

From Propaganda to Science: Looking at the World of Academies in Early Seventeenth-Century Naples*

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“E quando le ali dell’angelo toccarono la Sirena,
giunse la primavera...”

This essay examines the role of academies in early seventeenth-century Naples in relation to four major themes: networking and scholarship; citizenship and community; propaganda; and self-representation. Seen as venues for wide-ranging intellectual debates that extended from science to literature, Neapolitan academies played a crucial role in positioning Naples as an important European center of learning. In contrast to a well-established historiographical tradition which has looked mainly at early modern academies as institutions that favored learned sociability, indeed as an expression of the cultural decadence that characterized Italian baroque, this essay argues that seventeenth-century Neapolitan academies were part of a milieu which encouraged ground-breaking forms of scientific and literary experimentation. Aimed at re-positioning intellectual circles within their local environment, Neapolitan academies played a major role in enhancing political and religious propaganda. Early modern Naples was a bustling European center with a teeming population riven by social tensions and popular protests. Within an urban context where fear of political revolt was a matter of public concern, this essay argues that several important Neapolitan academies were commissioned to produce texts and accounts of both secular and religious spectacles. The majority of these texts deceptively portrayed an image of Naples as a “chosen city” whilst functioning as instruments aimed at legitimizing the power of elite groups whose policies had made Naples a model for social order and stability.

Moreover, this essay argues that in some instances academies also functioned as institutions that legitimized the role of a politically under-represented class of rising commoners keen on acquiring recognition and visibility. Often this was through affiliation to academies founded by aristocrats such as the *Oziosi*, although Neapolitan commoners from the professional classes also founded their own academy (the *Incauti*) for this purpose. The first section of this essay describes the city and its institutions. Against this backdrop, sections two and three examine the structural organization of some major Neapolitan academies together with their role in producing accounts of public events that represented forms of political and religious propaganda.

As I will argue, some academic circles became identified with particular social groups and communities based within the local *seggi* (city quarters with political prerogatives). This guaranteed visibility, political legitimacy, and effective displays of power. Finally, I analyze the role played by Neapolitan academies within a multidisciplinary European discourse on science showing how—despite the repressive environment within which scholars worked—Naples had a vibrant intellectual milieu—one in which academies promoted intellectual networking, book circulation, and knowledge transfer.

The city

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a foreign traveler in Naples would have seen a bustling, densely populated, commercially and militarily active city.¹ Within this urban setting there were merchants, ships and galleons transporting soldiers and slaves.² Naples was a major Mediterranean port containing an arsenal which had the capacity to build dozens of galleons and to store a considerable amount of foodstuffs for fleets.³ A strategic geographical position had made the bay of Naples a desirable outpost for a number of culturally diverse rulers, a target for military incursions, and a place with a long tradition of commercial interchange which had helped consolidate the multicultural dimension of Neapolitan society. Moving around the port district from Castel dell'Ovo to Castelnuovo—a symbol of a glorious past combining military grandeur with the imposing elegance of civic Renaissance art—the visitor would enter the city center. This was a labyrinth of streets and districts where different communities had found a home. With a warren of narrow streets dominated by the tall *tuffo* buildings looking down on

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¹ For a preliminary reading on seventeenth-century travel literature on the Kingdom of Naples see George Abbott, *A Briefe description of the whole world wherein is particularly described all the monarchies, empires, and Kingdoms of the same, with their academies, as also their severall titles and situations thereunto adjoyning written by the Reverend Father in God George Abbott* (London, 1664); Peter Heylyn, *Mikrokosmos. A little description of the great world*. (Oxford, 1625); Edmond Warcupp, *Italy in its original glory, ruine, and revival being an exact survey of the whole geography and history of that famous country, with the adjacent islands of Sicily, Malta, &c.: and whatever is remarkable in Rome (the mistress of the world) and all those towns and territories mentioned in ancient and modern authors* (London: S. Griffin, London, 1660); Fynes Moryson, *An itinerary written by Fynes Morison Gent. First in the Latine tongue, and then translated by him into English: containing his ten yeeres travell through the twelve dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turkey, France, England, Scotland, and Ireland.*(London,1617); Gabriel D'Emiliane, *Observations On A Journy To Naples* (London, 1691); Richard Lassels, *The voyage to Italy* (London, 1691); Henry Duke of Guise, *Memoires of Henry Duke of Guise, relating to his passage to Naples, and heading there the second revolt of the people* (London, 1669); Jacques de Villamont, *Les Voyages Du Sr. De Villamont, Divisés En Trois Livres* (Arras: Guillaume de la Riviere, 1606), 80-102.

² “Tre delli galioni acconciati à Baia stanno per partire, non aspettando altro che tempo, havendo imbarcato da 800 et piu marinari che se andranno à dirittura in Spagna si dice per supplire al bisogno di quell'armata...Continuano ad entrare nella città le militie che sono nelli alloggiamenti si dice per instancarle quanto prima...per farle passar in Fiandra...S'allestiscano in molta diligenza otto galere della squadra si dice per mandarle a levar le genti che sono in Calabria et per condurle con l'altre...et altri che sia disegno di mandarle in Levante, et forse in Golfo a Manfredonia.” Di Napoli, 21 Aprile 1620, SP 93/1 f. 84, The National Archive (London).

Slavery was legally taxed in Naples. Domenico Antonio Parrino mentions a pragmatic sanction issued by Viceroy Fernando de Castro Count of Lemos which stipulated that “tutti coloro, che tenessero schiavi, dovessero denunciarli.” See Domenico Antonio Parrino, *Teatro Eroico, E Politico De' Governi De' Vicere Del Regno Di Napoli Dal Regno Del Re Ferdinando Il Cattolico Fin' all'anno 1683*. Regnando la sel. Mem. Di Carlo Secondo (Naples: Ricciardo, 1730), 91; Pasquale Liberatore, *Introduzione Allo Studio Della Legislazione Del Regno delle due Sicilie* (Naples: Nuovo Gabinetto Letterario, 1832), 330; Warcupp, *Italy in its original glory*, 266-67.

³Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *Descrizione Di Napoli Ne' Principii Del Secolo XVII*, ed. Bartolomeo Capasso (Naples: Società Di Storia Patria, 1882), 19.

crowds of passers-by, Naples stood out for its transnational dimension and for being one of the most important capitals in Europe.

English merchants (an expanding community in Southern Italy eager to control Mediterranean trade), Greeks, Germans, Portuguese, Spanish, French, Genoese, Florentines, Venetians, and people coming from the whole of the Kingdom of Naples lived within the city. Here, they mixed with locals acquiring civic rights, often consolidating their status by setting up successful businesses and charity organizations as well as building palaces and churches to display their position in the city.⁴ The imposing network of Neapolitan churches, monasteries, convents, hospitals, offices, and palaces embellished with gardens and fountains, was interspersed with businesses and markets.⁵ These brought into the city the produce of local farmers and the merchandise of international cargos transporting a range of goods, from luxury tobacco to second-hand clothing that catered to a city where decadence and shocking poverty went hand in hand.⁶ With a population that surpassed 250,000 inhabitants between 1600 and 1606, Naples comprised 37 parishes and nearly 200 churches.⁷

The city was divided into twenty-nine *Ottine* (districts), nine *Quartieri* (quarters) and six *seggi* (seats)—of which one represented the Neapolitan *popolo* and was politically dominated by five major noble districts⁸ with representatives actively participating in city government and trying to preserve their power from encroaching Spanish influence and the rise of commoners in

⁴ Capaccio, *Descrizione*, 44-5; Francesco De' Pietri, *Dell'Historia Napoletana Scritta dal Signor Francesco De' Pietri Libri Due* (Naples: Montanaro, 1634), 80-2.

⁵ “Questa Città da buona parte è bagnata dal mare, e tiene sette Borghi principali, detti latinamente Suburbia, ne' quali si scorgono bellissimi palaggi con vaghi, & delitiosi horti, e giardini abbondantissimi d'ogni sorte di frutti, & herbe per tutto l'anno, con fontane così d'acque vive, come artificiose, & sono ta[ll]mente ripieni di habitatori, così di Signori, & Baroni, come di qualunque sorte di persone, che ogni Borgo sembra popolosa, & ornatissima città.” Giuseppe Mormile, *Descrittione Dell'Amenissimo Distretto Della Città Di Napoli, Et Dell'antichità Della Città Di Pozzuolo* (Naples: Longo, 1617), 2-3.

⁶ For a discussion on the properties of tobacco and its use in Naples, see Academia de gli Incauti, *Lettonne giocosa sopra il tabacco*, Ms: Coll:28.I. 64, Gerolamini Library (Naples). For a discussion on English merchants in Naples, see H. G. Koenigsberger, *Estates and Revolutions, essays in early modern European History* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1971), 99.

⁷ See Capaccio, *Descrizione*, 24; John A. Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan. Citizen Culture in Baroque Naples* (Baltimore: John Hopkins university Press, 2011), 36.

For a detailed description of Neapolitan churches, convents and monasteries see Engenio Caracciolo, *Napoli Sacra* (Naples: Beltrano, 1623).

⁸ Around 1606, the city of Naples was divided into 29 *Ottine*: “Santo Spitiro, et borgo di Chiaia, Rua Catalana, e Posilipo, S. Giosepe con S. Ermo, Porto, Porta del Caputo, S. Caterina, S. Pietro martire, S. Giovanni Maggiore, Nido col borgo di S. Maria del Monte, S. Maria maggiore con Limpiano, et Antignano, Porta di S. Gennaro, et Vergini, S. Angelo a Segno, Mercato Vecchio, Capoana col borgo di S. Antonio, Case nove col borgo di S. Maria della Gratia, Forcella, Vicaria vecchia, S. Gennarello, Mercato grande col borgo di S. Maria doloretto, o Pazzigno, Sellaria, Fistola, e Baiano, S. Giovanni a mare, Rua Toscana, Spetiaria antica, Armieri, Scalesia, Selice, Alvina.” Capaccio, *Descrizione*, 23-4.

Neapolitan quarters were called Montagna, Nido, Porta nova, Porto, Capoana, San Pietro Martire, Mercato, San Giovanni, San Giovanni à Carbonara. The five noble districts in Naples were called Capuana, Montagna, Nido, Porto and Portanova.

