

*I.C.S. "CAMPO DEL MORICINO" plesso "Caduti di Via Fani".
Project: "Vusciola"*

A Tourist guide to the south-eastern area of the city of Naples



Naples and the Myth of Parthenope



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Introduction:

Within the ambit of the project "Vusciola", the aim of this Tourist Guide is to examine with the students historical places and monuments of their district, through researches, document, direct visits and photos so that they can be aware of the value of their cultural property.

The Origins of Naples and the Myth

The origins of Naples are linked to the legend of "Parthenope", the famous Siren who had uselessly tried to

bewitch Ulysses. Disappointed; she had thrown herself into water. Therefore she was transported by the tides near the islet of Megaride (the current "Castello dell'Ovo") in front of the promontory of Monte Echia (the current Pizzofalcone), from thence the origin of the first known toponym. Here the first inhabitants, navigators coming from Rhodes Island, settled a Greek colony in the ninth century a.c. Subsequently, the Cumani, who found in this area a funeral monument devoted to

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Parthenope, moved the city more to the east, taking the name of Neapolis (new city) to distinguish it from its predecessor, Paleopolis (old city). The Greek-Roman Naples had a structure that remained untouched for over 2500 years, and which is today the old centre. It was subjected through the centuries, to the constant domination, Byzantine, Longobard, Norman, Swabian, Angevin, Aragonese, Spanish, Austrian, Borbonic and French, all of whom left an indelible sign of their presence in the buildings and

monuments of the city. Naples was a great European capital until the unification of Italy and today is an important artistic and cultural centre



The South-eastern area of the city

The market district, strictly joined with the old city, is a place rich of strong contrasts. Even if it is chaotic, it is laden with history; here you can live deep emotions visiting the place which was the scenery of important events in the past and be struck by the sight

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of very important monuments apparently abandoned to them.

First itinerary:

Piazza St. Eligio, The gothic clock-tower, the church of St. Eligio, The convent school and the cloister, the church of San Giovanni a mare and the statue of "Donna Marianna".

Starting our visit from Piazza St. Eligio, where our school is situated, we can reach, passing under a gothic clock tower on the right, two



important monuments of the Middle Ages: The church of St. Eligio and The church of St. Giovanni a mare.

The Arch of St. Eligio and the Gothic Clock Tower

The Arch of St. Eligio is situated on the east side of the market square. It dates back to the XVII cent. and was restored in the XVIII cent., it is also called the clock arch and

enclosed in a small two floor tower. On the first floor, there is the clock, on the

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second floor a small gothic window.

On the corners of the clock, we can still see some little old heads of marble representing a man with a beard and a woman; they remind us the legend of "Antonello

- Caracciolo" who was beheaded by order of "Isabella D'Aragona because of a rape of a woman: Costanza Del Pizzo. The Clock has been out of order since 1943, after an explosion of a ship in the port nearby and was restored

on 8th May 1993 by the cultural association" Nea Ghenesis" after collecting money with holy music concerts given in the Church of St. Eligio.



The church of St. Eligio

The hospital and church of St. Eligio were built in the 12th century and were



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among the earliest of Anjou buildings in whole town then during the XVIth cent., an orphanage and a public bank were added on.

The apse of the church and the lateXVIIIth cent. facade of the hospital (crafted by Ignazio Di Nardo), take up the west side of piazza Mercato. The square had been a commercial area from the time of the French, and was the place where on 29th October 1268; Conradin of Swabia was executed at the



orders of Charles of Anjou.

The church was dedicated to three Saints of French origin, Dionysius, Martin and Eligio; it was readjusted

during the XVIIIth century and amply restored by Orazio Angelini who, from 1830 to 1843 covered the interior with stuccoes. Destroyed by bombing in 1943

insensitive restoration ensued which cancelled out all traces of the church's baroque and XIXth cent

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decorations. Entrance of the church is gained through a fine French Gothic doorway in side of the building where the Arch of the clock stands, erected in the XVth cent. And restored in the Sixth cent. By this Arch, the bell tower is accessible from neighbouring houses.

