


Notes and commentary by



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## Geographical position

Italy is situated in the centre of the Mediterranean sea whose fame is mainly linked to the many civilizations which prospered on its shores.

Over the centuries Phoenician, Greek, Carthaginian, Arab, Norman people and others have settled down in our peninsula and have overlapped on the local cultures, thus contributing to make Italy an extraordinary country, rich in archaeological and artistic remains.

Statistics elaborated by **UNESCO** show that more than half of the world artistic heritage is in Italy, which is only 0,25 % of lands above sea level.

Tourism is a huge resource for the imposing archaeological remains, the works of art and the varied and pleasant landscapes. Italy occupies a highly strategic vantage point and it constitutes a sort of bridge between Africa and Asia on one hand and Europe on the other.

Naples is certainly one of the richest towns for art, culture and breath-taking landscapes

*Naples!*

*Thou Heart of men which ever pantest  
Naked, beneath the lidless eye of Heaven!  
Elysian City, which to calm enchantest  
The mutinous air and sea!  
(P.B.Shelley, Ode to Naples)*



The largest city of Campania, capital of the province and the region, Naples is the third most populated city in Italy (after Rome and Milan), with over a million inhabitants, and is the most important industrial centre and trading port for the South. It is situated halfway down the Tyrrhenian coast, at the innermost point of the Bay of Naples, between Vesuvius and the Phlegrean Fields. and wonderful isles of Capri, Ischia and Procida.

It has a mild and constant climate, with average temperatures of 16° C and a serene sky for at least half the year. Among the major industries are metalworking, oil refineries, mechanics (naval and railroad), electricity and food producing. The artistic crafting of coral and tortoise shell flourishes

## Historical notes

According to the legend, Partenope, a mermaid, gave her name to the city that rose around her tomb; but, even if we leave out old myths and the more or less reliable hypotheses on its origin, it is certain that Naples began its life in 470 B.C. from the union of two ancient cities of Greek origin, Palaepolis (old city) and Neapolis (new city); it expanded during the Roman period, keeping unaltered for centuries the character of a Greek city. Already famous in the classical era, it was praised by historians and poets for its beauty and civilization. When the city became a Roman colony, gymnasiums, porticos, aqueducts, schools, new streets, tunnels were gradually built while the Roman patricians made Naples their favourite seaside resort, populating the coast with magnificent villas. In VIII century Naples became the seat of a dukedom that preserved its autonomy up to 1139, when it was annexed to the kingdom, founded by Ruggero II, the Norman. In **1224** Frederick Barbarossa, duke of Swabia, made the city the intellectual capital of his kingdom, by founding a University. In 1266 with Carlo d'Angiò, Naples became the capital of a kingdom to which Carlo d'Angiò gave his own name. With one of his successors, Robert the Wise, the city awakened to new life. The population increased, more and more sacred and civil buildings were built and several colonies of Florentines, Lombards, Catalans and Provençals, settled down in the city and gave great impulse to industries, trade and commerce.

Intrigues, tragedies, political fights determined the fall of the Angevin dynasty till, under Alfonso il Magnanimo, a new period of splendour started which lasted until 1504, when Southern Italy was subjected to Spanish domination, exploited and overtaxed by the dominators. Naples was practically enslaved for two centuries; nevertheless the city continued to change and expand itself, especially during viceroy Pietro de Toledo's government (1532-1553) when important works were carried out. Among them there were the widening of the city walls and the opening of a new street – Via Toledo - which still bears the viceroy's name.

In 1734 with the Bourbon dynasty, Naples rose once more to the rank of a capital.

Thanks to new buildings and many imposing works, Naples became one of the most attractive towns in Europe, the place illustrious Italian and foreign travellers, such as Wolfgang Goethe, preferred.

In 1806 Bonaparte proclaimed himself King of Naples. During the French domination, the city enjoyed a good period of prosperity and civil progress and improved in the field of culture and economic reforms.

In 1815 the Bourbon dynasty returned to the throne, and the city made further progress: it was in Naples that the first steamboat was built (1818), the first railway (Napoli-Portici) was inaugurated (1839), the first telegraphic communications were used. In 1848 the Neapolitan Navy was the third in Europe.

The famous sentence “**Vedi Napoli e poi muori**” ( See Naples and die) was coined during the Kingdom of the Bourbon dynasty, a period generally considered the golden age of Naples. The kingdom, called “Il **Regno delle due Sicilie**” was the richest and the most industrialized of all Italian states till it became part of the Kingdom of Italy. After London and Paris, Naples was the most densely populated town in Europe and also one of the wealthiest. Nowadays a tour of Naples is not considered exhaustive without a visit to Palazzo Reale, to the Reggia di Capodimonte and to the three Castles which in ancient times were used to protect the country. They are Maschio Angioino, Castel dell'Ovo and Castel Sant'Elmo.