Socio-historical books on Naples and its institutions were widely published during the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. For the purpose of this article, the following publications have been consulted: Cornelio Vitignano, *Cronica Del Regno di Napoli Del Sig. Cornelio Vitignano nobile Napolitano* (Naples: Carlino & Pace, 1595); De' Pietri, *Historia*; Camillo Tutini, *Dell'Origine E Foundation De Seggi Di Napoli* (Naples: Beltrano, 1644); Scipione Mazzella, *Descrittione Del Regno Di Napoli* (Naples: Cappello, 1601); Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *Il Forastiero Dialogi Di Giulio Cesare Capaccio Academico Otioso* (Naples: Roncagliolo, 1634).

public offices.⁹ The bureaucratic organization of the state revolved around seven important offices and a powerful magistrate divided into three major institutions: *Regia Camera della Sommaria*, *Gran Corte della Vicaria*, and the *Consiglio Collaterale* presided over by the Spanish viceroy.¹⁰ Besides the institutional structure of the state and the presence of independent organizations,¹¹ the city had a number of secular and religious foundations that mainly operated through patronage. These included hospitals, orphanages, monasteries, oratories, and a *Monte di Pietà*—a pawnbroking institution with a volume of business that allegedly amassed assets of 150,000 ducats in the early seventeenth century.

These institutions often functioned as a public display of the power that eminent citizens, religious bodies, and competitive city guilds exercised on the daily management of the city. Gifts of land, edifices, and money offered by families, individuals, or corporations supplemented a charity system that catered for a variety of spiritual and financial needs. Churches, confraternities, monasteries, and crowded convents were often places where noble female patrons gathered in prayer¹² and where unwanted babies or girls from poorer families found protection from the rough perils of street life.¹³ Some hospitals provided free healthcare for foreigners and the destitute; orphanages were shelters for indigent children;¹⁴ oratories provided a Jesuit education for aristocrats and poor pupils destined for the clergy; churches and confraternities, frequently supported by guilds and lay associations, buried indigent people and provided small dowries for virgins from needy families.¹⁵

Charity organizations thus functioned both as the major part of the civic infrastructure and as symbols of the power exercised by religious, aristocratic, and civic patrons. As John Marino has recently demonstrated, Neapolitan patronage manifested itself through *patronato*, *mecenatismo*, and *clientelismo*.¹⁶ Through exercising these three forms of patronage, bonds were created that forged relationships of a secular and religious nature that—through literature, visual arts and other mediums—helped promote civic identity together with an idealized vision of

⁹ For a discussion on the political role of the Neapolitan patriciate, see Giovanni Muto, “Noble presence and Stratification in the territories of Spanish Italy,” in *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion 1500-1700*, ed. Thomas James Dandeleit and John A. Marino, 251-98 (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2007).

¹⁰ The major public offices in Naples were *Gran Contestabile*, *Grand’Ammiraglio*, *Gran Giustiziero*, *Gran Camerlingo*, *Gran Protonotaio*, *Gran Cancelliere*, and *Gran Siniscalco*. For a brief description of these offices, see Mazzella, *Descrittione Del Regno Di Napoli*, 491-95. For a detailed description of the institutional structure of the Kingdom of Naples at the beginning of the XVII century, see *Una Relazione Vicereale Sul Governo Del Regno di Napoli agli inizi Del ‘600*, ed. Bernardo Jose Garcia Garcia (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1993); G. C. Capaccio, *Il Forastiero*, 605-10, 623-27; Paolo Mattia Doria, *Massime del governo spagnolo a Napoli*, ed. Vittorio Conti, (Naples: Guida, 1973), 79-142.

¹¹ For a description of separate tribunals available to some foreign communities living in Naples, see Capaccio, *Descrizione*, 45.

¹² As Helen Hills points out in her analysis on the relationship between sacred architecture and social classes in early modern Europe and Naples “Convents were connected to the aristocracy through their material culture, to particular families through sites and bequests, but above all they were connected to the habitus of aristocratic women. This is architecture designed and built for female patrons, to enhance female religious devotion...and it was used almost exclusively by women.” See Helen Hills, *Invisible City. The architecture of devotion in seventeenth-century Neapolitan convents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 7.

¹³ See Capaccio, *Descrizione*, 32.

¹⁴ Founded by the Protonotary apostolic Giovanni Tapia in 1537, the orphanage of the church of Santa Maria di Loreto was one of the biggest in Naples which in the 1620s hosted more than 400 children. See Caracciolo, *Napoli Sacra*, 439-43, 648-51.

¹⁵ See Caracciolo, *Napoli Sacra*, 175.

¹⁶ See Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 119-20.

Naples as a divinely favored city. Power was envisaged as emanating from a hierarchical structure atop which was God and below which were the patron saints and the King. Thus especially in time of crisis, God (the divine King) defended Naples and its people with his sacred army of interceding patron Saints.¹⁷ These protected Naples with their miracles and thousands of relics displayed in the city's churches. In this sense, Naples was a fragmented society where individual communities had their own religious and secular rulers. Locally deployed confraternities, Saints and political representatives granted special protection to single groups, thus becoming symbols of the various districts, corporations and nationalities settled in the city. The delicate task of managing the spiritual and political dimension of Neapolitan life favored forms of power interaction between politics and religion that often served a wider need for propaganda.

Within this context, academies were commissioned to produce art and choreograph spectacles that provided an idealized and exportable image of Naples; they emphasized symbols of civic unity, political strength, and economic stability. In a world where the relationship between people and rulers was far from peaceful, Neapolitans had to relate themselves to three major groups. First, the local aristocracy; second, a politically under-represented yet crucially important class of middle men holding office in a highly bureaucratic state; and third, the world of Spanish power deployed in the city through the presence of troops, civil servants, the aristocracy, the vice-regal entourage, and the king of Spain (whose absence was of crucial importance). The social landscape of Naples was equally complex. Dissimulation played a key role in the Neapolitan social fabric, from the splendor of nobility, gentry¹⁸ and rich commoners to indigent masses. Rituals aimed at enhancing the importance of appearances in social relations often took place during social gatherings, public events, and courtly celebrations. In such a context, the world of academies, with a stratified division of roles and a rich repertoire of ritualized performances, played a crucial role in shaping public opinion and in ensuring that patrons would firmly invest in culture and art.

Contemporary historiography has looked at Italian academies in different ways, though with little attention to those in Naples. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the publication of pioneering works by Carlo Minieri Riccio, Lorenzo Giustiniani, and later Michele Maylender uncovered valuable material on the world of southern Italian academies.¹⁹ By adopting a methodology aimed at collecting data on the number of academies and their members these works became reference tools for scholars. Benedetto Croce's criticism of seventeenth-century Neapolitan academies as being aspects of the cultural decline that affected Baroque Italy played an important role in cementing a negative perception of this period.²⁰ These dismissive positions, however, have been cautiously reassessed in view of an increasing scholarly interest in

¹⁷ As Giuseppe Galasso points out in his analysis of popular religion in early modern Southern Italy, ostentation of religious rituals became particularly important in post-tridentine catholic tradition. See Giuseppe Galasso, *L'altra Europa. Per un'antropologia storica del mezzogiorno d'Italia* (Naples: Guida, 2009), 105, 71-89 and 101-19.

¹⁸ "It is the fashion of Italy, especially of Naples, (which is one of the richest parts of it) that all the Gentry dwell in the principall Townes, and so the whole country is emptie." See James I of England (and VI of Scotland), *The Workes Of The Most High And Mightie Prince Iames* (London: Barker, 1616), 528. See de Villamont, *Les Voyages Du Sr. de Villamont*, 80.

¹⁹ Lorenzo Giustiniani, *Breve contezza delle Accademie istituite nel Regno di Napoli* (Naples, 1801); Carlo Minieri-Riccio, "Cenno storico delle accademie fiorite nella città di Napoli." *Archivio storico per le Provincie Napoletane* 3:4 (1879); Michele Maylender, *Storia delle Accademie d'Italia* (Bologna: Rava, 1926-1930).

²⁰ Benedetto Croce, *Storia Dell'Età Barocca in Italia. Pensiero-Poesia e letteratura-Vita Morale*, ed. Giuseppe Galasso (Milan: Adelphi, 1993), 18-90.

exploring the importance of academies in early modern Italy. Recent scholarship, such as Simone Testa's work on the transnational impact of Italian academies, has convincingly shown how they were a cultural phenomenon intrinsically linked with the development of a European *Republique des Lettres*.²¹ Moreover, the new Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project—*Italian academies 1525-1700: the first intellectual networks of early modern Europe*—has led to a major reassessment of how traditional historiography has looked at early modern Italian academies. By bringing to light hitherto unknown material concerning academies that flourished in Naples and other major Italian centers throughout the Italian Peninsula this project has demonstrated that academies were major platforms which, on the one hand, promoted intellectual debate on science, literature, and the visual arts and, on the other, often functioned as institutions promoting political and religious propaganda.²²

Often seen as “closed and self-sufficient” communities, scholars such as Amedeo Quondam located academies within spaces and rituals intended to create a distance from the rest of society.²³ Academies achieved this by setting up rules, delimitating their space, constructing their lists of members and marking their individuality by devising unique symbols (names and emblems). It was in such an enclosed environment that academies developed, as Cesare Vasoli has argued, as centers of sociability which promoted different sectors of knowledge²⁴ that ranged from encomiastic literature to scientific experimentation. Conversely, the relationship between culture and politics has led scholars such as Alberto Asor Rosa to look at *Seicento* academies as scholarly and political institutions aimed at promoting intellectual relationships to the extent of consolidating forms of “solidarity and mutual support” while adapting innovation to the demands of politics and the taste of learned rulers.²⁵ In the case of Naples, however, some academies clearly developed as institutions fully connected with society which, as I shall demonstrate, maintained elitism while at the same time adopting a dissimulating, populist strategy.

This was achieved by publicly promoting collective civic values aimed at enhancing visibility and forms of public self-representation that fulfilled a wider need for propaganda. As Girolamo de Miranda has convincingly argued, the history of early modern Italian academies summarizes a history of relationships and tensions between society and political power. In the case of Naples, academies were generally places of political consensus where artists, scholars and men of letters became, as de Miranda argues, increasingly aware of “their historical role.”²⁶ The multifaceted dimension of Neapolitan intellectual circles, seen by Vittor Ivo Comparato as

21 Simone Testa and Jane Everson, “Le Accademie senesi e il network intellettuale della prima età moderna in Italia (1525–1700). Un progetto online. Introduzione di Jane Everson.” *Bullettino senese di Storia Patria* 117 (2010): 613-37.

22 Conceived by Jane Everson (Royal Holloway University of London) and Denis Reidy (British Library), The Italian Academies project provides a detailed searchable database for locating printed material related to Italian Academies founded between 1525-1700 and now held in the collections of the British Library. The Database of Italian Academies can be consulted at <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/ItalianAcademies/>. For general information on the project, see <http://italianacademies.org/>

23 Amedeo Quondam, “L’Accademia,” in *Letteratura Italiana*, vol. I, ed Alberto Asor Rosa, 824-98 (Turin: Einaudi, 1982).

24 See Cesare Vasoli, “Le Accademie fra Cinquecento e Seicento e il loro ruolo nella storia della tradizione enciclopedica,” in *Università e società scientifiche in Italia e in Germania dal Cinquecento al Settecento*, ed Laetitia Boehme and Ezio Raimondi, 81-2 (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1980).

