

THE KOLLEKTIV

The official newsletter with the latest news and updates



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By Federica Marulo and Cor Wagenaar

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The Kollektiv is an initiative of the staff of the History and Theory of Architecture and Urbanism section of the University of Groningen (RUG). As we speak, more than 60 students – masters, premasters, bachelors – have joined the Kollektiv, all of them lovers of iconic cities, beautiful buildings and intriguing histories. After a successful trip to Budapest and Antwerp in 2022 and Hamburg and Groningen in 2023, we are quite confident many more interesting cities will be discovered in this initiative.

THE NAPLES EXCURSION

Hereby we would like to elaborate upon our coming adventure to Naples, Italy, **taking place from the 16th to the 21st of June!** Let us know if you would like to join by **sending an email to i.m.zorzou@rug.nl**. This excursion promises to immerse you in the rich and diverse architectural heritage of this vibrant city.



FRANCESCO STROZZI, TAVOLI STROZZI, 1472-1473 (MUSEO DI SAN MARTINO). VIEW OF NAPLES IN THE 15TH CENTURY

Naples: the palimpsest city

Naples, the largest metropolis in southern Italy, is a city where ancient, medieval, and modern elements coexist. This crossing of historical layers creates a unique urban fabric where traces of the city's long history are embedded. However, Naples' timeline cannot always be understood through the sequence of overlapping layers alone. Instead, Naples resembles a palimpsest in which the evolution of the urban landscape has been partial and discontinuous, leaving traces of previous stages intact. Through this lens, this excursion aims at going beyond those perspectives that often depict Naples as only a 'colonial' city, where foreign dynasties have left their mark as superimposed layers. Instead, it aims at unravelling the stratigraphic sequence that is simultaneously readable in many of its historic buildings and sites, going beyond stylistic categorizations.



AERIAL VIEW OF NAPLES WITH PIAZZA PLEBISCITO IN FRONT



AERIAL VIEW OF THE CENTRE OF NAPLES WITH THE SPACCANAPOLI

Preliminary program

SUNDAY, JUNE 16: ARRIVAL

- Arrival in Naples and check-in at the accommodation
- Afternoon: Orientation walk around the historic center of Naples

MONDAY, JUNE 17: THE ANCIENT CITY CENTRE

- The cathedral of Naples: a palimpsest building for a palimpsest city
- Via dei Tribunali: along the traces of the ancient acropolis & Naples undergrounds
- Spaccanapoli & the Santa Chiara Complex
- National Archaeological Museum

TUESDAY, JUNE 18: KINGS AND CASTLES

- Maschio Angioino Castle
- Royal Palace & Plebiscito Square
- Castel dell'Ovo, Naples waterfront and Chiaia district
- Spanish quarters

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19: EXTRA MOENIA

- Real Albergo dei Poveri (Bourbon Hospice for the Poor)
- Royal Botanical Garden
- Sanità neighborhood
- Catacombs of S. Gennaro

THURSDAY, JUNE 20: NAPLES FROM A BIRD'S EYE VIEW: HILLSIDE NEIGHBORHOODS

- Sant'Elmo castle
- Saint Martin's Charterhouse
- Capodimonte Royal House and Wood (now: National Museum)

FRIDAY, JUNE 21: NAPLES SURROUNDINGS: BETWEEN ARCHAEOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE

- Pompei archaeological park
- Vesuvio national park

Naples – a concise urban history

A palimpsest – that is how we describe Naples. Layer upon layer, each defined by a succession of ruling elites with their own cultural identity, has shaped the city's unique character. Naples boasts the world's largest historical center – larger than Rome or Paris. Scholars trace the origins of the city to the Greek colony of Neapolis, meaning 'new city', founded in the 8th century BCE. However, aside from a few archaeological remnants, little of its ancient past remains visible in today's cityscape. More tangible traces of ancient Rome can be found, though the city itself pales in comparison to the spectacular excavations in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and smaller cities, villages, and villas.

In the 6th century, the Roman Empire split into two halves, with the Eastern half eventually relocating its capital to Constantinople. Naples became a satellite of the Byzantine Empire during this period, a status that lasted until the 11th century. Subsequently, Naples became subject to the whims of various foreign powers. When the Normans established the Kingdom of Sicily, they chose Naples as its capital, marking a significant milestone in their vast expansion from Denmark, through the coastal regions of Europe, to Normandy, the Sicilian Kingdom, and even a brief occupation of Constantinople, leaving their mark in the Hagia Sophia.