Royal Palace (interior)



## The Castles

**Maschio Angioino** was built in 1282 by order of Charles I of Anjou and was named Maschio Angioino in his honour.

**Castel dell'Ovo** (The Egg Castle), built in 1349 by order of Robert of Anjou on the small island of **Megaride**, stands in the centre of the gulf, between the **Mergellina** marina and **Borgo Marinaro**, the little area where fishermen used to live and work. According to a medieval legend, the Roman poet Virgil, who in ancient times was considered a powerful wizard, hid an egg inside a jug hanging in one of the rooms of the castle. Tradition has it that when the egg falls and breaks, the castle and the entire city will fall to ruin.

**Castel Sant'Elmo**, too, was built by Robert of Anjou: its construction was completed in 1343.



Maschio Angioino





Castel dell'Ovo

The castle and the adjacent **Certosa di San Martino** form an important group of buildings situated on the hill on whose slopes the Vomero neighbourhood has grown up.

The building, whose architectural features from a distance resemble those of Castel dell'Ovo, was one of the city's fortifications and was used above all to protect it against invasions from the sea. King Charles V, through his viceroy Pedro de Toledo, rebuilt the castle in 1537. The star-shaped plan of the castle dates back to that period.



Castel Sant'Elmo

## Capri

Soaring up from the depths of the sea, Capri's limestone composition is revealed in the island's slopes and its steep but unusually lovely dolomite walls, not to mention its numerous natural grottoes that, together with the cliffs in the southeast, have made the Isle of Capri world famous.

The slow but unrelenting fluctuation in the island's shoreline caused a drop in the water level in the famous "**Grotta Azzurra**" (Blue Grotto) and the "**Bagni di Tiberio**" (Tiberian Baths). The island attained its greatest glory under Caesar Augustus' successor, Tiberius, whom took up residence on Capri about **26 BC**, from where he ruled the Roman Empire for the last ten years of his reign. Capri's popularity with international tourist is due in good part to its rediscovery by some of the world's most famous writers.

In addition to its historic, literary and scenic wonders, Capri can be boast of excellent beaches, making it one of the world's leading swimming and climatic resorts.

With its characteristic arcades that merge into a labyrinth of narrow alleys and streets, Capri, main town on the Isle of Capri works its own special charm on every visitor. The steps of the famous **Piazzetta** are an unofficial rendezvous for a colourful congregation of guests from all over the world, who take in the attractive view from here.

Also **Marina Piccola** is very charming as well as the **Natural Arch** and **Anacapri**, from where you can reach Mount Solaro by chair-lift, and finally the Villa Museum of S. Michele



Capri – I Faraglioni



Capri – L'Arco Naturale

## Pompei

The eruption of the **Vesuvius** raged from the afternoon of **August 24th** through to the **26th of 79 A.D.** An enormous cloud in the shape of a pine tree appeared and it changed colour continuously. The tremors went on unabated, shaking the buildings to their foundations, and everybody chose to stay out in the open, covering their heads with cushions to protect themselves from the storm of scorching particles, rather than risk being buried under falling masonry. The light of the sun was unable to penetrate the thick veil of soot hanging over the never-ending eruption, while the condition of wind and sea continued to make escape impossible.

A "vertical section" of the city of **Pompeii** in the last decades of its life before eruption of Vesuvius, would offer a picture of roads, inns, taverns bustling with people, brothels in full activity, stall keepers in the forum, the amphitheatre cram-full of people, who were very fond of sports, always ready for a brawl, walls covered with election slogans in favour of this or that candidate, graffiti with names, quips, love messages everywhere.

The **House of the Faun** is one of the most beautiful examples of a private house in the ancient world because of its size, the elegance of its architecture and the splendid mosaics. **House of the Vettii** is the most admired; it is full of very well preserved paintings, statues, decorations and wonderful rooms. **Villa dei Misteri**, a large construction (55 rooms), is also famous because of its beautiful paintings inspired by the Dionysiac rites that took place there.



House of the Vettii



House of the Faun



## Herculaneum

**Herculaneum** (Ercolano) was an Italic city founded around the **Vlth century B.C.** It copied, in the geometric regularity of its structures, the lay-out of **Naples**, if we consider how "decumani" (the main streets, with an east-west orientation) and "cardines" (narrower streets) resemble those of the Partenopean city.

