Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples

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Naples and Renaissance Italy

I, Loise de Rosa, wish to announce some good news to our Neapolitans. The news is this: Neapolitans are by nature the best men in the world. You ask me to prove it? Listen to my explanation."

With these words, a garrulous octogenarian opened a short treatise that amounts to an encomium of the city and kingdom of Naples. The author, Loise de Rosa, does not figure prominently in studies of Italian, or even of Neapolitan history. Yet his praise of Naples suggests something important about Neapolitan culture in the Renaissance, so that his life and work repay a bit of study.

Born in 1385 at Pozzuoli, near Naples, Loise served as a courtier (a rather important one, by his testimony) to several kings and queens of Naples (six of each, by his count). He credited himself with a staggering array of offices during the course of his career: he claimed to have served as viceroy of Bisceglie and the Val di Gaudo, governor of several districts and towns, vice-admiral of the royal fleet, and majordomo of numerous important households, including those of the cardinal of Naples, prince of Salerno, duke of Sora, count of Troia, and King Ferrante of Naples, among other illustrious princes and prelates. Although Loise exaggerated the importance and variety of his political services, it seems well established that he served as a sort of master of the household to several Neapolitan monarchs. In that capacity he became acquainted with various fables, stories, and miscellaneous lore concerning the kingdom of Naples. In 1452 he composed a set of memoirs discussing his career and notable events that took place during his lifetime. In 1471 he produced a chronicle of Neapolitan history

from the time of Conrad IV through that of King Ferrante in Loise's own day Modern historians consider both works defective and highly inaccurate, though valuable for their rather pure Neapolitan dialect and for the light they throw on the culture of the barely literate in Renaissance Naples [1]

Loise's encomium of Naples, also composed in 1471, holds special interest for present purposes because it takes up a theme—praise of a city—commonly developed in Renaissance Italy thus his argument that Neapolitans ranked as the best men of the world At creation, Loise explained, God divided the world into Asia, Africa, and Europe In fifteenth-century Italy, it went without saying that Europe was the best part of the three Neapolitans enjoyed the benefits not only of Europe, however, but also of Italy, the best part of Europe, of Campania, the best part of Italy, and of Naples itself, the best part of Campania That settled it—at least to Loise's satisfaction

After his rather deductive introduction, Loise enumerated in inductive fashion and in great detail the advantages of Naples and environs He took a surprisingly analytical approach—even if he did not develop it in a very systematic way—that enabled him to compare Naples to other cities and to judge it superior to them all He recognized thirteen categories as important in the evaluation of cities the four elements as found in a particular city (earth, air, fire, and water), the four environments expected in the ideal city or its surrounding countryside (mountains, plains, sea, and waters), and the five accouterments of the city itself (walls, streets, houses, churches, and fountains) Naples merited Loise's praise on almost every one of these counts, plus a few additional ones as well It boasted pure spring water, fine air, neither dry, hot, oppressive, nor thin, perfect fire, fueled by plentiful oak wood, and bountiful earth that provided an abundance of game, fruit, and

[1] The best discussion of Loise de Rosa is that of Benedetto Croce, Sentendo parlare un vecchio napoletano del Quattrocento, in his *Storie e leggende napoletane*, 4th ed (Bari, 1948), pp 121–39 See also Antonio Altamura s edition of Loise s works, *Napoli aragonese nei ricordi di Loise de Rosa* (Naples, 1971)

vegetables. Loise described the environs as no less marvelous. within a day's journey from Naples, one finds mountains, plains, sea, forests, all the four seasons, hot baths, and sixty other cities Most impressive, however, was Naples itself. No other city of the world numbered so many nobles—counts, marquises, dukes, princes, and kings—among its inhabitants Loise praised Neapolitan hospitals, physicians, and schools, but devoted special attention to churches and relics. Chief of them, of course, was the cathedral of Naples, which possessed "the most beautiful relic in all the world"—the head of San Gennaro, fourth-century bishop of Benevento and patron saint of Naples, along with a vial of his dried blood, which miraculously liquefied when publicly displayed several times each year.

Loise did not wish to overstate his case. He admitted that Naples did not possess beautiful city walls. Yet even with this defect, Naples overshadowed all rivals when evaluated against the thirteen categories. Rome, for example, counted not a single perfect element in Loise's opinion, only one ideal environment (presumably either the mountains or the sea), and but four of the five accouterments. (The lack of fountains that Loise noted has been abundantly remedied in the intervening centuries) Loise considered Venice even more miserable than Rome. though founded in the sea, so that it at least possessed one of the four environments, the Venetians enjoyed none of the other twelve advantages that Loise considered essential for civilized life. They had no fresh water, no springs, no mountains, no plains, nor a single perfect one of the four elements. Other world-renowned cities—Loise mentioned Milan, Florence, Paris, Genoa, Constantinople, and even Cairo[1]—likewise failed to measure up to the magnificence of Naples, which earned perfect marks in twelve of Loise's thirteen categories [2]

[2] Loise s works have been edited twice, first by G de Blasiis as Tre scritture napoletane del secolo XV," *ASPN*, 4 (1879), 411–67, more recently by Antonio Altamura in the edition cited in note 1 I mention both editions because that of de Blasiis provides annotation, lacking in Altamura s, while that of Altamura

Historians have long recognized civic pride as a distinctive element in the thought of those Renaissance political thinkers, humanist and nonhumanist alike, who contributed to the development of a lay-oriented political ethic. Indeed, Leonardo Bruni's encomium of the city of Florence (composed ca. 1403 to 1404) served as the centerpiece of Hans Baron's influential analysis of early Florentine humanism and political thought.[3] So far, however, the civic pride of Loise de Rosa and other Neapolitans of the Quattrocento—quite similar to the sentiments of their contemporaries in other parts of Italy—has gone almost unnoticed by historians of the Italian Renaissance.