The Church interior is of particular interest, with three naves and a transept by means of which the various transformations the building underwent over the centuries may be understood. One example of these transformations is the addition of a fourth

nave to the earlier three that too, place in the XVIth cent. providing a connecting route between the hospital premises and the Church through wide, elegant Renaissance archways. Of the fresco cycle executed between the XIVth and XVth cents., of note are the Redeemer giving blessing, datable to 1360 attributed to the Master of the Leonessa chapel in St. Peter's church in Maiella; to the same circle also attributable all the her XIVth cent. decorations, except for the St. Nicholas, the

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stories of St. Nicholas and Annonciation, probably by a master associated with Giotto's workshop. Gennaro Aspreno Galante relates a curious fact related to the history of the Church: let it be known that our coachmen, whenever their horses were taken ill, led them before the ancient bronze figure of the horse, that stood where the obelisk of St. Gennaro rises(...); when this superstition was removed by Archbishop Matthew Filomarino in the XIV, people began to take their sick horses

to receive blessing from the Rector of St. Eligio, because in that church there was a congregation of blacksmiths; and if the horses got better, their shoes were affixed to the Church door as a sign of gratitude for the mercy of St. Eligio, to whom people in the Anjou vernacular referred to as Sant'Aloja " (A religious to the city of Naples,1872).



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The covent school and the cloister

The building next to the church was first a hospital then ,by order of the viceroy" Don Pedro di Toledo", a conservatorium where young girls could be educated as nurses; afterwards it became a monastery; a XVIth century fountain is placed in the main cloister with columns of piperno marble and renaissance round



arches. On the upper floor, there is a hall with frescoes representing scenes from the "Gerusalemme Liberata" by Angelo Mozzillo; in this room, the Bourbon sovereigns used to watch the famous fireworks of the feast "Del Carmine". The XVIIth century façade of the building, craft by Ignazio Di Nardo, stands on the west side of p.zza Mercato.



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The church of San Giovanni a mare

The church of "San Giovanni a mare" was built in the twelfth century in a place that once was washed by the sea and it was joined to the hospital of St. Giovanni a mare, which was founded by the knights of the Maltese order to welcome the pilgrims and crusaders coming back from the holy land.

During the centuries, some restorations were made but during the eighteenth



century, the hospital was closed and its rooms became civil flats while the church became a parish. At the end of the eighteenth century, after new restorations to restore the city, new streets were created and the church of "San Giovanni a mare" changed its shape to be absorbed in the new buildings; after the restorations of the last years the church today appears in its ancient splendour.

The central nucleus is made up of a nave and two aisles with

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columns and capitals of different orders. In the floor of the transept, covered by a glass, you can admire the foundations of the original circular apse, which dates back to the twelfth century. The side chapels created between the 13th and the 14th century are all made of piperno marble and dedicated to saints; the floor made of basalt, contains memorial tablets of the Maltese knights while you can see others on the walls. According to the tradition, it is told that in the past, near the church, the evening

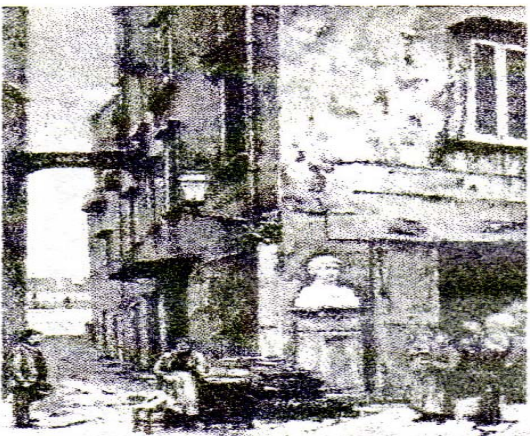
before the feast of "San Giovanni mare" on the 24th of June, people used to go in procession with the statue of the saint and some religious customs took place in memory of Jesus Christ's baptism in the Jordan River. The day after, people used to enjoy themselves all the night with songs and obscene dances, which ended with a bath into the sea. Later on, during the reign of king Charles the third of Bourbon, the pagan feast was forbidden; only the religious feast was allowed.

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The Bust of "Donna Marianna"

This statue of marble, was found in the 19th cent., under the foundations of a house in St. Eligio. According to the tradition we know that Neapolitans



considered this bust ,with a beautiful female face, as Parthenope, the famous Siren ,symbol of the of the city which was called

"Onna Marianna a capa e Napule"(The Head of Naples).