25 Alberto Asor Rosa, “La cultura della Controriforma,” in *Letteratura Italiana*, vol. I, ed Asor Rosa, 7-9.

26 Girolamo de Miranda, *Una quiete operosa. Forma e pratiche dell’Accademia napoletana degli Oziosi* (Naples: Federiciana, 2000), 4. See also de Miranda, “Tra storia politica e ragioni sociologiche. Rassegna di studi per una definizione delle accademie italiane sei-settecentesche.” *Esperienze Letterarie* 4 (2004): 105-14.

having a governmental, aristocratic, or private function,²⁷ has encouraged studies on the role played by academies in the life of the city. In this vein, Giorgio Fulco and Michele Rak analyze the importance of patronage and censorship in shaping the position of some Neapolitan scholars within the city's academies.²⁸ More recent contributions such as Tobia Toscano's study of the relationship between courtly life and academies in sixteenth-century Naples, Carmela Lombardi's study of aristocratic patronage in some seventeenth-century Neapolitan academies, Girolamo de Miranda's pioneering work on the *Oziosi* academy together with Nancy Canepa's and Suzanne Magnanini's analyses of the relationship between academic affiliation and the development of fairy tales as a new literary genre in early *Seicento* Naples, have all provided an insightful study of a Baroque culture whose socio-political impact on urban life has been convincingly highlighted by John Marino in his recent book on Neapolitan citizenship.²⁹

With the exception of circles such as the *Secreti* and the *Investiganti*—which had a more private composition—academies, whether they were scientific or artistic circles, became an important aspect of Neapolitan life. Founded as independent institutions outside the university's sphere of influence, academies were intellectual centers with a physical setting, rules, symbolic logos, and membership procedures. Neapolitan academies were formalized and hierarchical centers, mainly supported by patronage—which, by implicating scholars and artists in the complex game of networking, wished to control intellectual life in the city. They did this by commissioning works of propaganda designed on the one hand to reinforce the political *status quo* and on the other to neutralize any form of opposition. Socially, academies also functioned as institutions aimed at promoting the role of aspiring middle classes and residents of urban areas constantly engaged in a conflict of self-affirmation between the aristocracy and the ambitions of rising commoners.

Academies generally cut across social boundaries, putting aristocrats and professionals together cheek by jowl, the exception being the *Incauti* academy whose membership was restricted to professional classes. In such a context, the role of academies in Neapolitan society was three-fold. Firstly, they played a civic role in promoting specific urban areas and in representing an image of Naples that reached Europe often through the circulation of locally published academic texts. Secondly, academies played a political role as they became in some instances state-funded agencies which used political and religious propaganda as a way to

²⁷ See Vittor Ivo Comparato, "Società civile e società letteraria nel primo Seicento: l'Accademia degli Oziosi," *Quaderni Storici* 8:23 (1973): 359-88.

²⁸ See in particular Benedetto Croce, *Saggi sulla Letteratura Italiana del Seicento* (Bari: Laterza, 1924); Giorgio Fulco, *La meravigliosa passione: studi sul barocco tra letteratura ed arte* (Rome: Salerno, 2001); Michele Rak, *La maschera della fortuna. Letture del Basile "toscano,"* (Naples: Liguori, 1975); Michele Rak, *Napoli gentile* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994); Michele Rak, *Immagine e Scrittura. Sei studi sulla teoria e la storia dell'immagine nella cultura del Barocco a Napoli* (Naples: Liguori, 2003).

²⁹ Tobia R. Toscano, *Letterati, corti accademie. La Letteratura a Napoli nella prima metà del Cinquecento* (Naples: Loffredo, 2000); Carmela Lombardi, *Enciclopedia e letteratura. Retorica, poetica e critica della letteratura in una enciclopedia del primo primo Seicento* (Siena: Mediateca del Barocco, 1993), <http://www.unisi.it/lettura.scrittura/lombardi/pubblicazioni.html.encyclopedia> (accessed 15 Jan. 1012); de Miranda, *Una quiete operosa*; Nancy Canepa, *From Court to Forest: Giambattista Basile's Lo Cunto de li Cunti and the Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1999); Suzanne Magnanini, *Fairy-Tale science. Monstrous generation in the tales of Straparola and Basile* (Toronto, Toronto University Press, 2008). See also Diego Duque de Estrada, *Comentarios del Desengañado, o sea Vida de D. Diego Duque de Estrada, escrita por el mismo* (Madrid: Imprenta Nacional, 1860), 124-27; Alfonso Pardo Manuel De Villena, *Un Mecenaz Español del siglo VXII, El Conde De Lemos, Noticia De Su Vida Y De Sus Relaciones Con Cervantes, Lope De Vega, Los Argensola Y De Mos Literatos De Su Epoca* (Madrid, 1911), 128-29; Otis Green, "The Literary Court of the Conde of Lemos at Naples, 1610-1616." *Hispanic Review*, 1 (1933): 293-95; Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*.

publicly consolidate the covenant between Naples, Catholicism, and the crown of Spain; indeed a way for Madrid to also test the political skills of its viceroys. Thirdly, academies played a fundamental role in promoting Naples as an international center for learning.

Academies and the city

Society in early seventeenth-century Naples cannot be fully understood without analyzing the multifaceted nature of its intellectual milieu. Ranging from literature to science, from politics to religion, from courtly life to public events, the Neapolitan cultural milieu of early Seicento was an efficiently organized machine that generated multidisciplinary scholarly debates and was responsible for shaping an often stereotyped image of Naples that circulated throughout Europe and, as Melissa Calaresu has recently argued, continued throughout the eighteenth century.³⁰ A mythicized image of Naples was also circulated through a profitable Neapolitan publishing industry that set up branches in centers that included Rome, Florence, and L'Aquila. This undoubtedly attracted a conspicuous number of foreigners who spent time in Naples visiting museums, courts, and aristocratic palaces and often joining elitist intellectual circles.

Visitors included John Milton, who stayed in Naples in 1638 hosted by Giambattista Manso; Jean-Jacques Bouchard, who became a member of the *Oziosi* academy and left a detailed account of his journey to Naples; the French artist Nicolas Perrey, whose engravings embellished important books published under the auspices of various Neapolitan Academies; Athanasius Kircher, who observed volcanoes in Campania in the late 1630s and showed an interest in the “Neapolitan” scientific debate in his *Mundus Subterraneus*; Spanish intellectuals such as Lupercio Leonardo Argensola, Bartolomé Leonardo Argensola, Francisco Quevedo, and Lope De Vega, all of whom became members of the *Oziosi* academy and worked at the Neapolitan vice-regal court—an ambition which people like Miguel Cervantes never fulfilled.³¹ The international dimension of Neapolitan circles stimulated ideas and knowledge transfer often providing an opportunity for intellectuals coming from the whole of the Italian peninsula such as Giuseppe Castiglione, Maiolino Bisaccioni, Gabriele Zinani, Federico Cesi, and Errico Scipione

³⁰ Melissa Calaresu, “From The Street To Stereotype: Urban Space, Travel And The Picturesque In Late Eighteenth-Century Naples.” *Italian Studies* 62:2 (2007): 189-203.

³¹ For a study on Manso and Milton see Estelle Haan, *From academia to Amicitia: Milton's Latin Writings and the Italian Academies* (Philadelphia: Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 1988), 118-49. Jean Jacques Bouchard became a member of the *Oziosi* academy in Naples and the *Umoristi* academy in Rome. See Jean-Jacques Bouchard, *Lettres inédites écrites de Rome a Peiresc* (1633-1637), (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1881), 58; Bouchard, *Journal, II. Voyage Dans Le Royaume De Naples Voyage Dans La Campagne De Rome* (Turin: Giappichelli, 1976), 178-227.

Nicolas Perrey engraved many books published in Naples in the 1630s and 1640s some of which appeared under the auspices of Neapolitan academies. Examples include Giovanbernardino Giuliani, *Trattato Del Monte Vesuvio e de' suoi Incendi. Di Giovanbernardino Giuliani segretario del Fidelissimo Popolo Napolitano* (Naples: Longo, 1632); Giovambattista Masculo, *De Incendio Vesuvii* (Naples: Roncagliolo, 1633); Jean Germain, *Breve e Sustatiale Trattato Intorno Alle Figure Anatomiche Delli più rincipali Animali terrestri, Aquatili, et Volatili, con la simpatia et Convenienza che hanno ò in parte, ò in tutto, con il corpo humano con maturi, et succinti discorsi dalle loro naturali proprietà di Geroglifichi, et moralità più curiosi, cavati* (Naples: Maccarano, 1625).

For Athanasius Kircher's observations on Naples, see Athanasius Kircher, *Mundus Subterraneus* (Amsterdam: Janssonium & Weyerstraten, 1665), 221-22 and 267.

to name but a few, to join Neapolitan academies.³² These mainly gathered in courts, churches, and monasteries.

In a context where affiliation of intellectual groups to symbolic urban spaces enhanced public visibility, churches such as Sant'Agostino, Santa Maria della Nova, San Domenico, and San Lorenzo were venues for local city council gatherings and for public rituals organized to honour patron saints and dignitaries. It is not surprising that such places were chosen for academic gatherings organized by the *Infuriati*, the *Oziosi*, the *Incauti* and the *Erranti* academies.³³ With the exception of the *Incauti* academy, a group based in the church of Sant'Agostino della Zecca where the *Seggio del popolo* was also based and mostly formed by what we would today call professionals (doctors, judges, notaries, lawyers, clergymen, and non-aristocratic men of letters), academies were usually founded under the auspices of aristocratic figures. The formation of these groups primarily responded to the demands of patrons whose affiliation to academies was often a public statement of their socio-political prestige. Academies themselves often functioned as spaces where art was packaged for political ends, where academic speeches were carefully censored, where literature was used as an encomiastic tool, and the organization of spectacles usually involved the participation of the aristocracy in public processions or courtly staged performances that mostly functioned as “an agonistic combat to maintain one’s place at court.”³⁴ In such a context, patronage played a crucial role in sustaining the existence of academies within which individual creativity was granted only as far as patrons would allow. The hierarchical structure of patronage revolved around a system which shaped, on the one hand, the relationship between local aristocracy and the highest echelons of the Spanish entourage based in the city and, on the other, was instrumental in establishing the position of scholars (usually belonging to a politically under-represented Neapolitan middle class), seeking to acquire noble titles, intellectual prestige, offices, and some degree of economic stability. In attempting to delineate a picture of academies and their members, it is therefore important to understand both the logistic structure of these institutions and the type of activities they organized. Here intellectuals gathered, networked and tried to find a place within a web of contacts where patronage and *amicitia* dictated the rules of competition and shaped individual success. In a context where entertainment and propaganda shaped courtly life and public events, academies often wished to reinforce civic, political and religious values in an attempt to position themselves as a strong voice within the Neapolitan public sphere or, in some individual cases, as a way to be positioned within urban elitism. This was an opportunity for *Oziosi* academicians like Giulio Cesare Capaccio or Giovan Bernardino Giuliani³⁵ to produce works in praise of the political *status quo* that partially enhanced their own position as public political figures. In such a context, academies often developed as state-funded “cultural agencies” aimed at reinforcing

³² See Giuseppe Castiglione, *Discorso Academico in Lode del Niente* di D. Giuseppe Castiglione Palermitano, *Professore della Sagra Teologia, e delle Leggi. Academico Incauto detto il Trabocchevole* (Naples: Beltrano, 1632). See also individual entries on <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/ItalianAcademies/>

³³ See Bouchard, *Journal*, 198-99. For a study on these circles listing members, dates, and publications see Neapolitan academies on <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/ItalianAcademies/>

³⁴ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 169-97 and 200-33.