In fact, the city and kingdom of Naples in general have not attracted their fair share of attention from Renaissance scholars. The republics, the despotic city-states, and even the minor tyrannies of central and northern Italy have succeeded in capturing historians' interest at the expense of Naples and southern Italy, the *Mezzogiorno* This point holds especially true for non-Italian studies, but even in Italy scholars have directed their attention to the center and north rather than the south. It is not difficult to understand the fascination exercised by central and northern Italy over Renaissance historians The creative approaches taken by Florentines in particular to political, moral, and philosophical problems—not to mention their extraordinary artistic and cultural production—ensure them an enduring and prominent position in Renaissance studies. Yet historians ignore the experience of Renaissance Naples only at great cost. The kingdom of Naples was at least potentially the most powerful of all the various states of fifteenth-century Italy. The *Regno* (as the kingdom of Naples is often called in Italy) influenced peninsular and Mediterranean politics

provides a glossary of Neapolitan dialect as represented in Loise's work, missing from the earlier edition The encomium appears on pp 428–40 of de Blasiis edition, pp 183–94 of Altamura s edition

[3] Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, 2d ed (Princeton, 1966), pp 189–211 See also J K Hyde's important article Medieval Descriptions of Cities," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 48 (1966), 308–40

throughout the century, and Neapolitan cultural figures commanded respect on both the Italian and the European scale.

These considerations I hope will help to justify the following effort to analyze the political and cultural experience of Renaissance Naples and to interpret Neapolitan humanism in the light of the broader cultural history of Renaissance Italy.

Establishment of the Aragonese Dynasty of Naples

The following study concentrates on the Aragonese period of Neapolitan history, from the conquest of the kingdom (1435 to 1442) by Alfonso V of Aragon (Alfonso I of Naples), until the imposition of direct Spanish rule through the viceroys (1504). The Regno of the fifteenth century presents historians with a fascinating combination of problems and possibilities, the study of which can throw new light on both the history of Naples and the character of the Renaissance as a historical period. The policy and diplomacy of the Aragonese kings of Naples played a role in almost every political issue of fifteenth-century Italy—including, to cite only a few examples, struggles for the kingdom itself, the emergence of a state system after the Peace of Lodi in 1454, and the French invasion of 1494 that led to the calamity of Italy and the establishment of Spanish hegemony in the peninsula. Meanwhile, the works of cultural figures in Naples reflected both the broader concerns of Renaissance Italy and the more local interests of the city and kingdom of Naples. Many of their works dealt with political issues—often with narrow and specific questions of policy and diplomacy, though sometimes also with more general ethical or theoretical problems. Hence the approach of the following study is to analyze the interaction between men of power and men of culture in fifteenth-century Naples.

The analysis presumes a basic understanding of Neapolitan and Italian politics in the Quattrocento. Thus I begin with a review of the major issues in both the domestic and the external politics of the Aragonese monarchy of Naples. Specialists in the history of the

Italian Renaissance will perhaps find much of this chapter reasonably familiar, but the plan of the study as a whole mandates this sort of introduction Specific historical events, including almost every element of the following account, figure prominently in the works of cultural figures discussed in later chapters An analysis of Neapolitan politics that synthesizes the results of modern scholarship will thus serve as a useful foundation for the ensuing study of Renaissance men of culture, whose works faithfully reflected the political society they inhabited

The background to this period consists of the expansive, imperialist efforts of the rulers of Aragon and Catalonia during the Middle Ages [4] Two forces helped drive these efforts the territorial ambitions of the Aragonese nobility in the Iberian peninsula and, more important for present purposes, the commercial ambitions of the Catalan merchants in the Mediterranean basin The interests of the Aragonese nobles contributed to the *Reconquista* in eastern Iberia, most notably to the absorption in 1244 of the kingdom of Valencia into the Aragonese-Catalan empire Meanwhile, the maritime expansion favored by the merchants of Barcelona set the stage for the Aragonese presence in Naples Jaime I the Conqueror, king of Aragon (1213–1276), engineered a successful invasion of the Balearic Islands in 1299 as the first episode of a relentless drive to establish a Catalan naval and mercantile presence in all parts of the Mediterranean In following years, Jaime and his successors captured Genoese markets in North Africa, established commercial relations in Constantinople and Egypt, and even attempted an ill-fated crusade to Palestine The sea-based empire of Aragon and Catalonia grew by the addition of Sicily (1283-1284), the duchy of Athens (1311), and Sardinia (1323–1324), to name only the most important conquests Thus by the early fourteenth century, the kings of Aragon and the merchants of Catalonia became the dominant power in the western Mediterranean, and a force to be reckoned with in the entire Mediterranean basin

[4] For a detailed account, see J Lee Shneidman, *The Rise of the Aragonese-Catalan Empire 1200–1350*, 2 vols (New York, 1970), esp vol 2

During the conquest of Sicily, Aragonese forces crossed the Strait of Messina and established a toehold on the Italian peninsula around Reggio di Calabria, but they did not command the resources to subjugate the Angevin kingdom of Naples. After about a century and a half, however, Aragonese ambition exploited new opportunities that presented themselves in the Mezzogiorno [5]

