire was a shattered dream, and his kingdom had been reduced to the Italian Mezzogiorno. Despite its mutilation, it remained the "Kingdom of Sicily" throughout the period under discussion here.[12]

The Angevin period nevertheless remained one of international influence, prosperity, and cultural and religious brilliance for Naples. The war and its aftermath, and the Angevins' possessions in Anjou, Provence, and Piedmont, created an immediate surge in the city's population and commercial activity. Merchants from Catalonia, Marseilles, and Tuscany founded trade emporiums; bankers and investors soon filled the new section of the city to the southwest of the late Roman imperial walls; while to the east and south, along the waterfront, a new manufacturing district around Piazza del Mercato arose. Charles II also began construction on the castle of Belforte on Mount San Martino above the Certosa of San Martino, which was begun in 1325 under his successor Robert of Anjou and was completed under his granddaughter Joanna I. Because it is not known how much of the original Greco-Roman city within the walls remained fully inhabited, population estimates for the period vary widely, anywhere from 12,600 in around 600 to about 30,000 by about 1278.[13] Archaeological evidence beginning to emerge suggests that, as in medieval Rome, large stretches of medieval Naples were deserted or

converted into small-scale garden farms and vineyards or into extended *domus* and *curte*: residential complexes with either interior courts or gardens derived from ancient atrium and hortus housing types.[14]

Charles II's son, Robert of Anjou, the Wise (c. 1278–1343), and his second queen, Sancia of Majorca (1286–1345), ruled a Naples at the forefront of European culture and helped nurture the earliest geniuses of the Italian Renaissance.[15] The court of Naples became a meeting place of poets and scholars from the Regno, theologians from northern Italy, dissident and heterodox reformers, and great writers and artists. The king's reputation for learning was known throughout Europe, and he was immortalized by Dante for his deep, if prolix, sermonizing. Petrarch recounts Robert's keen interest in the city's classical remains and legends, and Boccaccio paints a lively picture of the city's sophisticated culture, social mores, and personalities.

During Robert's reign, the kingdom and city of Naples became the focal point of Italian politics. Robert tried five times to regain Sicily, now the "Kingdom of Trinacria," with an immense war fleet based at the Arsenal, built between 1301 and 1307 next to the Castel Nuovo. He extended his influence over Rome and was at times overlord or "protector" of Florence and Tuscany and the upholder of Guelph affinity in Italy for the papacy during its exile in Avignon. Yet his war efforts and his feudal "census" payments to the papacy – the price for Charles I's crown – exerted tremendous pressures on the kingdom and the city by way of taxes and in the concessions that Robert was forced to grant the already independent-minded barons. By the mid-fourteenth century, there were 3,455 fiefs of the lower nobility in the kingdom, not including the great barons or the patricians of the cities. Most of these nobles were so poor that their desire for livable holdings created a constant menace to central authority, their own impoverished rural populations, and the maintenance of law and order.

With the expansion of the city's residential quarters southwest, including the royal quarter along the Largo delle Corregge between the Castel Nuovo and the old city walls,[16] to the west toward San Giovanni Maggiore, and to the southeast of the city around the Piazza Mercato, the population of Naples reached new heights in this period just before 1350, cresting to 100,000 along with Venice, Milan, and Florence, the largest cities of Europe. Paris at the time numbered only 80,000, while Constantinople, the largest city in the West, probably totaled 200,000.[17]

Yet the city had reached its medieval limit. Robert's reign shared much of the good fortune of the Italian peninsula and Europe in the first quarter of the Trecento: growing population, expanding trade, and capital surpluses that resulted in expanded urban life and the support for cultural enterprises on a large-scale basis. The Angevins, however – like most of the Italian political entities of the time – were living on borrowed time.[18] Deep structural problems caused by the overextension of arable lands, a limited monetary supply, and government inefficiencies would soon be exposed. The Black Death became the catastrophic tipping point that revealed already endemic fault lines.