³⁵ For Giulio Cesare Capaccio, see, for example, Capaccio, *Il Forastiero*; Id., *Descrizione Della Padronanza Di S. Francesco Di Paola Nella Città Di Napoli e della Festività fatta nella Translatione della Reliquia del suo Corpo Dalla Chiesa Di S. Luigi Alla Cappella del Tesoro nel Duomo* (Naples: Longo, 1631); for Giovanbernardino Giuliani, see Giuliani, *Descrizione Dell'Apparato Fatto Nella Festa Di S. Giovanni Dal Fedelissimo Popolo Napolitano* (Naples: Maccarano, 1631). For a recent analysis of the political component of Capaccio's *Forastiero*, see Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 49-63.

legitimization of rulers, lineages and individuals constantly involved in competitive self-affirmation. Similarly, academies were prime spaces for intellectual debates, experimentation and knowledge transfer. While the circulation of books and ideas on what was happening or being debated in Naples in some isolated cases resulted, as John Robertson has pointed out, in a dangerous exposure to heterodoxy,³⁶ texts and iconography on Naples generally shaped myths and favored “safe” communication. This for instance was the case for some texts published in the city after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in December 1631, when politics and propaganda were often linked to a hot academic debate in the fields of geology, seismology, and volcanology.

Academies and their organization

Between the late sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century more than fifty academies flourished in Naples.³⁷ They established themselves as institutions at which selected members of the community, usually aristocrats, clergymen, reputable commoners, and intellectuals, gathered and networked. Varying in size and importance, academies were of two major types: some preferred to keep a low profile and gathered in privately maintained spaces,³⁸ others became symbols of ostentation and often met to publicly celebrate courtly life, patrons, and events of both a secular and religious nature.

1611 marks an important date in the history of Neapolitan Academies. Founded by Marquis Giambattista Manso under the auspices of Viceroy Fernando de Castro Count of Lemos, the *Oziosi* Academy mirrored the splendor of the Neapolitan elite.³⁹ As Tommaso Costo states in his narration of the event, the *Oziosi* academy counted more than 150 members on its foundation day in May 1611.⁴⁰ Officially opened in the prestigious venue of the Church of *Santa Maria*

³⁶ See John Robertson, *The case for the Enlightenment*. Scotland and Naples 1680-1760 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), 94-101.

³⁷ For a list of Neapolitan academies see <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/ItalianAcademies/>

³⁸ Famous examples include the *Secreti* academy founded by Giambattista Della Porta in the 1560s and the *Investiganti* academy founded by Marquis Andrea Concublet in 1650. For a reference to Giambattista Della Porta's affiliation to the *Secreti* academy, see Giambattista Della Porta, *Della Magia Naturale* (Naples: Carlino, 1611); Giambattista Della Porta, *Della Chirofisonomia Overo Di quella Parte della humana Fisonomia, che si appartiene alla Mano. Libri Due del Signor Gio: Battista*, ed Pompeo Sarnelli, (Naples: Bulifon, 1677), 3-6. For a reference to Andrea Concublet's affiliation to the *Investiganti* academy, see Luca Antonio Porzio, *Del Sorgimento De' Licori Nelle Fistole Aperte d'ambidue gli estremi, et intorno à molti corpi, che tocchino la loro superficie. Discorso Di Luc'Antonio Porzio Accademico Investigante* (Venice: 1667); Alfonso Giovanni Borrelli, *De Motionibus Naturalibus A Gravitate Pendentibus* (Regio Iulio: Ferri, 1670); Antonio Bulifon, *Lettere Memorabili, Istoriche, Politiche, ed Erudite* (Naples: Bulifon, 1698), 281. More recent studies include Maurizio Torrini, “L'Accademia degli Investiganti. Napoli 1663-1670,” *Quaderni Storici* 48 (1981): 845- 83; William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature. Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Robertson, *The case for the Enlightenment*, 94-147.

³⁹ For an essential bibliography on the *Oziosi* academy see Carlo Padiglione, *Le Leggi Dell'Accademia degli Oziosi in Napoli* (Naples: Giannini, 1878); Alfonso Pardo Manuel de Villena Marques de Rafal, *El Conde de Lemos, noticia de su vida y de sus relaciones con Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Los Argensolas y de mos literatos de su epoca* (Madrid: Martín, 1911), 160-167; Green, *The Literary Court of the Conde of Lemos at Naples*, 290-330; Lombardi, *Enciclopedia e letteratura*; de Miranda, *Una Quiete operosa*; Lorenza Gianfrancesco, “Accademie, scienze e celebrazioni a Napoli nel primo Seicento.” *Quaderni di Symbolon* 5 (2010): 175-209.

⁴⁰ For a description of the event, see Tommaso Costo, *Memoriale delle cose più notabili accadute nel Regno di Napoli dall'incarnazione di Cristo Per tutto l'Anno M.DC.XVII cavato, così da tutto il testo del Compendio, come dalle annotazioni, e supplementi, che vi sono, da Tomaso Costo con la giunta di Don Gioseffo Mormile Napolitano* (Naples: Gaffaro, 1639), 84-5.

delle Grazie, the *Oziosi* Academy celebrated its birth with a ceremony attended by the Spanish Viceroy and his entourage of courtiers, aristocrats and scholars. Potential members were selected according to their position in society. Social status in addition to moral and intellectual credentials were strict requirements in the selection process. In some instances, the president of an academy wrote personal letters of invitation to eminent people. An example of this type of correspondence can be found in a letter by Abbot Angelo Grillo responding to Manso's invitation to join the *Oziosi* academy soon after its foundation.⁴¹ In other cases, encomiastic verses were written as a form of acceptance and gratitude for being admitted to an academy.⁴² When not chosen for their social status, *Oziosi* academicians had to guarantee commitment, skills and flexibility. Potential members were carefully examined before being admitted and, significantly, they were mostly men.⁴³

Admission practices also included the issue of membership credentials following an evaluation of the applicant's scholarly standing.⁴⁴ This was the fate for those who did not belong to the highest ranks of Neapolitan aristocracy or did not gravitate around the court of the Spanish viceroy. Networking practices were part of a precise strategy for intellectuals of modest economic means who were usually admitted to academic circles thanks to their skills or, in some cases, to their friends. Academies often functioned as centers where ambitious intellectuals promoted themselves to potential patrons. Eager to be praised, protectors granted contracts and benefits to those who wished to rise. In turn, protégés were commissioned to produce books of encomiastic literature or to write multidisciplinary texts in which patrons generally appeared as dedicatees, censors or, less often, as contributors. The prestige of an academy was also enhanced by the affiliation of prominent intellectuals. These included figures like Giambattista Marino, whose return to Naples in 1623 was quickly followed by a ceremonial admission to various circles such as the *Svegliati*, the *Risvegliati*, the *Sileni* and the *Oziosi* academy of which he reluctantly became president.

A highly organized institution, the *Oziosi* academy was led by a president, a secretary,⁴⁵ a number of annually-elected assistants, advisors and a group of censors responsible for proofreading, correcting and ensuring the suitability of material to be prepared, performed during academic gatherings or to be published under the auspices of the academy itself. Similarly, a carefully chosen series of topics were to ensure that the academy lectures revolved:

⁴¹ Upon receiving Manso's invitation, Angelo Grillo replied with a letter of acceptance stressing the importance of the *Oziosi* academy: Angelo Grillo, *Lettere del Reverend.mo Padre Abbate D. Angelo Grillo*, Vol. 2 (Venice: Deuchino, 1612), 266-68.

⁴² See, for instance, encomiastic verses written by Ferdinando Di Donno for being admitted to the *Oziosi* academy in Ferdinando Di Donno, *La Musa Lirica di Ferdinando Di Donno* (Venice: Sarzina, 1620), 100.

⁴³ Female academicians were rare, exceptions being Laura Terracina and Margarita Sarrocchi. A highly regarded and a prolific poetess, Laura (nicknamed *La Febea*) became a major figure within the *Incogniti* academy founded in Naples in mid-sixteenth century. Margarita Sarrocchi became members of the *Oziosi* academy in Naples. Her name is listed as a member of the said academy in Giovanni Battista Composto, *La caduta di Lucifero* (Naples: Carlino, 1613); Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *Illustrium Mulierum Et Illustrium Litteris Virorum Elegia* (Naples: Carlino & Vitale, 1608). For Sarrocchi's affiliation to Roman academies, see Virginia Cox, *The prodigious Muse. Women's writing in Counter-reformation Italy* (Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press, 2011). For general information on Sarrocchi and Terracina see also dedicated entries on <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/ItalianAcademies/>

⁴⁴ In his history of Chieti, Girolamo Nicolino mentions the admission of Marcello Ramignani to the *Oziosi* academy in 1613. See Girolamo Nicolino, *Historia della Citta di Chieti Metropoli Delle Provincie D'Abruzzo* (Naples: Heredi Savio, 1657), p. 62.