The Angevin kings of Naples (1268–1435) had never succeeded in controlling their barons, indeed, in efforts to win support and curb domestic violence, they increased both the numbers and the powers of the Neapolitan nobility. By the end of the Angevin period, for example, nobles routinely gained powers of full criminal jurisdiction—the famous *merum mixtumque imperium*—along with their fiefs During the last century of the Angevin monarchy, the barons intrigued, struggled for power, and forged alliances with parties both inside and outside the kingdom—all to such a point that chaos reigned throughout the Mezzogiorno.[6]

The personal and political instability of the last Angevin monarch, Queen Giovanna II (1414–1435), compounded this problem by delivering the kingdom of Naples into a state of anarchic civil war. For the first six years of her reign, Giovanna sought to bolster her position against the barons by intriguing with Aragonese royalty, French nobility, and Italian condottieri. In 1420 she turned to Alfonso V (1396–1458), king of Aragon and Sicily since 1416, whom she legally adopted as her heir in July 1421. By this ploy she hoped to gain Alfonso's support, without encumbering her own freedom to maneuver and establish policy.

Alfonso ranks easily as one of the most fascinating and complicated characters of the Quattrocento. Born in Castile, he exercised

[5] The best short account of Neapolitan history is Benedetto Croce's *History of the Kingdom of Naples*, trans F Frenaye (Chicago, 1970) For more recent and detailed accounts, see the contributions by various authors to the *Storia di Napoli*, 10 vols (Naples, 1975–81)

[6] See the withering indictment returned against the barons by Croce, *History of the Kingdom of Naples*, pp 58–75 Though overstated at points, Croce's argument illustrates well the excessively selfish and individualist temperament of the Neapolitan barons

his talents to the fullest in Italy By nature a restless adventurer, ambitious to expand his influence to every corner of the western Mediterranean, he devoted most of his adult energies to the kingdom of Naples, with the intention of founding a stable dynasty in the Mezzogiorno. Bred in the culture of medieval Spain, with emphasis on piety and militarism, he valued and encouraged the civilization of Renaissance Italy, with emphasis on lay values and devotion to literature.[7] In the half-millennium since his time, no account of Alfonso's life has captured his personality quite as well as that of his contemporary, Vespasiano da Bisticci, the Florentine bookseller and biographer, who devoted one of his best crafted sketches to Alfonso.[8] Vespasiano's friend, Giannozzo Manetti, who knew Alfonso well, provided the biographer with anecdotes and personal information that enabled him to characterize the king in concrete detail. Vespasiano portrayed Alfonso in a flattering light: he was king to the common man, forgiving of those who offended him, moderate to the point of abstemiousness at the table, simple in his dress, just and honest in his judgment Three qualities emerge with exceptional clarity from Vespasiano's account: Alfonso's piety, which prompted him to devote himself to the Mass and other religious ceremonies, also to read many times the scriptures and the commentaries of Nicholas of Lyra, his love of literature, which he cultivated even on the battlefield, where humanists read and discussed portions of Livy before Alfonso and his soldiers, and his generosity, so lavish that Vespasiano described Alfonso and Pope Nicholas V as "the two singular lights who brightened the world of letters" through their patronage and promotion of learned and literary men. No wonder, then, that King

[7] I obviously cannot accept Benedetto Croce's grossly exaggerated caricature of Alfonso as an uncouth, barbarian, provincial Spaniard stuck incongruously in the sophisticated milieu of Renaissance Italy *La Spagna nella vita italiana durante la Rinascenza*, 2d ed (Bari, 1922), pp 33–54

[8] Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Le vite*, ed A Greco, 2 vols (Florence, 1970–76), I 83–117 Vespasiano's lives have been translated into English as *Renaissance Princes, Popes, and Prelates*, trans W George and E Waters (New York, 1963) See pp 59–83 for the biography of Alfonso

Alfonso of Aragon and Naples is known more generally as Alfonso the Magnanimous

When Giovanna II approached him in 1420, of course, Alfonso possessed none of this reputation. Yet even at that early point of his career, Alfonso's ambition and energy had begun to manifest themselves. Born the eldest son of Ferdinand of Antequera, crusading hero and infante of Castile, Alfonso followed his father and his fortune to Aragon. In 1412 Ferdinand won the crown of Aragon under the terms of the Compromise of Caspe. Heir apparent to the throne, Alfonso quickly became infected by the expansionist zeal of the Catalan merchants. In fact, he had just begun an expedition to conquer the island of Corsica from Genoa when Giovanna sought his aid in 1420. When approached, Alfonso readily shifted his sights to Naples, far richer than Corsica, especially since the Genoese offered more effective defense than he had anticipated Soon after the adoption, however, Alfonso and Giovanna began to quarrel, and even to make war on each other. In 1423 Giovanna disinherited Alfonso, naming her French cousin, Louis d'Anjou, and later his brother, René d'Anjou, as her new heirs Giovanna and her allies drove the Aragonese out of Italy in 1423, and Alfonso devoted his attention in the following years mostly to affairs in Spain, Sicily, and the island of Jerba, which he conquered from the Tunisians in 1432.