The statue was displayed to the affectionate attention of the Neapolitans on a small column on the corner between St. Eligio street and St. Donato street not far from the sea,(to bewitch sailors and tourists);at the end of eighteenth cent., after some restorations to modernize the city, it was moved though people claimed it. The 24th June 2003 on the occasion of the event "Donna Marianna gets back to the field of the Moorish" a copy of

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*the statue was put in
its original place at
the entrance of the
Monumental Church
of "San Giovanni a
mare; the original
copy is in" Palazzo
San Giacomo", the
town council of
Naples.*



*Piazza Mercato,
The Church of"
Santa Croce al
Mercato ", The
church of St." Maria
del Carmine".*

2nd itinerary:



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Getting out of St. Eligio, we reach, on the left side, Piazza Mercato, which is semi-circular in shape and adorned with two obelisk-fountains; the square had been a commercial area from the time of the French and was also the place of public executions; here Conradin of Swabia, the last representative of the Imperial



dynasty, was executed on 29th October 1268, at the orders of Charles of Anjou, after his unsuccessful attempt to win his throne back.

In 1647 the fisherman Tommaso Aniello, "Masaniello", began the revolt of the first Parthenopean Republic here.

It ended when he was shot nearby. (We can see a memorial tablet on the house where he was born, in vico Rotto). In the same square, the liberals, who had tried to establish the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity

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proclaimed by the French Revolution, were executed in 1799. Thousands of victims of the 17th cent plague were buried in a common grave under the pavement.

The Church of "Santa Croce al Mercato"



On the north side of the square, a chapel was erected to hold Conradin's mortal remains but in 1781 the Church was destroyed by a fire due



to the celebration of the feast of the Madonna del Carmine. Ferdinando IV ordered the reconstruction of the church to the Architect Francesco Securo. The new church, with a square plan and a Palladium shape, was realized more to the north in comparison to that one built at the end of the 700. Inside, we can see the column of porphyry surmounted by a cross, the keystone and the remains of the unlucky

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Conradin.



The church of

"Santa Maria del Carmine"

The church, which has a special place in the hearts of the Neapolitans, was originally built in the 12th cent. And later modified between 1283 and 1300 to include a small church containing the



image of the black-haired holy Virgin. On the right of the façade, there is a narrow bell tower with an interesting spire made of majolica-tiled bricks and built by "Fra Nuvolo" in the first half of the 17th century. Every year, on July 16th, during the popular festival Dedicated to the so-called "Madonna Del Carmine" impressive fireworks are organized to simulate the burning of the church tower. Inside the church

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there is a fourteenth-century wooden Crucifix ;you may notice how the head is bent to the left; a legend says this happened in 1493 when a shell hit the church during the fightings between Angevins and Aragonese for the succession to the throne



3rd itinerary:

Via Marina, The remains of the "Porta Del Carmine, the

Tower of the "Castello Del Carmine, The fish Market and Porta Nolana

From Piazza Del Carmine, we can reach Via Marina, where the sea front, which includes also the molo Masaniello, with a succession of docks, silos and warehouses, is part of the western side of the bay of Naples and the port area.

In the foreground, we can discover the ruins of the "Porta Del Carmine", (the ancient entrance to "I Giardini Del Carmine" with

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enormous columns of "piperno" and white marble, and the tower of the castle "del Carmine" (founded by Carlo Durazzo in 1932 and demolished in 1906).

Places, here, have completely changed after reconstruction works in the recent years, according to urban plan.

Following Via Marina, on the corner of corso Garibaldi, we can notice two beautiful Aragonese towers, once joined to del Porta Del Carmine, which were a way of connection, through other towers of the old city, with "Porta Nolana" and "Porta Capuana" and the