In October 1347, the plague arrived at Messina, Sicily, aboard a ship from the Crimea. It reached Naples along the trade routes within a few weeks. Within two months, according to one estimate, it killed 63,000 in and around the city. It returned in 1362, 1382, 1399, and 1411. By the end of the fourteenth century, according to one estimate, the population of Naples had been reduced to 36,000. Drastic population declines, of up to two-thirds in places, shortfalls in agricultural output, famine, great inflation, and decreases in the tax base all contributed to slow the pace of growth and to exacerbate the already growing economic failures, social disorder, and political confusion that characterized the early Renaissance throughout Italy.

While Robert and Sancia were able to stem the tide of disorder, their successors were not as fortunate. Robert's son, Charles, duke of Calabria, died in 1328, and upon Robert's death in 1343, therefore, no direct male heir was available, though the Angevins' family ties with the throne of Hungary offered some possibilities. Queen Sancia became regent for Charles's daughter, who came to the throne as Joanna I (r. 1343–1382). History has not been kind to Naples's ruling Angevin queens, neither Sancia nor the two Joannas. Married to her cousin Prince Andrea of Hungary in 1342, Joanna I

lived through her husband's grisly murder, the invasion of Naples by his brother Louis of Hungary and the devastation to the Regno that it produced, her own exile to Avignon, her marriage to her cousin and ongoing rival Louis of Taranto, her restoration to Naples, and two further marriage alliances.[19]

During the Great Schism between the rival Roman and Avignon lines of popes (1378–1417), Joanna I took the side of Clement VII of the Avignon line of popes against Urban VI, former archbishop of Bari and now the Roman pope. Urban retaliated by excommunicating the queen and raising up as her rival Charles of Durazzo (Charles III), the son of Robert the Wise's nephew. Charles conquered Naples in 1381 and had Joanna murdered in 1382. By that time, however, Joanna had adopted Duke Louis I of Anjou as her heir. He, however, died in 1384. Charles III then went off to assert the Angevin claim to the crown of Hungary and was assassinated there in 1386. Louis II of Anjou then invaded the Regno, but Charles's young son, Ladislas of Durazzo, managed to retain the throne by allying with the Roman papacy in 1399.

During this "Durazzan" period, the noble families of Naples exploited royal weaknesses by seizing the government of the city and redividing it into five district councils or *seggi* (*sedile*), already long-existing local councils, each controlled by its own faction. By 1386, they felt strong enough to elect six nobles and two *popolani*, as the non-noble merchant class was called, as a city government and later to force concessions from the young King Ladislas.[20] Upon Ladislas's death in 1414, his younger sister, Joanna II (r. 1414–1435), came to power. She attempted to stave off the growing power of the Neapolitan barons by forming marriage and love alliances with useful men. Heirless, in 1421 she adopted Alfonso V, king of Aragon and Sicily since 1416, but quickly disowned him and drove him out in 1423, turning instead to her French cousin, Louis III of Anjou (d. 1434), and then to his brother, the romantic, and ill fated, René of Anjou.

The Aragonese, 1442–1495

When Joanna II died in 1435, claims to the kingdom were divided between the house of Anjou, through dynastic lineage and the adoptive clams of Duke, now King, René and the house of Aragon, through Alfonso's adoption in 1421. Aragon had long been a major Mediterranean power since it had consolidated its own kingdom in the eleventh century and then conquered Catalonia with Barcelona, the Balearics, Sardinia, Sicily, and portions of Greece. René, held prisoner until 1438 by Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, could not match Alfonso's initiative or resources.

In 1442, after Alfonso had been laying siege to Naples for weeks, a Neapolitan showed him the very same aqueduct used by Belisarius to enter Naples 900 years before. On June 6, Alfonso took the city; after years of war, René abandoned the kingdom. Despite the Neapolitans' loyalty to René and the Angevins and their hostility to the Catalans, Alfonso, the Magnanimous,[21] followed up his conquest by showering mercy and favors upon the city and made Naples a major center of the new visual culture of the Quattrocento. As Alfonso I of Naples (r. 1442–1458),[22] he built new piazzas, water systems, and fountains, and he repaired walls and streets, palaces, and religious institutions.