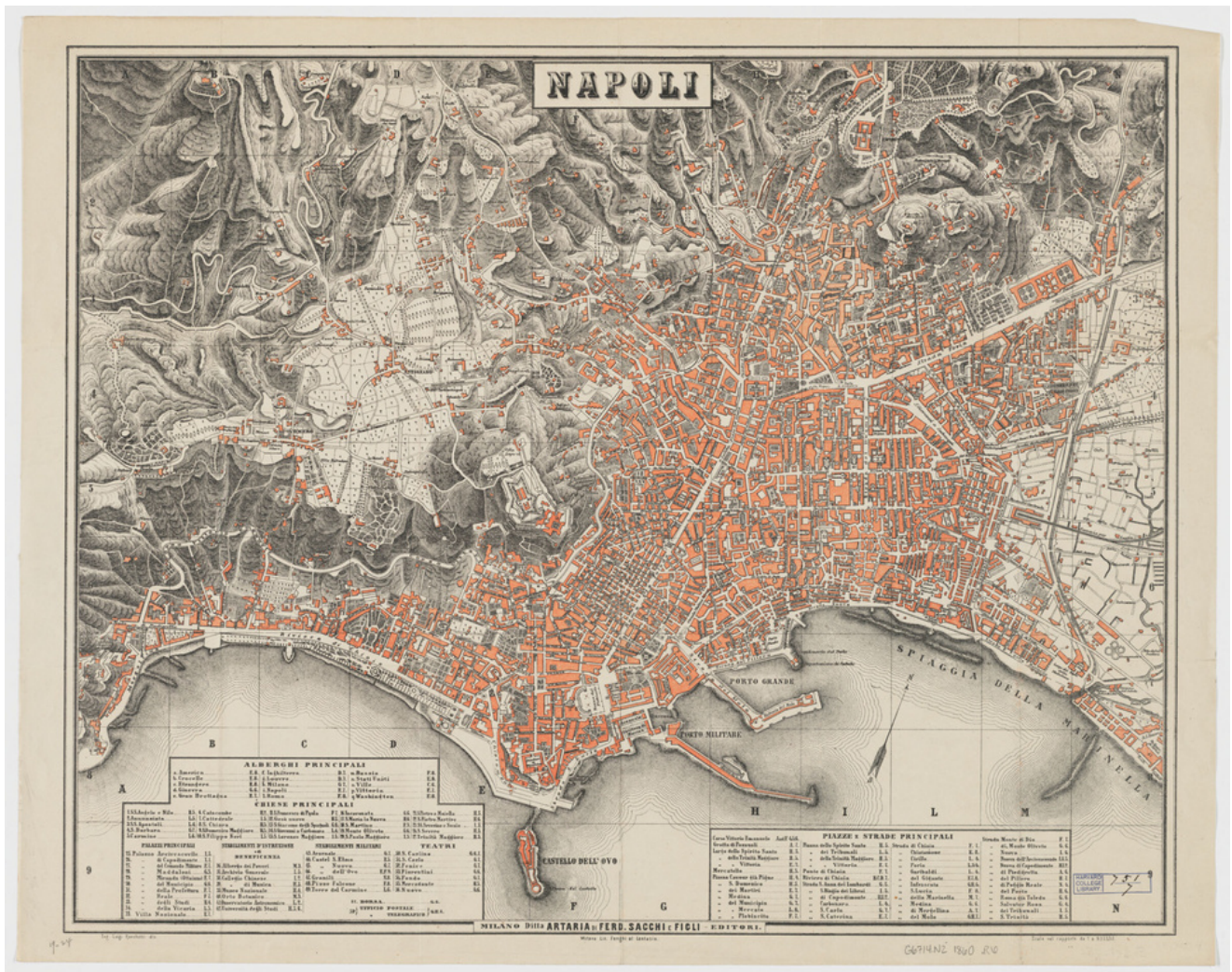


THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER WITH MOUNT VESUVIUS IN THE BACKGROUND



VILLA DEI MISTERI, A 2ND CENTURY ROMAN VILLA WITH WELL-PRESERVED FRESCOES

In the 13th century, the Swabian Dynasty briefly ruled over the Kingdom of Sicily before being succeeded by the Angevin Dynasty, led by Charles I of Anjou, who left an indelible mark on Naples. He began the famous Santa Chiara monastery, the Duomo, and the Castel Nuovo. In the 15th century, political shifts in Spain elevated its prominence, leading to the Aragonese Dynasty gaining control over the kingdom. They were precursors to the Spanish Habsburgs in the 16th century. The Via Toledo – Naples’s central spine – and the Quartieri Spagnoli are their most remarkable urban heritage. They also inspired the baroque makeover of the city, which is nowhere more present than in the numerous churches – a prime example is the church of Gesù Nuovo, with its undulating façade adorned with intricate sculptures and reliefs. The royal palace, with its grand facades, ornate interiors, and sprawling gardens, exemplifies the opulence of this period. The Habsburgs were succeeded by French rule under the Bourbon dynasty in the 18th and much of the 19th century. The Bourbons’ urban ideals appear to reflect enlightenment visions when they shifted attention from adding even more churches to public building – the most remarkable is the Albergo dei Poveri.



LUIGI RONCHETTI, MAP OF NAPLES, 1860 (HARVARD MAP COLLECTION)

To summarize: since the 11th century, Naples served as the capital of the Sicilian Empire, ruled by Normans, Germans, French, Spanish, and again French rulers. Though inherently Italian, it only became part of Italy during the unification process led by Garibaldi. Only then did its fate align with the rest of the country. The Galleria Umberto I, a grand shopping arcade inaugurated in 1890, reflects the prosperity and modernity of this period. In 1927 the fascists took control – they left some remarkable buildings. The city endured significant hardship during World War II, and emerged as the largest and most vibrant city in southern Italy during the reconstruction era.