⁴⁵ A discussion on the role of the academy secretary is in Carlo Padiglione, *Le Leggi Dell'Accademia degli Oziosi in Napoli* (Naples: Giannini, 1878), 16-8.

intorno alla Poetica, alla Retorica, alle Discipline Matematiche, et a'tutte le parti della Filosofia ... vietando che non si debba leggere alcuna materia di Teologia, e della Sacra Scrittura, per le quali per riverenza dobbiamo astenerci: È medesimamente niuna delle cose appartenenti al Publico Governo.⁴⁶

The task of establishing boundaries to control individual expression was crucial in guaranteeing the existence of an academy. Banning discussions on theology and sacred scripture was a statement of religious orthodoxy and a sensible maintenance of order in a “Spanish-Italian” institution like the *Oziosi* academy that counted among its members the highest ranks of Neapolitan clergy. Religion was, however, encouraged through the publication of hagiographical literature of a civic nature,⁴⁷ histories of religious orders and confraternities, historical descriptions of Neapolitan sacred architecture, and copious accounts of religious events. In 1613, under the auspices of the *Oziosi* academy, the Neapolitan printer Giovanni Giacomo Carlino published a multi-authored account of the city celebrations organized in April that year to honour Saint Ludovico Bertrando.⁴⁸ On that occasion, Naples was transformed into a public display of religious and political grandeur. Aristocratic parades, “che facendo bella vista... vennero dal Regio Palazzo per strada Toledo....a San Domenico,”⁴⁹ proceeded through the city center before crowds of reverent Neapolitans. Churches decorated with exotic textiles, banners, emblems, flags, majestic candle holders, and many rich ornaments⁵⁰ were a display of religious sumptuousness. Events included the celebration of more than two hundred masses in the space of one day⁵¹ and the public display of pieces of poetry composed by *Oziosi* academicians specialized in writing eulogies, encomiastic verses, and mini treatises of religious rhetoric.⁵²

Such events were also important occasions for strengthening the bond between patrons and academies which, for celebrations of this caliber, purposely worked together and divided commissions among themselves. The religious fervor of rulers also played a crucial role in shaping popular perception and in channeling collective devotion, for it was the earnest attachment of Countess Catalina de Zunica, a patron and symbol of religious integrity, that “ha spinto questa Città ad essere divota del detto Beato, & à celebrarli Festa solenne in questo

⁴⁶ Padiglione, *Le leggi*, 19.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Filocalo Caputo, *Il compendio della vita, della morte, e de' miracoli di S. Andrea Corsini*. (Naples: Scoriggio, 1629); Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *Descrittione Della Padronanza Di S. Francesco Di Paola Nella Città Di Napoli* (Naples: Longo, 1631); Giambattista Manso, *Vita, et Miracoli di S. Patricia Vergine Sacra, con il compendio delle reliquie, che si conservano nella chiesa del Monasterio di detta Santa in Napoli*. (Naples: Carlino, 1611); Prospero Antonio Zizza, *Prosperi Antonii Zizae, Sacerdotis, Academici Ociosi Neap. Noncupati Pii. Basilica Maior Seu Archiepiscopion Neapolitanum Poemation*. (Naples: Roncagliolo, 1623); Francesco Zacconi, *Discorso Academico Della Vita, E Morte Del B. Andrea Avellino Del Signor Francesco Zacconi* (Naples: Savio, 1636); Cleonte Torbizi, *Vita Di S. Patricia Vergine Figlia Dell'Imperator Costante E Protettrice della città, e Regno di Napoli* (Naples: Savio, 1642); Francesco Porcelli, *Breve Discorso nel qual si narrano i motivi della Città di Napoli in reintegrare la sua padronanza la Vergine Santa Patritia Imperatrice Di Costantinopoli, E Della Solenne Festa Che Si Fece* (Naples: Savio, 1642).

⁴⁸ *Breve Relatione Della Pompa E Delle Cose Che Occorsero Nella Festività Del Beato Ludovico Bertrando, Celebrata Nella Regale Chiesa Di San Domenico Di Napoli L'Ultima Domenoica D'Aprile* (Naples: Carlino, 1613).

⁴⁹ *Breve Relatione*, 11.

⁵⁰ *Breve Relatione*, 10.

⁵¹ *Breve Relatione*, 11.

⁵² Compositions included madrigals, epigrams and encomiastic poetry written by *Oziosi* academicians such as Giambattista Basile, Lorenzo Biffi, Prospero Antonio Zizza, Maurizio Di Gregorio, Carlo Pianto and Paolo Portarelli.

giorno.”⁵³ Religious celebrations and public events were among the most effective strategies for propaganda. They were often an opportunity that, as Gabriel Guarino has recently demonstrated, enhanced some degree of cultural interaction between the Spanish élite and Neapolitans while providing an occasion for collective participation shown by “sharing forms that dialectically combined ‘aristocratic’ and ‘popular’ elements.”⁵⁴ From funerals⁵⁵ to religious and secular celebrations, academies fulfilled the task of shaping a narrative of events that was generally intended to both strengthen internal political propaganda and channel wider perception of the healthy political state of the city.

In so doing, academies were also assigned crucial portions of the public space. These included street areas where rulers were expected to pass; entrances to churches; and areas within indoor sacred spaces where viewers sitting in the most privileged seats could admire emblems, mottos and encomiastic verse that groups of academicians had been commissioned to produce. These areas were enriched with emblems, poetry, inscriptions and dedications that functioned as a public epitome for religious and secular figures and consequently as a form of public affirmation for academies. On some occasions academies worked together in organizing events, an example being the tribute to the death of Queen Margaret of Austria, wife of Philip III, organized in 1611 by the *Oziosi* and the *Sileni* academies.⁵⁶ Ordered by the Viceroy, Fernando de Castro, Count of Lemos and supervised by the Academy President Giambattista Manso, the academy’s tribute is an interesting example of art used as a means of political celebration.

Displayed on the pedestals positioned below an eight-columned *Castellana*, (catafalque), the *Oziosi* homage to the Queen of Spain consisted of a series of emblems embellished with encomiastic compositions framed within:

una Scala Platonica, che consiste ne quattro elementi, e ne gli otto Cieli assignando il p [rimo]. de’ detti piedestalli alla terra, il 2. all’acqua, il 3. all’aria, il 4. al fuoco, il 5. alla Luna, il 6. al sole, il 7. á gli altri pianeti, l’8. al Cielo stellato per dinotare che all’essequie di cosí gran Reina concorre tutto l’universo ad honorarla, e che la memoria di lei sará immortale fondata sopra queste salde, et eterne basi.⁵⁷

⁵³ *Breve Relatione Della Pompa E Delle Cose Che Occorsero Nella Festività Del Beato Ludovico Bertrando*, p. 4.

⁵⁴ Gabriel Guarino, *Representing the king’s splendor, Communication and reception of symbolic forms of power in viceregal Naples* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 73-4.

⁵⁵ See Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *In Funere Serenissimae Margaritae Austriacae Hispaniarum, & Indiarum Reginae. Iulij Caesaris Capacij Academici Tranquilli, & Neapolitanae Urbi A Secretis Oratio* (Naples: Roncagliolo, 1611). For an example of dedicatory verses written to the Queen by a single academician, see Donato Antonio Cito, *Rime Del Dottor Donato Antonio Cito. Il Negletto. Accademico Ozioso. Divise in tre parti* (Naples: Longo, 1619), 50-1.

⁵⁶ *Esequie della Regina Margherita d’Austria moglie del Re Catolico Filippo Terzo: celebrate dall’Accademia degli Oziosi di Napoli sotto la ispezione di Gio. Battista Manso, marchese di Villa, Principe della predetta accademia e di Gio. Andrea di Paolo, Socio della Accad. stessa: fatte nell’anno 1611 per ordine del Signor Ferrante Ruiz di Castro, conte di Lemos, Vicerè di Napoli*, Naples, 1611, Ms 04405, Thomas Fisher Library, Toronto. Parts of this manuscript were published in Ottavio Caputi, *Relatione Della Pompa Funerale Che si Celebrò In Napoli, Nella Morte Della Serenissima Regina Margarita D’Austria* (Naples: Longo, 1712). For a Spanish edition of the event, see Juan de Valcazar, *Relacion de las exequias que se celebraron en Napoles en la muerte de la Reyna Margarita* (Naples: Longo, 1612).

⁵⁷ Thomas Fisher Library, Toronto, Ms 04405, *Esequie della Regina Margherita d’Austria moglie del Re Catolico Filippo Terzo*, Mss 04405, fol. 2^r, 3^v.

Here a carefully designed celebratory strategy was intended to use specific spaces to “guide” the viewer’s appreciation of the symbolic value of verses and images. The use of “blank” areas positioned from the pedestals and along the columns of the Queen’s imposing catafalque was a statement of devotion to the Spanish crown. This was also a public recognition of the position of the *Oziosi* academy as a state-legitimized cultural and political institution. In organizing public events of both a religious and secular nature, academies developed a patterned scheme which employed the use of images and of three major forms of poetry: short anagrammatic compositions, inscriptions, and eulogies.

In June 1629, a sumptuous event was organized to celebrate simultaneously the feast of Saint John the Baptist and the seventh anniversary of Duke Antonio Alvarez Toledo as Viceroy of Naples. On that occasion, rich ornamentations transformed the city into a stage for a public display of abundance and prosperity. With its embellished streets framed by balconies from which cascaded exotic brocades, people exulting at the procession of the Viceroy and his entourage as it passed, Naples projected an idealized image; a living fresco of beauty and collective happiness. Displayed along the major streets of the city center, artists and academicians produced portraits, engravings, emblems, and numerous verses praising the monarchy and the Viceroy “sotto il cui governo non men le spade, che le penne han ricevute i suoi premi, & altrettanto l’Academia, quanto il campo è trofeo del suo merito.”⁵⁸ The ultimate symbol of a humanistic prince, the Viceroy was praised for the protection he had granted to men of letters like Giambattista Marino and for his artistic patronage described through a series of emblems and encomiastic verses praising the Duke’s generosity “perche non inbelli non disarmate, sotto Mecenate si grande sono le lettere e le dottrine.”⁵⁹ Duke Antonio Alvarez Toledo was also depicted as a perfect governor. A reverential encomium of his political virtues was publicly represented in central city districts adorned with twelve gates each embellished by a sign of the Zodiac celebrating “un trionfo d’una particolare virtù ammirata nel governo del Duca.”⁶⁰ The symbolic use of a zodiac to praise the Viceroy is an interesting detail as it shows the use of astrology and the choice of employing the language of science for political ends. This was not unusual in early modern Naples as stars, planets and astrological signs were also the subjects of scholarly debate.

Observing and classifying: academies and science

Away from public scrutiny, astrology and astronomy were hot topics in erudite academic speeches and became major subjects of scientific enquiry. Moreover, empiricism and naturalism, often framed within an anti-Aristotelian approach to cosmology had all found their way into Neapolitan circles. Although Bernardino Telesio’s naturalism was welcomed by “young

⁵⁸“Molti furono gli ornamenti e di pitture, e di arazzerie, e di drappi che si vedevano d’ogni parte; molte le compositioni in Toscana come in Latina poesia, che contenevano varie lodi di S. E. Molti anco i ritrovati di quelle pitture, che imprese, & emblemi son dette” in Francesco Orilia, *Il Zodiaco Over Idea Di Perfettione Di Prencipi, Formata dall’Heroiche Virtù Dell’Illustriss. Et Eccellentiss. Signore D. Antonio Alvarez Di Toledo Duca D’Alba Vicere Di Napoli: Rapresentata come un Trionfo dal Fidelissimo Popolo Napoletano*. Per Opera del Dottore Francesco Antonio Scacciavento suo Eletto. Nella Pomposissima Festa Di San Gio: Battista, celebrata à 23. Giugno 1629. Per il settimo Anno del suo Governo (Naples: Beltrano, 1630), 51 and 254.