Alfonso's reign saw the establishment of a humanist center at the razed and rebuilt Castel Nuovo (still ironically referred to by Neapolitans as the Maschio Angioino) and at the revived *studium*, or university of Naples. Among the major humanists whom he patronized were Bartolomeo Facio, Lorenzo Valla, Giannozzo Manetti, Panormita (Antonio Beccadelli), Giovanni Pontano, the noted Greek scholar George of Trebizond. He refurbished the royal library, which had been moved from Castel Capuano to the Castel Nuovo after its renovation, vastly increased its size and importance, sponsored philosophical and literary discussions at the Academy there, and opened it up to selected students at the *studium*. Alfonso also turned Naples into one of the first capitals of an early modern state, establishing a permanent class of well-educated professionals and a bureaucracy drawn from the urban middle class, which he utilized to check the barons' power.

In the face of foreign war and invasion, baronial revolt, and the devastating earthquake of 1450, Alfonso's heirs continued the beautification and enrichment of the city. By the beginning of the

sixteenth century, Naples was on the brink of becoming the largest city in Europe. By 1500, its population reached an estimated 150,000, larger than Venice or Milan and twice the size of London. Fifty years later, it had reached 210,000. By contrast, the population of Constantinople, the largest city of the Mediterranean in the early modern period, numbered 80,000 in 1478 and 400,000 around 1530.[23] The Aragonese seaborne empire and Naples's predominance in southern Italy brought to the city a vast network of commercial trade and manufacturing. Administrators and nobility flocked to it from all over the South and abroad. The Aragonese regularized taxation and finance, granting Naples and other cities much autonomy in local administration. Under Alfonso's son, Ferrante I (r. 1458–1494), manufacturing was expanded and supported throughout the kingdom, iron mines were opened in Calabria, and the printing industry[24] was launched in Naples. The famed *Tavola Strozzi* (Plates I-IV), now at the Museo di San Martino, accurately reflects the beauty and importance of the city about 1472.[25]

Under Alfonso II (r. 1494–1495), Naples became the projected site of the most ambitious urban redevelopment plan of the Renaissance[26]; architect Giuliano de Maiano expanded the eastern walls north from Castel del Carmine (Sperone), built by Charles II, to San Giovanni a Carbonara. One stretch of these walls and several typical Aragonese towers still stand, as do their Porta Capuana and Porta Nolana built at the same time. In 1487, the palace at Poggioreale was designed by Giuliano da Maiano northeast of Porta Capuana. To the west, a new expanse was added in the area now defined by Via Toledo (Roma) and Sta. Brigida. During this period, the city became famed for its gardens and elegant villas capping the crests to the west of the city.

Despite their largesse to the city and its gains during the Quattrocento, the Aragonese dynasty shared the insecurity of all late medieval and early modern dynasties throughout Europe and never rested secure on its throne. In 1459, Ferrante was faced with a serious revolt of the barons, in league with the aged René and Jean of Anjou, that was finally subdued in 1465; in the 1470s and 1480s, Naples was a key player in the Italian balance of power. In 1480, the Turks shocked Europe with the sack of Otronto, but perhaps an even worse enemy to Naples than the Turks was the Roman papacy, which under Pope Innocent VIII was strongly allied with the house of Anjou and through it with the French Crown, stirring up another barons' revolt in 1485/86. The 1490s brought catastrophe to Naples and to Italy as a whole. With Lorenzo de' Medici's death in 1492, the fragile balance of the peninsula wobbled, and an alliance between Lodovico Sforza, duke-regent of Milan, and King Charles VIII of France finally tipped it.

Charles lived in the hope of extending French rule over the old Angevin lands to the south; Lodovico Sforza's invitation to play his hand in Italian politics gave him the opportunity when Ferrante died in January 1494. Ferrante's son, Alfonso II, quickly allied with the papacy. But their defensive strategy failed, and Charles turned south with a huge army (40,000), panicking Alfonso, who in 1495 abdicated in favor of his son Ferdinand II (also called Ferrante II or Ferrandino, r. 1495–1496) and fled to a monastery in Sicily. With barons in revolt and Naples in anarchy, Charles entered the city, almost without a fight, in February 1495.