While the northern regions, with cities like Turin and Milan, became economic powerhouses, attracting many workers from the south to factories like FIAT, Naples remained a bustling metropolis, albeit grappling with social decline and the presence of the camorra. The historic center with its narrow alleys and overcrowded tenements, was affected by urban decay and neglect. However, this less fortunate chapter has now drawn to a close, and Naples stands as one of Italy's cultural capitals and a major tourist destination. In response, efforts were made to preserve and revitalize the city's architectural heritage, leading to the designation of the historic center as a UNESCO world heritage site in 1995.



NAPLES IN THE 1890'S

Fortunately, the city's vast size ensures it can accommodate the growing number of visitors without succumbing to the fate of Venice, which is besieged by tourists. Thus far, the transition to a significant cultural hub has been overwhelmingly positive, with the city's safety improving and efforts to enhance its appeal – such as advancements in public transportation and the construction of strikingly beautiful new metro stations – proving immensely successful.

Walking around in Naples is like walking in at least 10 cities simultaneously. As in every true metropolitan city, layers are superimposed on top of each other – they do not reveal their meanings and messages by moving from one area to another, but rather manifest themselves in buildings and urban structures that are intricately interwoven. Naples is a treasure trove that invites our collective to engage in an exceptionally intensive exchange with an incredibly rich history. Saturated with ample opportunities to enjoy the best food and drink one can imagine, this trip promises to be a truly unique experience.



SAN LORENZO



STELLA

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACCOMMODATION

1. OSTELLO BELLO

OSTELLO BELLO NAPOLI | HOSTEL IN NAPLES | BOOK YOUR STAY

2. TRIC TRAC HOSTEL

TRIC TRAC HOSTEL - OSTELLO A NAPOLI NEL CUORE DEL CENTRO STORICO

3. HOPESTEL

HOPESTEL - SECRET GARDEN

Neapolitan Cuisine

Neapolitan cuisine is a delightful fusion of flavors, deeply rooted in the vibrant culture of Southern Italy. At its core lies the iconic Neapolitan pizza, a culinary masterpiece renowned worldwide. Crafted with simple yet exquisite ingredients such as San Marzano tomatoes, fresh mozzarella cheese, and fragrant basil, each bite of the Neapolitan pizza tells a story of tradition and passion.

Beyond pizza, Neapolitan cuisine boasts a treasure trove of culinary delights. Indulge in the savory goodness of spaghetti alle vongole, featuring tender clams tossed with al dente pasta in a garlic-infused olive oil sauce. For a taste of comfort, savor the rich flavors of rigatoni alla Genovese, a hearty dish of pasta smothered in a sweet and savory onion-based meat sauce.