Thus Alfonso had to fight his way to the Neapolitan throne.[9] When Giovanna died in 1435, both René d'Anjou and Alfonso laid claim to the kingdom René had the support of many barons, the pope, and the other Italian states, but he could not effectively organize his forces, since the duke of Burgundy held him prisoner until 1438. Alfonso had the support only of a small party of barons, but he stood poised in Messina at the head of a powerful fleet, ready to enforce his claim His first attempt to do so, however, ended in near disaster As Alfonso and his ground forces laid siege

[9] Nunzio F Faraglia tells the story of Alfonso s war for Naples in exhaustive detail *Storia della lotta tra Alfonso V d'Aragona e Renato d'Angio* (Lanciano, 1908)

to Gaeta, the Genoese—traditional and bitter enemies of Catalan expansion—sent a fleet to relieve the city Alfonso put out to sea with his own fleet and engaged the Genoese near the island of Ponza There the Aragonese suffered a shattering defeat Alfonso and his two brothers fell prisoner to the Genoese, the Aragonese fleet was almost annihilated, and Alfonso's claim to the throne of Naples seemed worthless

Succeeding weeks, however, brought an about-face so astonishing that almost every figure discussed in later chapters commented on it at least once The Genoese delivered Alfonso to their overlord and protector, Duke Filippo Maria Visconti of Milan Alfonso had earlier sought an alliance with the duke, but Filippo Maria had hesitated to encourage Aragonese adventures in Italy In their negotiations following Ponza, Alfonso convinced Filippo Maria that a French dynasty in Naples posed a far greater threat to Milanese independence than an Aragonese presence A revived Angevin monarchy of Naples would lead inevitably to pressure on Milan, as the French sought to increase their influence by working south from France and north from Naples These considerations—aided by Alfonso's agreement to abandon his designs on Corsica and to pay thirty thousand ducats to the duke[10]—induced Filippo Maria not only to free Alfonso, but to enter into an alliance with him In effect, the two men divided Italy into two spheres of influence—the north and center, where Alfonso agreed to recognize the primacy of Visconti interests, and the south, where Filippo Maria offered diplomatic support for the Aragonese campaign to conquer and stabilize the Regno

Once freed, Alfonso devoted himself again to the task of making good his claim to Naples Seven years of almost constant war followed, complicated by shifting alliances, diplomatic maneuvering, and the presence of René d'Anjou, who after 1438 went to Naples and personally managed the Angevin defensive effort By

[10] Tammaro de Marinis, La liberazione di Alfonso V d Aragona prigioniero dei genovesi, *ASPN*, n s 34 (1953–54), 101–6

the spring of 1442, Alfonso had subdued resistance in all parts of the kingdom and stood before the city of Naples itself He avoided a protracted siege when a Neapolitan laborer revealed the existence of an aqueduct that led into the city During the night of 1 to 2 June 1442, Alfonso sent a force of two hundred men, including his most loyal and effective supporters, through the drain into Naples, where they captured a tower and opened a gate to the main body of Aragonese forces outside the walls This development appealed particularly to humanists, who in recounting the episode delighted to point out that the Byzantine general Belisarius had employed the same method some nine centuries earlier when he took Naples from the Ostrogoths A sharp battle followed the penetration and brought the city of Naples securely into Alfonso's hands

Thus Alfonso won the kingdom of Naples by military conquest, but he took great care to capture popular and diplomatic support for his rule He earned a measure of immediate gratitude from the people of Naples when he limited the sack of the city to a period of only four hours and hanged a number of undisciplined troops who committed excesses while looting and plundering A few months later, 26 February 1443, Alfonso made his triumphal entry into Naples The pageantry, ceremony, and lavish expenditures promoted the image of Alfonso as victor in the classical style and as worthy monarch of a deserving realm In following years, Alfonso showered money on Naples, repaired streets and walls, refurbished houses and buildings, and constructed new piazzas and fountains Most notably, he had the old Angevin fortress rebuilt along new lines, then he had the new stronghold, the Castelnuovo, outfitted with a magnificent marble arch celebrating his victory and reign in Naples

More significantly, Alfonso moved to consolidate his position by organizing political and diplomatic support [11] Within the

[11] There is no modern biography of Alfonso, though Alan Ryder expects to publish one soon The following discussion of Alfonso s politics and diplomacy relies most heavily on Ernesto Pontieri, *Alfonso il Magnanimo re di Napoli (1435–*

kingdom he worked to accomplish two major objectives he sought an agreement with the barons that would enable him to institute stable rule, and he sought to have his bastard son Ferrante recognized as his legal heir and successor Alfonso addressed both these issues shortly after the conquest at the parliament held in February and March 1443 in the convent of San Lorenzo in Naples In exchange for recognition of Ferrante (legitimized since 1440) as his heir, Alfonso confirmed the barons in their holding of *merum mixtumque imperium*—thus acknowledging them as ultimate judicial and political authorities in their own lands The same parliament restructured the kingdom's finances, replacing the cumbersome system of aids with a single direct tax levied on hearths, but not on the barons The new tax, modified in succeeding parliaments, served as the foundation of Neapolitan finances throughout the Aragonese period, and it enabled the monarchs to employ a standing royal army for use both in the Regno and elsewhere in Italy Thus within a few months of his victory over the Angevins and their supporters, Alfonso and the barons arrived at a compromise on the distribution of power that provided the Mezzogiorno with reasonably stable government all through Alfonso's reign

Relations with other Italian powers proved a great deal more difficult to conduct Alfonso began his conquest of Naples with only a few barons as allies In 1435 he won the support of Filippo Maria Visconti, but many barons and all the other Italian states took positions ranging from unfriendly neutrality to active hostility toward the Aragonese By the time of his victory over Naples in 1442, Alfonso had brought most of the barons onto his side by confirming them in their rights and holdings, but he had gained