The Spanish and the Hapsburg Viceroyalty, 1504–circa 1550

By May 1495, Charles's hold on Naples was already tenuous, given long supply lines, an untrustworthy nobility, and the heavy toll of disease. By July, Ferdinand II had retaken the city, and by 1496 he had added most of the kingdom. All seemed on the mend when Ferdinand fell ill and died in October. The throne passed to Ferdinand's uncle Frederick (r. 1496–1501), but by then the papacy had allied with the French, and in 1500 the French in turn had signed the Treaty of Granada to divide the Regno with a newly unified Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella. While Ferdinand of Aragon (Ferdinand the Catholic of Spain) had supported the Aragonese against both baronial revolt and the French, he now worked to dismember the Aragonese inheritance and absorb it into the new kingdom of Spain. By 1502, the French and Spanish were fighting one another, and by 1504 Ferdinand the Catholic's lieutenant in Italy, Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba,[27] had won the entire kingdom for Spain, fighting off a new French

invasion, this time under Louis XII. The last Aragonese claimant to the throne died in Spain, a well-treated prisoner of Charles V, in 1550.

With Ferdinand the Catholic's conquest and visit in 1506 came the period of the Spanish viceroyalty over Naples, which would last until 1734 under successive Hapsburg and Bourbon monarchies. In 1517, the Hapsburg Charles I of Spain inherited the throne of Naples, and he soon added it to his vast domain when he was elected Emperor Charles V. The most powerful monarch of his age, Charles ruled separately as king of Spain and as emperor over Germany, Austria and its eastern territories, the Low Countries, imperial Burgundy, and all the Spanish overseas empire in the New World and all its territories in the Mediterranean. He also inherited control over most of northern Italy from the Holy Roman Empire.

The wars of Charles V and Francis I (Valois) of France[28] brought further havoc to Italy and saw the sack of Rome in 1527. A fresh French attack on Naples came in 1528 when Francis's lieutenant, Odet de Foix, viscount of Lautrec, besieged the city and cut it off with a naval blockade. Only his death, along with most of his army from the plague, and Charles V's alliance with Genoa and its fleet under Andrea Doria saved the city and kingdom for the Hapsburgs.

Naples thus became one part of this great empire, ruled – as was Mexico or Peru – by a Spanish viceroy. Under his authority sat a series of *audiencias*, or courts, with their *presidentes*, local *alcades* (judges of minor crimes), and *corregidores* (appointed administrators). Local voices were heard in open councils, called *cabildos abiertos*. Firmly behind these colonial officials were the Spanish infantry, the dreaded *tercios*, so named after their unbeatable military formations. Nevertheless, Neapolitan feelings were respected; a parliament was reestablished to air the views and grievances of the baronage; and Neapolitans retained the privilege of appealing directly to the king in Spain, while the *seggi* kept much of their local powers. Relations remained cordial as long as the Neapolitans remained conscious of the Spanish garrisons within the city and the vast new bastions of Castel Sant'Elmo (Belforte), its guns aimed squarely at the city center.

The reign of viceroy Pedro de Toledo (r. 1532–1553)[29] marked a milestone in the conversion of Naples into a capital of a different kind: as one provincial center in a colonial empire. Toledo is properly credited with the rapid revitalization of a city left desolated by decades of war and neglect under the first viceroys. He expanded the city westward, extending the northern ramparts up the slopes of Mount San Martino to Castel Sant'Elmo and revamping the city's fortifications to include Pizzofalcone, the perimeters of Castel dell'Ovo, and the newly expanded Castel Nuovo. Within this enormous area of 150 hectares, Toledo established a new urban district, focused on an innovative grid plan that housed his Spanish garrisons in buildings three stories or higher, known ever since as the Spanish Quarter. The central corridor of this new expansion, paralleling the old western walls, remains known as the Via Toledo. To the east, Toledo transformed the old Castel Capuano into the viceregal administrative center of the city and Regno, bringing together (1540–1541) into this new "Vicaria" the prison and the civil, criminal, religious, and financial tribunals. To the south, he reinforced the old Aragonese walls along the waterfront, expanded the Arsenal, and eased access to the waterfront markets around Piazza del Mercato. The viceroy accompanied this with improvements to the ancient urban core: paving the streets and destroying encroachments along them, rebuilding the water and sewage systems, installing a series of monumental fountains, and reviving the aqueduct system.