The "feeling" inspired by **Herculaneum** is undeniably different from **Pompeii**. To a large extent this is due to the special circumstances of its interment by Vesuvius during the eruption in **79 A.D.** The city was not struck by ashes and lapilli, but by a torrent of mud flooding down along the slopes of the volcano. Having solidified and become tufalike, it has been for centuries the best possible defense against atmospheric agents and illegal excavators.

**Herculaneum** seems more elegant and refined than **Pompeii** because of the original character of its architecture and decoration and because of the natural position overlooking the gulf. The Roman seaside resort of Herculaneum, was no ordinary town. It was a seat of knowledge, frequented by some of the most famous minds of antiquity, including Virgil and Horace who studied within the walls of the **Villa dei Papiri**. Here, thousands of papyrus scrolls, turned into charcoal by the eruption, have been exhumed - scrolls that, incredibly, can now be opened and read. They are now shedding light on how the Romans lived, their philosophy of life and their attitudes to sex, slaves and gods.



Hercules



Teseo

## Capodimonte Porcelains

The Capodimonte Porcelain Manufacture finds its origin in 1738, when King Charles married Maria Amalia Valpurga, the grand-daughter of Augustus the Strong, who had founded the famous Meissen Porcelain Manufacture.

The King intended to keep the memory of the royal wedding alive and also raise the kingdom to the level of some of the most prestigious European Courts, such as the Saxon, the French and the Hapsburg courts that all had their own porcelain manufacture.

The success of Capodimonte porcelain is certainly due to a fortunate harmonisation of the tender high feldspar and high quality raw material which heightened the beautiful miniatures made with the tip of his brush by Giovanni Caselli. The tender quality of the material allows the coating to “absorb” the decoration and therefore the miniatures seem as made “under the glass”. The Biscuit manufacture, soft white polished and transparent, was particularly famous so that the Capodimonte porcelain was considered superior to the French one.

An extraordinary compact varnish coat made them even more beautiful by giving them a uniform soft light and velvet-like delicate chromatic nuances.

A particular mention must be made of the exquisitely decorated and manufactured snuffboxes, jugs and basins, stick heads in different shapes, polychrome vases, fireside pots, home cups, coffeepots and milk jugs, dinner dishes with excellent Japanese-like decorations or landscapes, flowers, mythological scenes and views of Neapolitan villas. All these handiworks were marked by a blue lily.



## “La Napoletanità”

(This term refers to the Neapolitan people’s way of being, to their way of facing situations and events; it is the consequence of their own history and roots. It implies an optimistic attitude which springs out of the Neapolitans’ awareness of suffering. Neapolitan dialect is widely considered a language, endowed with its own rules, its grammar, its metrics. Italian-Neapolitan dictionaries have even been published. It is for his “Napoletanità” that the protagonist of “Napoli Milionaria” (by E. De Filippo) says: “Adda passà ‘a nuttata”, which means that night cannot but be over. Night here stands for misery, suffering, unhappiness or whatever is felt as negative in one’s life)

Superstitious belief is also a distinctive feature of Naples; the widespread habit of putting one’s money on the lottery is a consequence of these beliefs. The numbers have specific meanings related to a particular event, object or character. These meanings are summed up in a particular handbook called “La Smorfia”.

“La Napoletanità” is certainly summed up by two well-known figures: Totò and Pulcinella (Punchinello)

**Totò** was an incomparable mask from “Commedia dell’arte”; an extraordinary actor who was able to give dignity to the most ordinary film by means of an off hand speech, made up on the spur of the moment. He represented the champion of poor people, the winning law-breaker who attacks power and conventions using mockery as weapon.

The many characters Totò interpreted represent a universal portrait of poverty: Totò-Cinderella who lives one day as a prince, the next as a tramp; Totò-clown who tricks the bourgeois thanks to his inconsequential rhetoric; Totò-martyr of a society which only wants to rob him of his imagination; Totò-criminal who attacks society; Totò, the humbled man who exalts man’s dignity; Totò-an unlucky and shrewd beggar, but noble in his behavior; Totò-Pulcinella, who represents the sub proletarian hero in an age when middle class feelings and attitudes are rampant; Totò who unmask the world’s bad conscience by means of his words.

Totò’s countenance sums up the centuries of hunger, fear, suffering which have marked the life of Naples, the birthplace of human nature itself.



Pulcinella is the traditional Neapolitan mask par excellence; he has always represented the Neapolitan lower class which is typically hungry, vulgar, braggart, craven and desecrating.



In the evolution of the relationship between Pulcinella and Naples, Pulcinella and the theatre and in particular between Pulcinella and the actor, there was a central and enlightening moment in which the history of the performance in Naples became the standard of the history itself of Naples. It happened between the end of 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> century; it was the moment in which the comic opera - the so called **opera buffa** – established itself in Naples from where it spread all over Europe. For its peculiarities the comic opera was almost considered a “Neapolitan musical school”.