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1458) (Naples, 1975) See also Alan Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples Under Alfonso the Magnanimous* (Oxford, 1976) Ryder perhaps exaggerates the modernity of Alfonso s kingdom, but his work remains extremely valuable because he grounds it on documents surviving in the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón in Barcelona, which few historians of Naples have examined A review article by A M Compagna-Perrone Capano discusses the merits of both these books A proposito di *Alfonso il Magnanimo re di Napoli* e di *The Kingdom of Naples Under Alfonso the Magnanimous*, *ASPN*, 4th ser 15 (1977), 375–82

the friendship of not a single new Italian power Long-term success for a new dynasty—not to mention the ability to influence Italian affairs—would obviously depend upon peninsular allies Thus Alfonso moved soon after his victory to improve his diplomatic position among the Italian states

He began this diplomatic campaign with the papacy—for good reason, since papal intervention had the potential to create havoc in Neapolitan affairs [12] Ever since Pope Nicholas II recognized Robert Guiscard as duke of Apulia and Calabria in 1059, the popes regarded southern Italy and Sicily as their own possession to be granted as a fief first to the dukes and later, after the coronation of Roger II in 1130, to the kings of Naples This political and legal relationship between popes and rulers was complicated by the proximity of the kingdom of Naples to the papal state, which itself guaranteed tense relations over the long term Ambitious thirteenth-century popes like Innocent III and Innocent IV waged an almost constant battle against the Ghibelline Hohenstaufen, though the Angevin kings of Naples, holding rather pronounced Guelf sympathies, enjoyed much more cordial relations with the papacy The aftermath of the Great Schism, the conciliar movement, and the conflict between Angevin and Aragonese all complicated an already confusing ecclesiastical and political situation, since rival parties jockeyed to control the papal tiara even as rival contenders fought for the Neapolitan throne

Though personally a man of deep zeal and piety, Alfonso intended chiefly to advance his own political designs when conducting relations with the papacy Since Pope Eugenius IV (1431–1447) supported the Angevins in Naples, he and Alfonso experienced numerous difficulties before the consolidation of the Aragonese hold on the Regno Upon the death of the childless Giovanna II and the expiration of her line, Eugenius claimed the right

[12] Besides the works mentioned above, see also Ludwig von Pastor, *History of the Popes*, trans F I Antrobus, 2d ed , 40 vols (St Louis, 1913–53), esp vols 1 and 2 on Alfonso s time, vols 3 through 6 on the period of Ferrante and the later Aragonese kings of Naples

to grant the kingdom of Naples to a new vassal of his own choice, and he recognized René d'Anjou as the most suitable claimant. His support naturally encouraged René's faction and the barons allied with the Angevins. But Alfonso also had cards to play, thanks to the Council of Basel (1431–1449) and its effort to institute effective conciliar supervision over the papacy In June 1439 the council proclaimed the deposition of Eugenius, and in November of the same year it selected Felix V as antipope. Alfonso maintained close relations with the council and listened with interest to Felix V, who offered to recognize Alfonso instead of René as king of Naples. With these maneuvers Alfonso maintained pressure on Eugenius, but he never allied himself irrevocably with either the council or the antipope.

Alfonso's adroit diplomacy served him well It prevented Eugenius from excessive interference in Neapolitan affairs, lest Alfonso side wholeheartedly with the council and Felix. Yet it did not commit him deeply to a council and antipope with dubious political prospects Finally, it did not rule out an eventual reconciliation with Eugenius. Alfonso's military successes in 1441 and 1442 prepared the way for this development With the Aragonese victory and the departure of René from Naples, Eugenius' Angevin policy offered few attractive possibilities, if any Negotiations thus led rather easily to the Treaty of Terracina (signed 14 June 1443), which normalized relations between the king and the pope. Eugenius agreed to recognize and invest Alfonso as king of Naples, further to legitimize Ferrante and recognize him as Alfonso's legal heir and successor. For his part, Alfonso recognized Eugenius as pope and withdrew his representatives from the Council of Basel. He promised further to drive the condottiere Francesco Sforza out of the March of Ancona, which he held in defiance of Eugenius, in a campaign that increased Alfonso's influence in the peninsula as well as restoring Eugenius' authority in the marches.

Thus by late 1443 Alfonso had gained two powerful Italian allies—Filippo Maria Visconti and Eugenius IV—and he began to

think about extending his influence in the peninsula.[13] Alfonso complied happily with the terms of his agreement with Eugenius he dislodged Francesco Sforza from the March of Ancona and helped to stabilize the papal state. But the year 1447 brought changed circumstances—both Eugenius and Filippo Maria died that year—and new opportunities for Alfonso. The papacy of Nicholas V (1447–1455) posed no threat, since the new pope devoted his efforts to the pacification of Italy and the encouragement of scholarship rather than to political ambition. Meanwhile, the disappearance of Filippo Maria left a gaping power vacuum in Lombardy, and Alfonso promptly moved to fill it. His chief rival, Francesco Sforza, enjoyed several advantages he had supporters in Milan, since he had previously served as chief condottiere for the Visconti, and he had married the late duke's only child, his illegitimate daughter Bianca Maria. Alfonso by contrast had the support of a will, possibly spurious, in which he was named Filippo Maria's political heir The citizens of Milan developed their own policy, however, and declared a revival of the Ambrosian Republic the day after Filippo Maria's death. Alfonso's army spent almost two years in central and northern Italy pursuing his claim to the duchy of Milan, but military reverses forced him to withdraw from the field late in 1448 Sforza went on to crush the republic and establish himself as the new lord of Milan, thus annulling Alfonso's best opportunity to extend his sway over the Italian peninsula.