The motives for Toledo's work were varied: the impending visit to Naples of Emperor Charles V in 1535–1536 spurred his first efforts, the continued threat of Turkish attack continued his work on defenses, and the unrenounced claims of France made defense of the city's western periphery an ongoing necessity. But Toledo also wanted to ensure that Naples functioned as the most important provincial capital of Charles V's widespread empire, and Renaissance ideals of city normalization and beautification coincided well with Naples's role in this larger political context.

However, despite these achievements, Pedro de Toledo apparently saw his mission as one of colonial administration: he and his Spanish colleagues

in the imperial bureaucracy focused almost solely on defense and the display of power and configured the city for those purposes. He and his bureaucracy saw little need to address many of the fundamental structural shortcomings of an urban fabric under extreme duress as his very policies drove masses of southern Italian nobility and countryfolk into the city. Between 1500 and 1550, the already overcrowded area of Naples increased by approximately thirty percent, while its population swelled by more than forty percent. By 1528, the population stood at between 150,000 and 220,000 (depending on estimates), second only to Paris. Despite losses of some 60,000 in the plague of 1529–1530, it quickly recovered. But Toledo did nothing to alleviate overcrowding and lack of economic opportunity within the ancient urban core. In addition, his mercantile policies favored both Florentine and Genoese commercial interests at the expense of the native Neapolitan merchant class. Such policies permanently imperiled the growth of an urban bourgeoisie that could both create excess wealth (and its resulting cultural production) within the city and Regno and counter the overweening policy influence of the Spanish monarchy and its dependent Neapolitan aristocracy.

Naples had also remained a haven for religious dissidents and intellectuals of all types, but almost immediately upon his appointment Pedro de Toledo moved to dismantle the city's vibrant humanist and academic traditions, suppressing the academies and limiting the freedom of the university. In 1547, his campaign to impose the Spanish Inquisition rapidly led to a general revolt that forced Charles V to retract the gambit. The viceroy remained feared and respected, acknowledged for his urban improvements but personally unpopular throughout his reign – so much so that in 1552 Charles V effectively recalled him by reassigning him to Tuscany.

Nevertheless, the city also benefited from its membership in Charles V's multinational empire. By the mid-sixteenth century, the economy of Naples had come to center on its luxury markets: "Naples had no equivalent in Christendom. . . . [It produced] lace, braids, frills, trimmings, silks, light fabrics (taffetas), silken knots and cockades of all colours, and fine linens. These goods travelled as far as Cologne in large quantities. . . . Pieces of so-called Santa Lucia silk were even resold at Florence."[30] The countryside abounded with fresh produce, and sheep for wool and food, as well as other livestock.[31] Florence and Venice were major markets for Neapolitan goods and raw materials; the trade within the Spanish empire remained a continuous source of wealth. Even with the gradual shift of maritime and commercial fortune to the Atlantic seaboard states, by 1605 Naples's fleet had a total tonnage of about 40,000, equal to that of Venice or Marseilles, while all of England had about 100,000 tons and Spain about 175,000.[32] The city and its wealth played a key role in the defeat of the Turkish fleet at Lepanto in 1572.

Wealth had its troubling side, however. The increasingly impoverished rural population continued to stream into the city. By 1595, the city's population would rise to between 280,000 and 300,000, twice that of Venice, still second in Europe only to Paris. The population of the kingdom as a whole, from which the city of Naples drew its numbers and its wealth, soared between 1505 and 1587 from 1 million to 3 million.[33] Most of this new population made Naples a center of immigration unlike almost any other European capital: tightly restricted to its original tufa platform and Greek grid plan, with expansions restricted either to the Spanish Quarter or to the aristocratic villas dotting the hills of Sant'Elmo and Posillipo (as seen in the *Tavola Strozzi*), the residents of the city had little choice but to build up. Naples boasted some of the very first high-rise apartments in Europe since the Roman *insulae*. These buildings still mark the core of the old city, visible, for example, all along the Via Carbonara or dotted amid the grander urban palaces of Naples's aristocracy. Complete urban renewal in Naples would have to await the Risorgimento and the often brutal Risanamento of 1887 to 1898[34] that forever removed many traces of the historic core.