⁵⁹ See, in particular, emblems in Orilia, *Il Zodiaco*, 252-53, 220.

⁶⁰ Orilia, *Il Zodiaco*, 2.

Neapolitans,”⁶¹ his books were publicly burned outside the cathedral of Naples on June 20, 1610.⁶² The ideas of Giordano Bruno, Giambattista Della Porta, and Tommaso Campanella⁶³ on the one hand alerted the Inquisition to the dangers of anti-Aristotelianism, demonology and judicial astrology, and on the other they circulated in Naples and beyond. Moreover, Della Porta’s empiricism led to the foundation of the *Secreti* academy.⁶⁴ A private circle, counting among its members Antonio Mizaldo, the *Secreti* academy’s main aim was to explore nature through practical experimentation in order to acquire “una consumata cognizione delle cose naturali.”⁶⁵

Alchemy in particular was at the center of controversial academic disputes and often defined as “*follia, ombra, sogno, fumo.*”⁶⁶ Alchemical experiments were a well-known practice among *Oziosi* and Neapolitan-*Lincai* academicians such as Nicola Antonio Stigliola and Ferrante Imperato.⁶⁷ Within this context, the challenge of deepening human knowledge of nature and its laws was primarily justified so long as it would benefit medicine and technology while having “an effect of transforming things.”⁶⁸ This was at the heart of Della Porta’s scientific interests in both *Magia Naturalis* and *De distillatione*. As a scholar and an active member of the *Oziosi* circle and the *Lincai* Academy (which opened a branch in Naples in 1612), Della Porta studied optics and devised a combination of concave and convex lenses allegedly used by Galileo Galilei for his telescope.⁶⁹ The lack of recognition Della Porta received for his invention generated friction with Galileo that reached the ears of Neapolitan circles. Della Porta’s resentment expressed in one of his letters to Federico Cesi⁷⁰ became a topic for discussion in some Neapolitan academies. In a speech delivered at the *Incauti* academy, Filocalo Caputo observed:

⁶¹ In his biographical entry on Bernardino Telesio, Giovanni Imperiali writes refers to the circulation of Telesio’s work among young Neapolitan intellectuals. See Giovanni Imperiale, *Musaeum Historicum Et Physicum*. (Venice, Giunti, 1640), 80. See also Mario Agrini, “Telesio nel Seicento napoletano,” in *Bernardino Telesio e la cultura napoletana*, ed Raffaele Sirri and Maurizio Torrini, 343-44 (Naples: Guida, 1992).

⁶² The list of burned books which contains Telesio’s *De rerum natura* and “Telesij opera” is in Pasquale Lopez, *Inquisizione Stampa e Censura nel Regno di Napoli tra ’500 e ’600* (Naples: Edizioni del Delfino, 1974), 216-17.

⁶³For a reference to Della Porta’s studies on Phytognomy, see Tommaso Campanella, *De Sensu Rerum Et Magia, Libri Quatuor* (Frankfurt, Emmelium, 1620), 255.

⁶⁴ For a short reference to the *Secreti* academy, see Pompeo Sarnelli’s preface to the Reader in Della Porta, *Della Magia Naturale*.

⁶⁵ Della Porta, *Della Magia Naturale*, 2. Very little is known on *Secreti* academicians. A very interesting reference to members of Della Porta’s circle includes the following: “Ceterum veterrima haec eiuscensus scriptorium, indelebisq; iam extitit nota, superius etiam dictis, & Alberto, Mizaldo, Alexio, Marinello, caeterisq; simper inusta” in Imperiale, *Musaeum Historicum Et Physicum*, 123. A reference to Antonio Mizaldo and Giambattista Della Porta’s interest in the occult and the “secrets of nature” is in Tommaso Garzoni, *La Piazza Universale Di Tutte Le Professioni Del Mondo* (Seravalle Di Venetia: Meghetti, 1605), 184.

⁶⁶ Francesco De’ Pietri, *I Problemi Accademici del Signor Francesco de’ Pietri L’Impedito Accademico Otioso ove le più famose quistioni proposte nell’Illustrissima Accademia de gli Otiosi di Napoli si spiegano* (Naples: Savio, 1642), 17.

⁶⁷ A very interesting analysis of the Neapolitan reception of Della Porta’s ideas on alchemy is in Massimo Marra, *Il Pulcinella Filosofo Chimico di Severino Scipione* (1681). Uomini ed idee dell’alchimia a Napoli nel periodo del Vicereame, con una scelta di testi originali (Milan, Collana Mimesis, 2000), 28-40.

⁶⁸ “Io. Baptista Porta...in patria siquidem sua Neapoli Academia extruxerat Secretorum nuncupatam, in quam nenimi fas erat insinuare se, qui admirandum aliquod supra vulgi captum non proferret arcanum, ex quo certissimi, commutationem effectus sequerentur,” in Imperiale, *Musaeum Historicum Et Physicum*, 123.

⁶⁹ See Giambattista Della Porta, *De refractione Optices. Libri novem* (Naples: Carlino & Pace, 1593).

⁷⁰ On the 28th of August 1609, in a letter addressed to Federico Cesi, Della Porta wrote: “del segreto dell’occhiale l’ho visto; ed è una coglionaria, ed è presa dal mio libro IX De Refractione optices.” See *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, Edizione Nazionale, Vol. 11 (Florence: Barbera, 1903).

Dica pur chi vuole che il Galileo Galilei di sì raro trovato sia stato l'autore, ch'io sempre chiamerò in testimonio gli fioritissimi commentarij della magia del nostro Porta...testimonio ne sarà il dottissimo Giovanni Keplero...che lo stesso occhiale mostrò al Galileo, che Gio. Battista haveva ritrovato; testimonio ne sono io che discorrendo co' l'istesso Galileo, e narrandoli ciò che visto havevo nella copia di una lettera del Keplero diretta a lui, rispose che no' negava essere stato il nostro napoletano l'Architetto, ma esso il fabro, il nostro filosofo fece il disegno, ma esso rizzò la machina.⁷¹

More generally, Della Porta's legacy was shaped by the reception of both *Magia naturalis* and his books on physiognomy, whose use ranged from science to political treatises.⁷² A miscellaneous text encompassing a variety of disciplines, Della Porta's *Magia naturalis* became a successful and widely-translated text that circulated throughout Europe. Eventually organized into twenty books, *Magia naturalis* included sections on pharmacy, botany, mineralogy, metallurgy, optics, gemmology, chemistry, cosmetics, and magic. After Della Porta's death it was within academies, courts, and city companies that the legacy of his work began to spread. Here scientists and physicians carried out research on animals, the human body and curative natural substances. Moreover, medicine was in some cases linked to alchemy, as metals, stones, and minerals were often used to clean the body of all impurities that were commonly believed to be a cause of disease.

In 1624, for instance, Secondino Roncagliolo published in Naples *Elixir Vitae* written by the Dominican friar Donato D'Eremita of Rocca D'Evandro. A renowned apothecary based at the Convent of Santa Caterina à Formello in Naples, D'Eremita's text, dedicated to Grand Duke Ferdinand II of Tuscany, was received with admiration as attested by the presence of dedicatory compositions written to both the author and Ferdinand II by *Oziosi* and *Incauti* academicians such as Orazio Comite, Carlo Pinto, Prospero Antonio Zizza, and Marco Antonio Perillo.⁷³

⁷¹ Filocalo Caputo, *Oratione* (Naples: Longo, 1632), 18-9. The Carmelite father Filocalo Caputo was also one of the censors who granted an *imprimatur* for Nicolò Antonio Stelliola's *Il Telescopio Over Ispicillo Celeste*. Di Nicolò Antonio Stelliola Linceo (Naples: Maccarano, 1627).

⁷² For a list of Della Porta's books on Physiognomy, see dedicated entries on <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/ItalianAcademies/>.

As early as the 1620s, the Neapolitan *Incauto* Filippo Finella published texts on Physiognomy and Metoposcopy which drew from Della Porta's studies, "i nomi de gli Autori, che della naturale Fisionomia han trattato...gli più notabili, & usitati, & fra gli altri sono. Adamantio. Aristotele. Antonio Pellegrino. Gober. Geronimo Cardano. Guglielmo Grattaroli. Gio. Battista della Porta" in Filippo Finella, *Phisonomia Naturale di Filippo Finella* (Naples: Maccarano), 1625, Preface.

In delineating the profile for the perfect Prince, Francesco Lanario Aragona drew on Della Porta's *Celeste Fisionomia*: "Entre los temperamentos moderados el que mas se debe desear en un Príncipe es el sanguineo... el temperamento flematico no es tan à proposito para un Príncipe porque quien tubiere, sera mas apto para la obediencia, que para el imperio...Faltale al Principe deste temperamento, la grandeza en el animo, la generosidad en los fines, la luz en las resoluciones, y en las execuciones, el espiritu, y brio, y lo poco que resuelve, y executa es masa caso que por elecion viviendo siempre sujeto à aconsejarse con otros como nos enseña Arist. ad Theodet. Y Iuan Bautista de la Porta en la fisionomia celestial," in Francesco Lanario Aragona, *Los tratados del Principe y de la guerra de Don Francisco Lanario, y Aragona* (Palermo, Maringo, 1624), 14-5.

⁷³ The censor's agreement contained in the *Elixir Vitae* refers to D'Eremita's position in the Convent: "Visis attestationibus plurium Adm. P.R. PP. Magistrorum Proviintiae nostrae Deputatorum pro revision libri de ELIXIR

Influenced by Della Porta's empiricism as "la sperienza è gran maestra delle cose" and by his analysis of the occult properties of plants contained in *Phytognomonica*,⁷⁴ D'Eremita refers to a series of demonstrations on the efficaciousness of his medical formula performed before a panel of selected experts which included:

Gio: Battista della Porta eccellentissimo Filosofo, e Principe à quell tempo dell'Illustrissima Accademia de gli Otiosi, con cui si accompagnò il Signor Col'Antonio Stigliola huomo dottissimo, & I Signori Oratio Citarella, Gio: Giacomo Lazzaro, e Gio: Bernardino Castellozzo tutti trè Filosofi, e Medici eccellenti. Nè sdegnò di venirvi il Signor Vincenzo Forte da Montemarano Spacirico di S.M. Cattolica, alli quali, in presenza d'alcuni Principi, e Cavalieri, per lo medesimo fine venuti erano, mostrai tutto l'apparecchio dell'Elixir Vitae.⁷⁵

Della Porta's studies also encouraged the publication of books on physiognomy, both human and animal,⁷⁶ and astrological medicine, an example being the work by Filippo Finella, a pioneer scientist who studied coral as a marine organism. A member of the *Incauti* academy with the nickname of *l'Inutile*, Finella published successful books on Physiognomy, Metoposcopy, Astrological medicine, and Paracelsian alchemy.⁷⁷ In Naples, scientific experimentation was also encouraged by secular and religious patronage. Experiments with the aim of "obtaining gold from impure metals" were performed at both the viceregal court and at the house of prominent

VITAE, compositiper Donatum de Heremita Aromatarum Conventus nostri S. Catharinae apud Formellum de Neapoli." See Frà Donato D'Eremita, *Dell'Elixir Vitae Di Frà Donato D'Eremita Di Rocca D'Evaandro dell'ord. De Pred. Libri Quattro* (Naples: Roncagliolo, 1624). D'Eremita's work included an equally well-received *Antidotario* published in Naples in 1639 which contains dedicatory verses written by Marc'Antonio Perillo Ingelosito Academico Incauto, Gregorio Alfieri Dottor delle Leggi Acad. Incauto, Antonio Valletta l'Improvviso Academico Incauto and Domenico Gallo Accademico Infuriato. See preface in Donato D'Eremita, *Antidotario Di Fra Donato D'Eremita Dell'Ordine De Predicatori* (Naples: Roncagliolo, 1639).