But it was not his last such opportunity. The aftermath of Sforza's victory brought a minor diplomatic revolution Cosimo de' Medici led the Florentines into an alliance with their former archenemy, Milan, while Venice and Alfonso forged an alliance in anticipation of a campaign to increase their holdings in central and northern Italy. Thus in 1452 and 1453 Alfonso's forces—under the command of Ferrante—again threatened to extend Aragonese

[13] Besides the works cited above, see also the following studies of fifteenth-century Italian politics Luigi Simeoni, *Le signorie*, 2 vols (Milan, 1950), Nino Valeri, *L'Italia nell'eta dei principati* (Verona, 1949), and Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Baltimore, 1964)

influence in Italy. The conflict might easily have developed, like many others, into a long, slow, dull, and costly war, except that external events brought it to an early end. The fall of Constantinople (29 May 1453) encouraged Pope Nicholas V to pacify Italy and join the various peninsular states in a common effort against the Turks. The Peace of Lodi (1454) and the League of Italy (1455) thus brought an end to the war, if not genuine peace to Italy. In at least one respect Alfonso made good use of the opportunities presented by the occasion He settled his differences with Francesco Sforza, enabling Naples and Milan eventually to resume their bilateral relationship as an especially strong alliance within the Italian League. Yet Alfonso refused to agree to any settlement that included Genoa, and indeed within a year he had again taken up arms against the Genoese.

His aggressive policy in fact helps to account for the last and perhaps the most bitter of all Alfonso's conflicts—that with Alonso de Borja, Pope Calixtus III (1455–1458).[14] Alfonso had brought Borja into his service in 1417, summoned him to Italy in 1432, charged him with important political responsibilities in the Regno, and zealously promoted his ecclesiastical career, so that in 1444 Eugenius IV elevated him into the college of cardinals. Called to the papacy at age seventy-six, Calixtus devoted himself with incredible energy and an almost maniacal zeal to one task—the organization of a land and sea crusade to recapture Constantinople, expel the Turks from other Christian lands, and even to liberate the Holy Land Early in his pontificate, he persuaded Alfonso to contribute a fleet and serve as admiral of the crusade's naval prong. But Alfonso had no intention of undertaking such a risky enterprise, especially in the absence of meaningful support from other western kings and princes Instead, he pursued an Italian policy designed to hamper Calixtus' crusading effort. he encouraged the condottiere Jacopo Piccinino, recently released from the

[14] Besides Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol 2, see also Michael Mallett, *The Borgias* (New York, 1969), esp pp 67–89

Venetians' service, to make war in Tuscany, and Alfonso himself cynically diverted a papal fleet, sent by Calixtus to strengthen the crusaders' forces, to the task of ravaging the Genoese coast and battling other Christian ships

No wonder, then, that relations between Alfonso and Calixtus rapidly deteriorated By June 1457 the two men came to the point of threatening to depose each other [15] In fact, however, Calixtus had little effective recourse except to menace the succession of Ferrante to the Neapolitan throne This he did with zeal He declined to recognize either the legitimization of Ferrante or his status as Alfonso's political heir When Alfonso died on 27 June 1458, Calixtus refused to invest Ferrante and actively encouraged pretenders to the throne His policy would probably have caused Ferrante considerable grief, had he not followed Alfonso to the grave within six weeks (6 August 1458)

Alfonso's political achievement won praise from contemporary historians and humanists at court, and certainly not without reason His conquest and consolidation of the kingdom of Naples ranks as perhaps the single most outstanding political accomplishment of fifteenth-century Italy, especially considering the setbacks Alfonso suffered in the early stages of his campaign Modern historians have devoted more attention to the institutions of Aragonese Naples, and they have found that Alfonso took thoughtful, useful and often creative approaches to the solution of administrative and financial problems He encouraged the development of a class of educated, talented, bourgeois bureaucrats to help counterbalance the barons He thought of Naples as a capital city in a modern sense, intending it to play a preeminent role in the administration and glorification of all his territories He fostered the development throughout his various realms of interregional commerce, which then served him as a source of credit and played an important role in his war finance He even supervised the creation

[15] See the document reported and published in Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 2 425–26, 552–53

of a fledgling imperial government to serve as central administration, albeit in a limited way, for his far-flung realms.[16] If one can avoid hyperbole, then, it seems reasonable to characterize Alfonso as an incipient modern state-builder of the sort that later constructed the absolute national monarchies of western Europe.[17]

A balanced evaluation of Alfonso's political achievement, however, must take account also of several serious, long-term problems that his policies created or exacerbated. Alfonso lacked a clear set of goals to guide his policy in the years following the conquest. As a result, compromise solutions to domestic problems and unstable relations with foreign powers left the kingdom in a precarious position at Alfonso's death. At home, for example, Alfonso came to terms with the barons, so that they had little cause to challenge his reign. But he did so by confirming and even strengthening them in their powers, privileges, and entrenched positions. The fruit of this policy came ripe only in the reign of Ferrante, who had to suppress two dangerous barons' revolts in order to retain his

[16] See Pontieri, *Alfonso il Magnanimo*, esp. pp. 11–14, 384–88, two articles by Alan Ryder, "The Evolution of Imperial Government in Naples under Alfonso V of Aragon," in J. R. Hale et al , eds , *Europe in the Late Middle Ages* (London, 1965), 332–57, and "Cloth and Credit: Aragonese War Finance in the Mid Fifteenth Century," *War and Society*, 2 (1984), 1–21, and two articles by Ruggero Moscati, "Nella burocrazia centrale di Alfonso d'Aragona: le cariche generali," in *Miscellanea in onore di Roberto Cessi*, 3 vols (Rome, 1958), 1.365–77; and "Lo stato 'napoletano' di Alfonso d'Aragona," *Clio*, 9 (1973), 165–82.