Naples in Modern and Postmodern Thought

With rare exceptions,[35] until the 1990s, Naples and its kingdom[36] had been a neglected field of history and interpretation in the Anglophone world. There are several reasons for this. The first derives from

the nineteenth-century outlook of most historical writing in English: medieval studies long focused on northern Europe, especially France, Germany, and England, while Renaissance history, even of Italy, had tended to focus on the northern and republican centers of the period. This fit well with the liberal and democratic tendencies of the Anglophone students of the Italian Renaissance through the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth. Naples, both the city as capital and the Regno, were long associated with royalty: with the Norman dynasty, the imperial dreams of the Hohenstaufen, the dynastic conflicts of the Angevins and the house of Aragon, and then with the autocratic monarchies of the late Renaissance and early modern Europe, and the Spanish under Ferdinand the Catholic and his Hapsburg heirs.

Coincident with this was the emphasis of historians on examining the origins and development of Renaissance humanism as an expression of this same urban and democratic culture, of a "civic humanism"[37] that purportedly expressed the desires and values of a bourgeois and republican way of life. Thus, again, historians tended to concentrate on humanism's northern centers: Florence, Siena, Milan, Venice, and, in the High Renaissance, Rome. Once these northern centers had abandoned their late medieval republican traditions and entered a period of dynastic and territorial state building under strong centralized rule, the historiography generally shifted to models of aristocratic, mercantile, and clerical humanism[38] that would accommodate interpretations of state building as well as new interpretive frames that could account for such social and political shifts: patronage, ritual and display, patterns of new economic and social construction,[39] the history of social and artistic consumption, or the straightforward development of humanism as an academic and intellectual discipline, divorced from any larger contexts. Yet even with these shifts to modes and structures that more closely resemble those of Naples in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, the focus of attention remained the North.

This tendency had been reinforced by the canons of artistic taste of the nineteenth century and the legacy of Romanticism, which tended to view first the Gothic of the North and of northern Italy[40] and then, through most of the twentieth century, the flowering of Renaissance style in Tuscany and northern Italy as the normative periods of Italian art. Naples, long associated with the glory of the baroque, suffered the disdain of the mid-twentieth century for its style, ethic, and association with the papal Counter-Reformation.[41]

More mundane reasons have also contributed to this long neglect of Neapolitan history. Perhaps the most pervasive is the tourist image of Italy first formed by Anglophones in the late nineteenth century with the end of the Grand Tour,[42] which formerly had made Naples and its bay a focus of travel and acquisition. For twentieth-century Anglophones, the cities of Rome, Florence, and Venice became the points of an ironclad triangle of travel, both for the obvious attractions and beauties of these places and their environs and for the cultural framework with which Anglophones had come to view Italy after the Risorgimento.

This attitude, moreover, belied another Anglophone attitude, one that is, unfortunately, still shared by a great many Italians and Europeans themselves: that the Mezzogiorno, the "South" of Italy, is a land of poverty, ignorance, backwardness, and cultural deprivation, a region – and a capital city – beset by corruption, crime, and the stereotypical *"far niente,"* southern Italian.[43] This remained an image reinforced, in the United States at least, by the daily occurrence of Italian dichotomies: the cultured art, literature, even cuisine, of the North, as opposed to the supposedly poor, immigrant culture of Naples and the South portrayed weekly in newspaper and new electronic media reporting on issues of crime, corruption, environmental degradation, and urban crisis that, while very real, are not confined to the south of an Italy now in deep structural crisis.