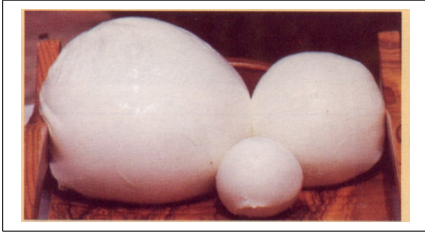
The relationship between Naples and music has always been very strong. There are songs as well poems written in Neapolitan which are well known all over the world. Apart from Conservatorio, the music school where through the centuries great musicians and performers have studied, the opera house – **Teatro San Carlo** – is one of the most famous and the oldest in Italy. This link between Naples and music goes on even nowadays: Riccardo Muti, one of the greatest conductors alive, was born in Naples.

Folk customs and usages are somehow reflected in gastronomy which implicitly shows the level of welfare, civilization and refinement of people. Neapolitans endowed with warm heart and feelings, substantially lacking material wealth, actually find in food one of the richest expressions of their character.

“**Maccheroni**”, as much as Pulcinella, have always symbolized “La Napoletanità”. In some popular prints we can observe how these two peculiar symbols of Naples interact: the eternally hungry Pulcinella who grasps “maccheroni” and brings them up to his mouth using three of his fingers.

But in Neapolitan tradition there is also **pizza**, of course. It is the symbol of poor and simple cooking and of the particular fantasy of the so called “pizzaioli”, whose work is the most noble and ancient in Naples. Their mastery consists in the way they work by hand a mixture of water, yeast and flour till, when it is ready, they bake it, constantly controlling and feeding the oven with firewood.

Campania is also the homeland of **Mozzarella di bufala**. The word mozzarella comes from the term "mozza", meaning "cut-off", and refers to the final stage of making this cheese. Campania buffalo-milk mozzarella is now the most important DOP (Protected Denomination of Origin) product in Campania. It is a fresh drawn-out cheese, produced in the humid southern coastal plains. According to gourmets, mozzarella should be eaten within 10-15 hours of its making. Homemade bread, mozzarella and sliced tomatoes make an excellent meal called "Caprese".



Another classic Neapolitan recipe is **spaghetti** with clams. They have to be

fresh, and served with their shells, that are used for a decor effect.

A particular hors d'oeuvre is prepared as a sauté with mussels, which have a strong and characteristic taste.

Neapolitan pastry has got a longstanding and glorious tradition and is characterized by the production of some cakes that cannot be found anywhere, such as "**babà**", "**sfogliatelle**", "**pastiera**". The first one, is soaked in rum, is very soft and it looks like a cone. Sfogliatella, usually tasted for breakfast, is a puff-pastry with ricotta cheese, sugar, citron and orange cubes. "Pastiera", which is a typical Easter cake, is particularly aromatic. Its ingredients are cottage cheese, boiled corn and different fragrances given by the citrus fruits.



**sfogliatella**



**pastiera**



**babà**



## 'O sole mio

Che bella cosa è na jurnata 'e  
sole,  
n'aria serena doppo na tempesta!  
Pe' ll'aria fresca para gia' na  
festa...  
Che bella cosa na jurnata 'e sole.

Ma n'atu sole  
cchiu' bello, oi ne',  
'o sole mio  
sta 'nfronate a te!

Luceno 'e lastre d'a fenesta toia;  
'na lavannara canta e se ne vanta  
e pe' tramente torce, spanne e  
canta,

Ma n'atu sole  
cchiu' bello, oi ne',  
'o sole mio  
sta 'nfronate a te!

Quanno fa notte e 'o sole se ne  
scenne,  
me vene quase na malincunia;  
sotta 'a fenesta toia restarria  
quanno fa notte e 'o sole se ne  
scenne.

Ma n'atu sole  
cchiu' bello, oi ne',  
'o sole mio  
sta 'nfronate a te!

## My sun

What a beautiful thing is a day of  
sun,  
calm is in the air after a storm!  
The air is so fresh it seems already  
a holiday...  
What a beautiful thing is a day of  
sun!

There is no other sun  
more beautiful  
my sun  
is on your forehead!

Sparkling are the glasses of your  
window,  
a wash lady sings and boast  
while she wrings, hangs out and  
sings.

There is no other sun  
more beautiful  
my sun  
is on your forehead!

When evening comes and the sun  
sets,  
I am assailed by melancholy.....  
I would remain under your window,

until is evening and the sun sets.

There is no other sun  
more beautiful  
my sun  
is on your forehead!