⁷⁴ See D'Eremita, *Elixir Vitae*, 4; Ioannes Baptista Porta, *Phytognomonica*. Io. Baptistae Portae Neap. Octo Libris Contenta (Naples: Salviano, 1588).

⁷⁵ D'Eremita, *Elixir Vitae*, 4.

⁷⁶ Germain, *Breve E Sustatiale Trattato Intorno Alle Figure Anatomiche*. Friar Jean Germain, a French physician who spent a period of time at the Convent of Santa Maria della Stella in Naples in the 1620s translated into Italian a text on medicine published in French by Andrea Lorenzo, physician at the court of Henry IV of France. See Gio. Germano, *Discorsi Della Conservazione Della Vista, Delle malattie melanconiche, delli catarri, e della vecchiaia*. Composti in lingua Francese dal Sig. Andrea Lorenzo, Medico Fisico del Christ.mo Herrico IIII. Rè di Francia. Tradotti in lingua Italiana, e commentati da Fr. Gio. Germano Francese, Medico Chirurgo, et al presente Religioso dell'Ordine di San Francesco di Paola (Naples: Scorigio, 1626). This text contains dedicatory verses written by Antonio Gallo, a member of the *Infuriati* academy in Naples known as *l'Impatiente*. Following a Neapolitan trend that made texts on natural medicine on high demand, Jean Germain's translation contains a series of remedies to live a long life and a long section on the "beauty of old age."

⁷⁷ See Filippo Finella, *Fisonomia naturale di Filippo Finella. Divisa in due parti. Nella qual si contiene la geometria delle membra humane con un brevissimo discorso delli segni ch'appariscono nell'ugne delle mani* (Naples: Maccarano, 1629); Filippo Finella, *De Planetaria Naturali Phisonomia* (Naples: Gaffaro, 1649); Filippo Finella, *De Metroposcopia Seù Methoposcopia Naturali* (Antwerp: Moretum, 1650); Filippo Finella, *De Quatuor Signis quae apparent in unguibus manuum* (Naples: Gaffaro, 1649); Filippo Finella, *De Methoposcopia Astronomica. De Duoecim Signis Coelestibus* (Antwerp: Moretum, 1650); Filippo Finella, *Delle Virtù Occulte Delle Vipere Per le 28. mansioni delli segni del Zodiaco* (Naples: Longo, 1639); Filippo Finella, *Soliloquium Salium Philippi Finelli* (Naples: Gaffaro, 1649). For a reference to Finella's scientific interests, see Massimo Marra, *Pulcinella Filosofo Chimico di Severino Scipione*, 42-3.

Neapolitan citizens such as Cardinal Francesco Boncompagno, Archbishop of Naples, 1623-1641.⁷⁸

Naples was also a city with exotic botanical gardens, where people collected and displayed scientific rarities. As Paula Findlen convincingly argues, “Aldrovandi’s museum... Francesco Calzolari in Verona... Ferrante Imperato in Naples and the papal physician Michele Mercati in Rome created museums of nature considered the wonders of the sixteenth century.”⁷⁹ A scientist and collector who became a member of the *Oziosi* academy and had contacts with Federico Cesi, the founder of the *Lincei* academy, Ferrante Imperato possessed a herbarium containing newly classified plants from the New World that he described in his *Historia Naturalis*, an essential reference in Lyncean books on medical botany.⁸⁰ In his Neapolitan house, Imperato also set up a museum frequented by the Viceroy for “its infinite number of things” which the Neapolitan scientist collected and studied with a group of fellow scholars that included Fabio Colonna and Nicola Antonio Stigliola.⁸¹ What is more, a fascination with scientific instruments also spread in elitist Neapolitan circles where sophisticated devices were part of private collections and cabinets of wonders, such as Viceroy Fernando de Castro’s collection of scientific instruments displayed at his Neapolitan court which included “Un Relox, que tenia el Conde de Lemos Don Pedro, siendo Virrey de Napoles, que era un glóbo sustentado por Atlante.”⁸²

An important component of the Neapolitan debate on science in early Seicento was, however, linked to the geo-morphological structure of its territory. A volcanic land with seismic activity, the bay of Naples offered plenty of opportunities for scientists wishing to carry out field research. In addition to the legacy of classical scientific literature (from Aristotle to Pliny’s observations of Naples’ volcano), Vesuvius and *Solfatara* in Pozzuoli became important destinations for scientists and travellers who had been informed⁸³ about a recent catastrophe that had hit Naples and its vicinities on 16 December 1631. At dawn that day Mount Vesuvius erupted causing one of the most devastating volcanic explosions since 79 AD. From late December 1631, as the volcano continued to erupt and the city of Naples was being repeatedly hit by earthquakes, Neapolitan printers started to publish a variety of accounts, news books, diaries, treatises, and books on Mount Vesuvius that would soon circulate throughout Europe. Neapolitan texts on Vesuvius, some of which have been recently studied by Jane Everson,⁸⁴ were

⁷⁸ See *Accrescimento D’Oro Secreto Reale posto in operazione dall’Illustrissimo & Eccellentiss. Sig. Duca D’Ossuna Viceré di Napoli* in Gioseffo Marini, *Breve Tesoro Alchimistico De più Alchimisti Moderni d’Europa. Nel quale si tratta d’alcuni Secreti particolari d’Alchimia oprati da Virtuosi Moderni e posti in luce da Don Gioseffo Marini* (Venice: Bortoli, 1664), 33-6, 65-73.

⁷⁹ Paula Findlen, *Possessing nature: museums, collecting, and scientific culture in early Modern Italy*, (Berkeley-London: University of California Press, 1994), 31.

⁸⁰ In describing the properties of some Mexican plants, the Lyncean Nardo Antonio Recchi refers to Imperato’s *Historia*. See Hernandez Francisco, *Rerum Medicarum Novae Hispaniae Thesaurus Seu Plantarum Anumalium Mineralium Mexicanorum* (Rome: Mascardi, 1649), 216.

⁸¹ In the preface to Ferrante Imperato’s *Dell’Historia Naturale*, the editor Francesco Imperato mentions the Viceroy’s visits to his father’s famous museum. See Ferrante Imperato, *Dell’Historia Naturale di Ferrante Imperato Napolitano*. Libri XXVIII. Nella quale ordinatamente si tratta della diversa condition di miniere, e pietre. Con alcune historie di Piante, & Animali; sin’hora non date in luce (Naples: Vitale, 1599).

⁸² See *Rimas De Lupercio I Del Dotor Bartolome Leonardo De Argensola* (Saragoza: 1634), 435.

⁸³ See, for example, “*The Continuation of our Forraine Intelligence*” (London: Butter & Bourne), 10: (1632): pp. 4-6.

⁸⁴ See Jane E. Everson, “The melting pot of science and belief: studying Vesuvius in seventeenth-century Naples,” *Renaissance Studies* (2011), doi: 10.1111/j.1477-4658.2011.00766.x.

so much in demand that: “se si volessero pagare a peso d’oro non si trovano dette Relationi, perche gli forastieri oltramontani non nce ne lasciano quando sono in Napoli et vanno le Caravane insieme à visitare il Vesuvio, come s’è osservato infinite volte.”⁸⁵ Excluding manuscripts, it is estimated that more than two hundred books were published in Naples on the subject of Vesuvius between 1631 and 1635.⁸⁶ In a context where “tutti li ragionamenti versono intorno questo infelice successo, et altro non hanno in bocca anco gli huomini più sensati.”⁸⁷ Vesuvius monopolized the Neapolitan public sphere from streets to private spaces. In recording this event the role of academies was crucial as it was in these circles that Vesuvius became the subject of a multidisciplinary debate that ranged from science to politics and from religion to poetry.

Neapolitan academies looked at Mount Vesuvius as a subject for scientific investigation in the fields of geology, seismology, volcanology, and astrology. Horrified by the eruption yet at the same time fascinated by an occurrence unprecedented in living memory, Neapolitan scholars narrated the sequence of catastrophic events, often positioning Mount Vesuvius within a religious and political discourse that simultaneously served—albeit mainly unwittingly—a wider need for propaganda. This was certainly the case for a typology of texts on Mount Vesuvius published by prominent politicians and clergymen such as Giovan Bernardino Giuliani, who held the office of Seggio del Popolo secretary, Giulio Cesare Capaccio, who held the office of Secretary of the city, and the Jesuit Giulio Cesare Recupito whose Latin text on Mount Vesuvius published in 1632 was translated into Italian in 1635.⁸⁸ All directly or indirectly associated with the *Oziosi* academy, Giuliani, Capaccio, and Recupito wrote texts on the eruption using a similar structure consisting of a general account of the event, an interpretation of the causes of the volcanic eruption, and a final part discussing the role played by the intercessions of local saints and political and ecclesiastical institutions in protecting the city of Naples. Descriptions showing the Viceroy publicly kneeling before the Virgin to seek protection for the people of Naples⁸⁹ or Cardinal Boncompagni leading a procession and holding San Gennaro’s blood to fight off the demonic spirits held responsible for the volcanic eruption,⁹⁰ were statements of the central role played by state authorities in reinstating order in such a difficult time.

⁸⁵ Ferrante Bucca, *Giornali Historici Delle cose accadute nel Regno di Napoli*, Ms MS X 51, fol. 58v, National Library, Naples.

⁸⁶ The literature on Mount Vesuvius is vast. A good list of books on this subject is in Federigo Furchheim, *Bibliografia del Vesuvio compilata e corredata di note critiche estratte dai più autorevoli scrittori vesuviani* (Naples, F. Furchheim di Emilio Prass Editore, 1897). A list of books published during and after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius is contained in Jane E. Everson, “The melting pot of science and belief.”

⁸⁷ Dispacci Ambasciatori veneziani a Napoli, filza 5, n. 145, fol. 2^v, State Archive, Venice.