Nor is this viewpoint restricted to popular media. As Nelson Moe, building on the work of Edward Said, has made clear, the "Southern Question" is at heart about cultural representation.[44] As such, it has taken an unconscious, almost mythic, hold on intellectuals dealing with questions of Italian culture.[45] The question thus goes beyond strict textuality to issues of visual representation that profoundly affect art-historical analysis. Some modern interpretation of Naples as an urban – and hence architectural and artistic – phenomenon has taken

firm hold in postmodern critical thinking as an ironic variant to this attitude. In addition, the Southern Question and the *meridionalisti* movement have objectified the South and deprived it of agency in their very formulation, for the Southern Question is not a question posed *by* the South but one *about* the South. So, too, *meridionalismo*, in contrast to a modern counterpart, *tropicalismo*,[46] is derived not from southern thought or culture but from the North's attempt to culturally define and politically subjugate the South. Theory has retained these nineteenth-century outlooks but reframed them in heavily coded postmodern terms, perhaps first seen in Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis's 1925 essay[47] and their concept of the "porosity" of Naples: its indolence, formlessness, and almost organic, precivilized nature. More recently, Victor Burgin, for example, has taken these tropes one step further, emphasizing the Oedipal, precivilized, even preadult and preconscious nature of the Neapolitan character and culture:[48] a peculiar expression of the urbanist theory of the bodily, organic nature of urban experience well summarized elsewhere by Richard Sennett.[49]

This notion of Neapolitan culture emerging out of the volcanic tufa, preconscious and organic, sets a faulty foundation for art-historical and more broad cultural inquiry. It becomes the condescending verso of outright hostility, colored by a Romantic appreciation of Naples's supposed affinities to a natural order long overcome in more civilized parts of Europe. Under these interpretations, Naples thus becomes a phantasmagoric carnival of dysfunction, of social and political incoherence, and of postmodern collapse of meaning and mediation, a "place of delirium"[50] that celebrates its stereotypical qualities of otherness, of the unconsciousness emerging organically from lava and stone, of the collapse of interpretive certainty reflected in thick, yet impenetrable and unreadable, urban contexts and affinities, and of derivative artistic traditions.[51]

So too, therefore, must we classify recent interpretations of the city's urbanistic growth as "organically" derived from its ancient Greek plan. As the following chapters will demonstrate, the fact that we are dealing with a Mediterranean city, not a northern European one, does not negate the interplay between private interest and public space[52] and the rational decision-making – the agency – of the city's authorities, both secular and clerical, in this process. Thus the rhetoric of "organic" or "poetic" urbanism espoused by this school of thought might not reflect any Neapolitan reality but in the end simply reflect this same archetypal attitude toward the South as exotic other. This is ironic because, while seeking to explain the Neapolitan cultural phenomenon from an internal point of view, such theoretical approaches merely reinforce – again in highly coded terms – the externalized tourist approach to much contemporary coverage of the city. In this cultural-studies approach, Naples becomes a postmodern equivalent of the patronized other exploited in ghetto tourism.[53]

This is also reflected – and deflected – by an interesting dynamic in the following chapters. The serious divergence of opinion on the autonomy of Naples itself as an artistic and politico-economic capital remains at the core of this book. It thus appears that, unlike many other artistic "capitals" of the Renaissance, Naples itself remained contested into the modern era in its historiography and in the interpretation of its artistic and urbanistic heritage. *"Napoli capitale"* has been the title of any number of important studies of the city, and the term itself is laden with value – an assertion among Italian writers from the late nineteenth century through the twentieth.[54] But it remains a contested question seeking various types of answers among the larger scholarly community: can we really term Naples an artistic "capital" at all?

Another aspect of this tendency to stress the "otherness" of Naples is couched more in terms of Jacob Burckhardt's[55] or Stephen Greenblatt's[56] theses of the legitimization of the precarious Renaissance persona. The scholarly tendency to trace links to cultural and religious roots outside Naples effectually emphasizes the foreignness of Neapolitan artistic styles and periodizations, beginning with the Angevins and the French Gothic model. While this is still somewhat valid for the first generation after the Angevin conquest, there remains the danger of overusing it as an analytical category. Early studies of late medieval and early Renaissance art in the city and Regno tended to confuse the general appropriation of the Gothic style throughout Italy (to a greater or lesser extent and success) with a