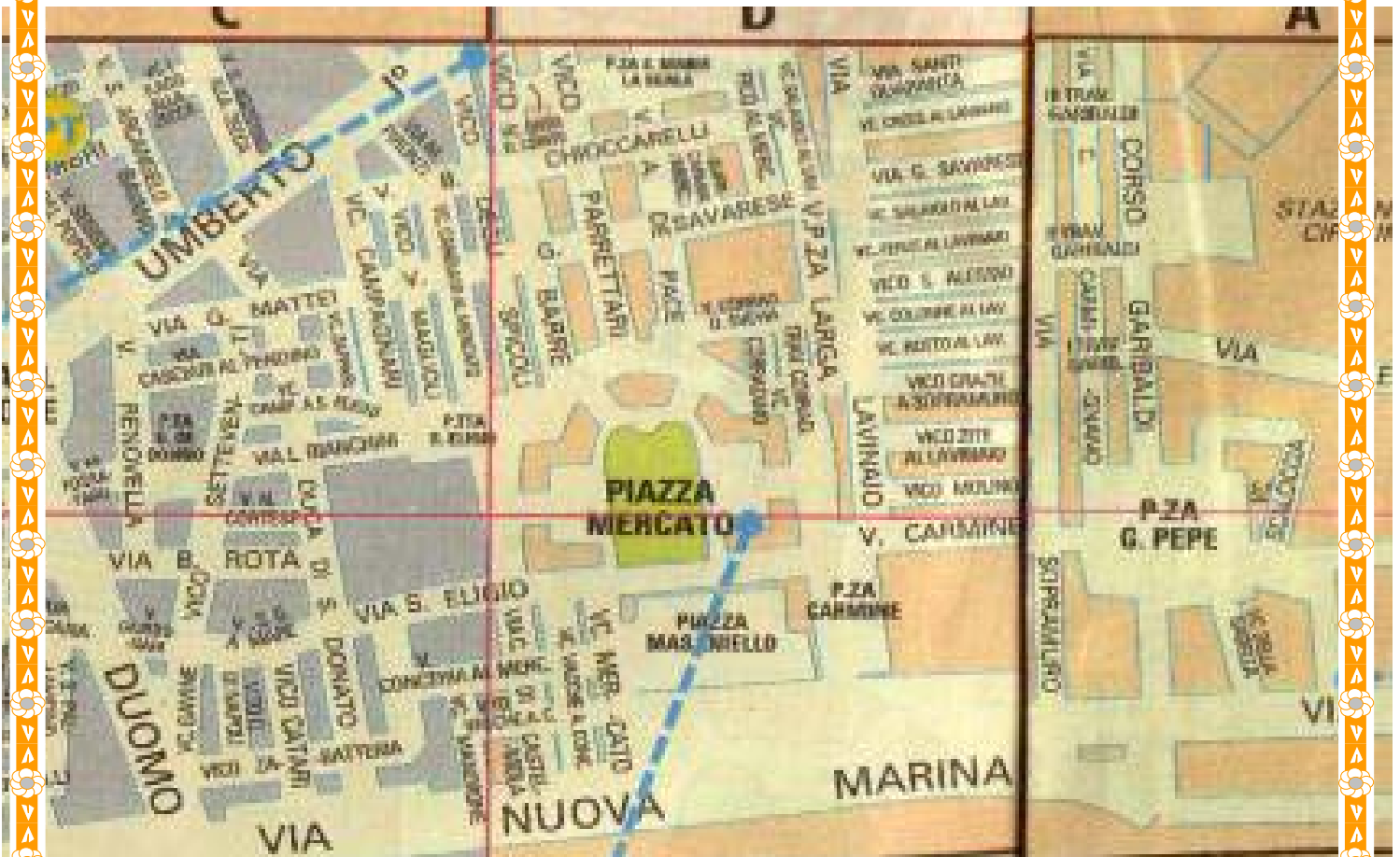


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towers situated in via Rossaroll, near the "Caserma Garibaldi" where the city walls ended. On the other side of Piazza Del Carmine, behind the church, we enter the most colourful outdoor fish market in Naples, which is

in via Carmignano; it is a crazy scene! Hoses spray on octopuses to keep them wriggling, all kinds of shellfish struggle to escape from their baskets, and



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the haggling of the shoppers competes with the cries of vendors in a fearful din. The street follows the lines of the old city walls that have disappeared except for the tower, at the entrance of the fruit and fish market, and Porta Nolana, a gate between two Aragonese towers, so called "Of the Faith and Of the Hope", with a XVth-century bas-relief, representing the King Ferrante I of Aragona on Horseback. On the opposite side of Corso Garibaldi, there is Piazza Nolana, named after the gate.