[17] I cannot entirely agree, however, with the theses of two recent historians Eugenio Dupré Theseider offers no solid evidence for his contention that Alfonso based his policy on imitation of the ancients and sought for himself the crown of a unified Italian monarchy· *La politica italiana di Alfonso d'Aragona* (Bologna, 1956). Alan Ryder presents a more sophisticated thesis in his *Kingdom of Naples Under Alfonso the Magnanimous*, where he argues that Alfonso introduced all the salient apparatus of the early modern absolute state a dependent nobility and clergy, direct taxation of the entire realm, a professional bureaucratic administration, and a standing royal army. But Ryder exaggerates the degree of Alfonso's accomplishments This is especially true in the case of the barons, who simply did not depend upon the crown for their power and authority. Otherwise they could not have threatened Ferrante's position with two serious rebellions (discussed below). Cf also the review article of A M. Campagna-Perrone Capano cited above, note 11.

crown Meanwhile, Alfonso's adventures in the Italian peninsula did not improve the kingdom's security His two land campaigns left the Tuscans suspicious of his intentions His intermittent alliances with the papacy, Milan, and Venice failed to provide a reliable Neapolitan ally for the long term And Alfonso's visceral hostility to Genoa helped set the stage for the calamities of 1494 and following years—the French invasion, the collapse of the Aragonese dynasty in Naples, and the Italian wars—by driving the Genoese into an inevitable and irrevocable alliance with France [18]

Alfonso does not merit blame for all of Italy's problems, and I have no wish to impose upon him responsibility for decisions implemented by policy makers in the decades after his death, much less for the hardships that plagued Italy in the centuries after his death This critical review of Alfonso's politics, however, will prove useful to the following study in two ways In the first place, it provides a solid political foundation for the analysis and interpretation of works produced by Neapolitan cultural figures of Alfonso's time Furthermore, it helps to explain some of the difficulties faced by Ferrante during his long reign as king of Naples (1458–1494)

The Reign of Ferrante

Ferrante never enjoyed a reputation for magnanimity, generosity, and learning like that of Alfonso A combination of unusual personality traits and unfavorable publicity resulted in a negative image of Ferrante that has persisted even into the twentieth century Many contemporaries bore witness to his taciturnity, and Ferrante's own actions prove his capacity for cold political calculation Giovanni Pontano, Ferrante's secretary for almost nine years

[18] Pontieri s rather harsh evaluation of Alfonso s achievement thus strikes me as largely justified Besides *Alfonso il Magnanimo*, pp 341–45, 367–88, see also Pontieri s Alfonso V d Aragona nel quadro della politica italiana del suo tempo, in his *Divagazioni storiche e storiografiche* (Naples, 1960), esp pp 296–306

and one of his most faithful servants, himself made mention once of a certain sadistic satisfaction that Ferrante took from the imprisonment of his enemies. He kept them well nourished, Pontano said, so as to prolong the experience, and derived from their condition the same pleasure that boys took from their caged birds.[19] Pontano and many other contemporaries praised Ferrante's more attractive qualities and talents, but the more positive image of Ferrante did not long survive the collapse of the Aragonese dynasty of Naples in 1501 Ferrante did not benefit from the sort of continuing public-relations campaign that carefully shaped the image of his contemporary, Lorenzo the Magnificent, both in his own day and in later periods of Medici rule in Florence. Meanwhile, a malevolent effort at negative propaganda actively sought to damage Ferrante's reputation. Thus Philippe de Commynes, fifteenth-century French historian and the chief agent of this enterprise, portrayed Ferrante in colors favored by the Angevin pretenders to the Neapolitan throne. His characterization, which gained wide currency in the sixteenth and later centuries, depended largely on gossip in accusing Ferrante of cruelty, avarice, vindictiveness, violence, vice, and impiety.[20] Granted that Ferrante did not possess the genial personal qualities of his father, the following pages will present a Ferrante endowed with considerable administrative skills and a remarkable sense of political reality

Born at Valencia 2 June 1431, Ferrante went to Italy at Alfonso's call in 1438.[21] Alfonso had his son legitimized in 1440 and

[19] Giovanni Pontano, *De immanitate liber*, ed L Monti Sabia (Naples, 1970), pp 21–22

[20] Philippe de Commynes, *Mémoires*, ed J Calmette (Paris, 1924–25), esp 3 78–81

[21] There is no modern biography of Ferrante, nor even a complete study of his reign The most useful scholarship is that of Ernesto Pontieri, *Per la storia del regno di Ferrante I d'Aragona re di Napoli*, 2d ed (Naples, 1969), which serves as the main foundation for the following account, along with Pontieri s article, 'La Puglia nel quadro della monarchia degli aragonesi di Napoli,' in *Atti del congresso internazionale di studi sull'eta aragonese* (Bari, 1972), pp 19–52, and Guido d'Agostino, *La capitale ambigua Napoli dal 1458 al 1580* (Naples, 1979), esp pp