To satisfy your sweet tooth, treat yourself to sfogliatella, a beloved pastry characterized by its delicate layers of flaky dough and creamy ricotta filling. Whether you're dining in a quaint trattoria or exploring the bustling streets of Naples, Neapolitan food promises an unforgettable culinary journey filled with passion, flavor, and a touch of Mediterranean magic.



NEAPOLITAN MUSIC



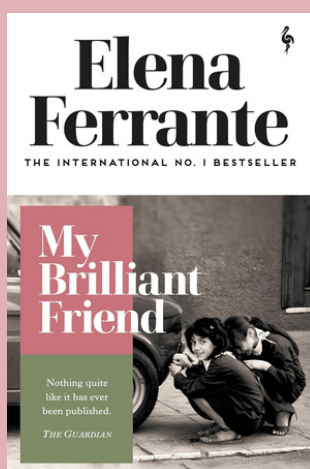
TO GET IN THE MOOD FOR THE EXCURSION, LISTEN TO REAL NEAPOLITAN MUSIC.. CONNECT TO THE SPOTIFY PLAYLIST WITH SONGS IN NEAPOLITAN (BOTH OLD CLASSICS AND MORE RECENT STUFF). USE THE LINK OR THE QR-CODE.



Naples in literature

Naples has served as the backdrop for numerous literary works, capturing the city's vibrant atmosphere, rich history, and complex social dynamics. Here are some important books set in Naples:

- *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante: This internationally acclaimed novel, the first in Ferrante's Neapolitan Novels series, follows the lifelong friendship of two girls, Elena and Lila, against the backdrop of post-war Naples. Through their intertwined lives, Ferrante vividly portrays the social and political upheavals of the city and the struggles of its inhabitants.
- *The Leopard* by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa: Set in 19th-century Sicily but with significant scenes in Naples, *The Leopard* is a masterpiece of Italian literature. The novel follows the decline of the aristocratic Salina family against the backdrop of political and social upheaval in Italy. Lampedusa's evocative prose captures the grandeur and decay of Naples during this transformative period.
- *Naples '44* by Norman Lewis: In this non-fiction work, Lewis recounts his experiences as a British intelligence officer stationed in Naples during World War II. Through vivid descriptions and keen observations, he provides a fascinating glimpse into the everyday lives of Neapolitans amidst the devastation of war.
- *Gomorrah* by Roberto Saviano: A searing expose of organized crime in Naples, *Gomorrah* offers a chilling portrayal of the Camorra, the powerful criminal syndicate that controls much of the city's underworld. Saviano's firsthand account sheds light on the social, economic, and cultural impact of organized crime on Naples and its inhabitants.
- *The Volcano* by Venero Armanno: Set in contemporary Naples, *The Volcano* follows the lives of three generations of the Esposito family as they navigate love, betrayal, and redemption in the shadow of Mount Vesuvius. Armanno's lyrical prose and keen insight into Neapolitan culture make this novel a compelling read.



My Brilliant Friend

Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend* (2012) follows childhood friends Lenù and Lila through their troubled teenage years into adulthood. This book wonderfully conveys the spirit of Napoli.

Ferrante masterfully conjures up images of this colourful city as we follow her characters along to the Piazza Carlo III, the Albergo dei Poveri, the botanical garden, Via Foria and Port'Alba. For anybody already familiar with Napoli, these are well-known landmarks; for those new to the city they serve as a good starting point for a mid-morning passeggiata (a leisurely stroll) that should always end with a lunch time slice of pizza. When in Napoli, do as the Neapolitans do.



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...an initiative of the staff of the History and Theory of Architecture and Urbanism section of the University of Groningen (RUG). As we speak, more than 60 students – masters, premasters, bachelors – have joined the Kollektiv, all of them lovers of iconic cities, beautiful buildings and intriguing histories.

Only members of the Kollektiv can participate in its events. Membership is open for architecturally minded students of the Department of History of Art, Architecture and Landscape (bachelors as well as masters, including exchange students and visiting students), PhD-candidates, staff members and invitees. Membership is free of charge. The costs for participation in the Kollektiv's events need to be paid by the members themselves. Interested in joining? Send a mail the Kollektiv's Secretary-General, Ioanna Zorzou: i.m.zorzou@rug.nl.



CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE DELLA PIETRASANTA