⁸⁸ Giulio Cesare Recupito, *De Vesuviano Incendio Nuntius In Lucem Iterum Editus* (Naples: Longo, 1632); Giulio Cesare Recupito, *Avviso Dell’Incendio Del Vesuvio*. Composto dal P. Giulio Cesare Recupito Napol.^{mo} Della Compagnia di Giesù. Tradotto dalla lingua Latina all’Italiana Ad istanza Dell’Ill.^{mi} Principe & Academici Otiosi (Naples: Longo, 1635).

⁸⁹ For a detailed account of the Viceroy’s participation to some public religious events organized after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, see: Giovanbernardino Giuliani, *Trattato Del Monte Vesuvio e de’ suoi Incendi*. Di Gianbernardino Giuliani Segretario del Fidelissimo Popolo Napolitano ((Naples: Longo, 1632), 67-8.

⁹⁰ As Giulio Cesare Capaccio reports: “[Cardinal Boncompagni]...vestitosi la corazza del manto Ponteficale, postosi in testa la celada della sacra Tiara, presa in una mano la spada del misterioso Pastorale, in un’altra imbracciato lo Scudo del miracolo[so] sangue del Gloriosi S. Gennaro...comandò a i diavoli che ritornassero in dietro, nè vomitasse più fiamme la voragine, e cessò il foco, e si rasserenò il Cielo, e così miracolosamente col vigor del Sangue beato, e con tre sue sante benedittioni, restò salva la sua bella Napoli.” *Incendio di Vesuvio Dialogo* in Capaccio, *Il Forastiero*, 66-7.

The scientific debate generated by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius encouraged the publication of successful treatises and academic speeches. *Oziosi*, *Infuriati*, and *Erranti* academicians positioned Vesuvius within a debate on science that ranged from astrology to medicine. Judicial Astrology looked at the eruption of Mount Vesuvius as a natural occurrence caused by a particular astral conjunction of the Moon with Mars which, in Filippo Finella's prediction, was believed to be the cause of: "infermità gravi, fistole, e piaghe...perché la congiunzione della Luna prevale al Sole; Marte nel segno di Leone in mezzo cielo ci va similmente minacciando guerre, tradimenti, innovationi di gente, furti, incendij, e perturbation."⁹¹ The clash of opinions generated by different interpretations of volcanic eruptions led to fierce criticism from scholars such as Giulio Cesare Recupito and Giulio Cesare Capaccio who discarded both the scientific basis of astrology and the heretical divinatory rituals of astrologers "che pretendono poter sapere quello che solo à Dio è manifesto."⁹² This was also the position officially adopted by the *Oziosi* academy which sponsored the Italian translation of Giulio Cesare Recupito's Latin text on Vesuvius in which the author condemned the mendacity of astrologers' predictions⁹³ and safely drew on Aristotle to explain the dynamics of volcanic eruptions.

It was, however, in discussing the causes for the series of earthquakes that preceded and followed the 1631 eruption that Recupito proved the lack of foundation for Aristotle's observations according to which earthquakes generated from volcanic eruptions were not expected to cause any damage. In interpreting the "unexpectedly" catastrophic scale of the seismic activities that had recently hit Naples and its vicinities, Recupito concluded that they had been caused by God: "Donde prender si può congettura, che l'incendio del Vesuvio sia per singular beneficio di Dio avvenuto."⁹⁴ Recupito's line of thinking appeared to be a common trait among Neapolitan scientists. In 1632 Giovanni Tommaso Giovino delivered a speech at the *Infuriati* academy in Naples on the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Surviving in manuscript, Giovino's succinct and stylistically incisive lecture can be seen as a summary of what may have been discussed in the Neapolitan public sphere at the time of the eruption. Giovino's lecture is divided into sixteen "problems," indeed a series of bullet points jotted down for an interdisciplinary oral performance that ranged from religion to science. The analysis of natural phenomena such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions resulted in a confutation of the pre-Socratic scientific tradition in favor of Aristotle's ideas.

To this, however, Giovino added the importance of astrology in explaining natural occurrences as "i terremoti sogliono predirsi dagl'eclissi, et da i gran congiogimenti di Pianeti maggiori, dette dall'Astrologi magne coniuntioni."⁹⁵ The range of themes discussed by Giovino, his choice both to opt for a scientific explanation of natural phenomena and to consider the validity of judicial astrology may partly explain why his lecture was never published. Its unpolished style may also tell us that Giovino wrote it in a short period of time. As Brian Richardson has argued, "manuscript circulation reflected in many instances a need for quick

⁹¹ See Filippo Finella (alias Lanelfi), *Incendio del Vesuvio del Lanelfi* (Naples: Beltrano, 1632), 4.

⁹² Capaccio, *Incendio di Vesuvio Dialogo*, 41.

⁹³ Recupito, *Avviso Dell'Incendio Del Vesuvio*, 179-180.

⁹⁴ Recupito, *Avviso Dell'Incendio Del Vesuvio*, 19.

⁹⁵ Giovanni Tommaso Giovino, *Lettione academica dell'incendio e terremoto di Somma fatta nell'Academia dell'Infuriati di Napoli, da Gio: Tomaso Giovino Dottor di Filosofia e medicinam academico prima nell'Ociosi e poi nell'Infuriati, nell'anno 1632*, Ms. E.20.³², fol. 3^f, Ursino Recupero Library, Catania,

communication,”⁹⁶ which, in the case of Naples, played a crucial role in creating a strong public opinion that somehow guided Neapolitans to make sense of the chaos generated from such a traumatic event.

In some cases science went so far as to anthropomorphize Mount Vesuvius and compare it to the human body. Here Medicine and Vulcanology met in a mutually shared space. In 1642 Francesco de’ Pietri published *I problemi accademici*, a collection of speeches delivered at the *Oziosi* academy during a thirty-year period which contains a speech entitled “Dell’incendio del Monte Vesuvio avvenuto à 16. Di Dicembre. 1631.”⁹⁷ De Pietri’s speech on Mount Vesuvius looked at volcanic explosions as a form of disease of the earth caused by an imbalance of its substratum substances. Drawing on Galenic medicine, De’ Pietri believed that the fire erupting from Mount Vesuvius had been caused by the principle of ‘humour putrefaction’ that was believed to be the cause of human diseases so that:

quelle eruttationi focose, ch’hora dal nostro Vesuvio veggiamo...la cagione può essere... la putrefattione de gli humori... che infocate accendono il sangue nelle vene humane, sicome il bitume nelle miniere terrestri... il che facilmente avviene in questi paesi, i quali hanno le viscere di fuoco... per la copia de’ minerali oliosi, virtuosi, e bituminosi.⁹⁸

Despite their vehement disagreements, scholars were in unanimity that the destructive fury of Vesuvius may have continued uninterrupted without the intervention of the Viceroy and the Cardinal of Naples. The necessity of having to position ruling institutions as figures able to speak with patron saints and fight with demons was a statement of the pervasive control they exercised on all aspects of Neapolitan life. Such control included, of course, academies and intellectuals whose existence depended on the extent to which they did not push the boundaries of orthodoxy.

Conclusion

As we have seen, in the early seventeenth century Naples was an important capital with an international port and a distinctive urban architecture. As a multicultural center with a complex social fabric, Naples—like all cities—had a constant need for stability. Moments of acute crisis due to changes in political power, social unrest, heavy taxation, and natural catastrophes, were some of the main reasons that led the state to use propaganda. Within this context, the role played by academies was crucial. They fulfilled a variety of tasks including organizing religious and secular public events which functioned as statements of power. The support academies provided to state-sponsored programs made them more than venues simply aimed at encouraging learned sociability. On the contrary, academies often became civic and political symbols which

⁹⁶ See Brian Richardson, *Manuscript culture in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 227.

⁹⁷ De’ Pietri, *I Problemi Accademici*, 217-20.

⁹⁸ De’ Pietri, *I Problemi Accademici*, 217-18.

gave certain groups and city districts visibility thanks to a system based on various forms of patronage; academies also supported intellectual activities and lively debate on science and the humanities. Books published within Neapolitan academies circulated throughout Europe often encouraging an intellectual network that positioned Naples as a major center within the Republic of Letters.

Within such a vibrant intellectual milieu, however, dissidence was barely tolerated. Despite the absence of a Tribunal of the Inquisition in Naples, the authorities nonetheless imposed strict constraints on freedom of expression. Accordingly, censorship was imposed on academies and their activities through rigorous control of the press. Members of the highest echelons of Neapolitan society were often part of panels of censors responsible for issuing *imprimatur* consonant with state and religious policies. During the first half of the seventeenth century this power was exercised through several pragmatic sanctions. Among them was the regulation of prohibited books which had been printed on the Italian peninsula but not granted the Viceroy's permission to be sold in the Kingdom of Naples. Indeed, so strict was press control that censors were even required to examine books after they had been printed but before they were distributed to Neapolitan booksellers. The strict control on books published within academies may thus partly explain why historians have found it difficult to provide evidence of both political and religious dissent within Neapolitan academic circles.

Even so, there was an underground culture among Neapolitan intellectuals which was regarded suspiciously by authorities. The "unofficial" circulation of Telesio's work among Neapolitan intellectuals, rumors of anti-aristotelianism, Della Porta's struggle against the Inquisition, the support given to Galileo's theories by thinkers such as Tommaso Campanella, the defense of the Copernican system, and the praise of Galileo and Kepler expressed by the Carmelite friar Marco Antonio Foscarini⁹⁹ prove that the Neapolitan intellectual scene had a daring, non-conformist component whose importance may have spread beyond the city. Neapolitan circles became international venues for intellectuals who travelled to Naples, purchased and read multidisciplinary texts published within academies, joined local circles and helped spread news about the city. Neapolitan academies also twinned with similar circles flourishing in other Italian cities. This was certainly the case for the *Lincci* and the *Umoristi* academies in Rome which collaborated with Neapolitan circles by encouraging mutual membership, the exchange of knowledge, and the joint publication of books.

Neapolitan books had a wide circulation often becoming part of the private libraries of collectors, aristocrats, intellectuals and polymaths. In some cases, due to restrictions imposed on freedom of expression, Naples forced thinkers such as Tommaso Campanella to escape abroad where the successful publication of his books became the first sign of his enduring legacy. It is an irony to think that some of the best known figures who benefitted from that milieu owe their fame to publications issued outside the ambit of academies and indeed in more liberal European cities.

⁹⁹ See Paolo Antonio Foscarini, *Lettera Del R.P.M. Paolo Antonio Foscarini Carmelitano. Sopra l'Opinione de' Pittagorici, e del Copernico. Della Mobilità della terra, E del nuovo Pittagorico Sistema del Mondo* (Naples: Scoriggio, 1615), 13-8. After its publication, Foscarini's *Lettera* was banned and included in the List of Prohibited Books.

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