recognized as his political heir by the parliament of San Lorenzo in 1443 Alfonso took care also to have both Eugenius IV and Nicholas V certify Ferrante's right to succeed to the throne, though he could not move the hostile Calixtus III to follow suit Alfonso entertained the possibility of marrying Ferrante to Bianca Maria Visconti in the interests of his Milanese alliance, or even to a daughter of King Charles VII in the hope of improving his relations with France Eventually, however, he selected Isabella di Chiaromonte—beloved niece of the most powerful of all the Neapolitan barons, Giovanni Antonio del Balzo Orsini, prince of Taranto—in the interests of domestic political stability The wedding took place in May 1445, and by 1461 it had resulted in four sons and two daughters Meanwhile, Alfonso took care also to provide Ferrante with administrative experience Besides holding the duchy of Calabria—the benefice traditionally bestowed upon the heir apparent to the Neapolitan throne—Ferrante also served (from an uncertain date after 1438) as lieutenant-general in Naples, in other words, as de facto governor of the Regno And in 1452 Alfonso sent Ferrante into Tuscany at the head of the army that sought to extend Neapolitan influence during the War of the Milanese Succession

Alfonso's death in 1458 quickly led to circumstances that required Ferrante to call upon all the skills—administrative, military, and diplomatic—that he had developed during the previous twenty years Alfonso's political testament provided for his brother to succeed him as King Juan II of Aragon, Sardinia, and Sicily, and for Ferrante to inherit only the kingdom of Naples Yet the Regno by itself presented enormous difficulties to Ferrante, who battled five years to retain his crown

He quickly overcame the first problem—Calixtus III's attempt to prevent his succession Immediately after Alfonso's death, the pope proclaimed the kingdom of Naples a lapsed fief and declared

7–107 On Ferrante s birthdate see the editor s note in Panormita, *Liber rerum gestarum Ferdinandi regis*, ed G Resta (Palermo, 1968), p 72 n 1

Ferrante ineligible to inherit it. Ferrante responded in the very month of his father's death (July 1458) by convoking a parliament at Capua, where the assembled barons recognized Ferrante as heir and called on the pope to do so. Calixtus, however, favored the claims of the now aged René d'Anjou, whom Alfonso had driven out of the kingdom in 1442, and his son and heir Jean d'Anjou. Only the early death of Calixtus removed this diplomatic hurdle, which otherwise, combined with other obstacles, might well have prevented Ferrante from gaining a secure hold on his kingdom Enea Silvio Piccolomini, in times past a reasonably close acquaintance of Alfonso, succeeded Calixtus as Pope Pius II (1458–1464). He immediately recognized Ferrante (August), concluded a treaty with him (October), and published a bull investing him with the kingdom (November). By 1 December 1458 Ferrante wore his crown

His troubles, however, had just begun. Always eager to diminish or destroy royal power, the Neapolitan barons recognized opportunity in the ambitions of two pretenders to the throne. The first was the adventurous Don Carlos, prince of Viana, eldest son of Alfonso's brother Juan of Aragon Driven out of the kingdom of Navarre, which he claimed through his mother, Carlos went to Naples in 1456 as a guest of his uncle Alfonso. During the uncertain days after Alfonso's death, he intrigued with the barons, but by 1460 he had opted to return to Spain and fish in the troubled waters of Aragon. He quarreled with his father, and his arrest (1460) and death (1462) helped ignite a decade-long revolt of nobility, clergy, and peasantry against the Aragonese monarchy.

Even before Don Carlos' departure, the barons had allied with René and Jean d'Anjou, who posed a far greater threat to Ferrante. In October 1459 Jean arrived in Naples with twenty-four galleys and sparked a rebellion by some of the most powerful Neapolitan barons, including the prince of Taranto. Ferrante's principal support came from Pius II and Francesco Sforza, who both recognized that a revived Angevin monarchy in Naples would inevitably limit the independence of Italian states. Thus in the spring of 1460, pa-

pal, Milanese, and Neapolitan forces moved to expel the Angevin invaders and put down the barons' rebellion Almost on the point of success, Ferrante ordered a surprise attack (7 July 1460) against his enemies encamped at Sarno (near Naples) in the hope of winning a quick and decisive victory. Instead, his army suffered a complete rout, and most of his troops fell prisoner. Ferrante himself escaped to Naples along with twenty cavalry. Had Jean d'Anjou and the barons quickly followed up their victory at Sarno, they could very likely have ended the Aragonese monarchy in Naples. Instead they delayed, enabling Ferrante to organize his resources Most significant of these were his friendships with Pius II and Francesco Sforza, who showered Ferrante with military, financial, and diplomatic support. Sforza even instigated a rebellion against the French garrison in Genoa, resulting in disruption of the Angevins' line of supplies. The turning point of the war came on 29 August 1462 at the battle of Troia (near Foggia), where Neapolitan and Milanese forces decisively defeated Jean d'Anjou. As a result the prince of Taranto made his peace with Ferrante. In succeeding months, other barons followed suit In November 1463 the prince of Taranto died, and internal, Neapolitan opposition to Ferrante quickly disappeared. Jean d'Anjou continued to press his cause, however, until the summer of 1465. he abandoned it only after the naval battle of Ischia (7 July 1465), where his fleet suffered a crushing defeat inflicted by a squadron of Neapolitan ships and a flotilla sent by Ferrante's uncle, King Juan II of Aragon

Ferrante's battle for his kingdom provided humanists and other cultural figures with abundant raw material in the years that followed. Their reflections on fortune, fortitude, and the unpredictable nature of military affairs make frequent reference to the events of the period 1458 to 1463. Ferrante himself provided one especially striking example of courage discussed by several commentators. Shortly before the battle of Sarno, on 30 May 1460, he met with one of the most powerful of the barons—Marino Marzano, duke of Sessa, prince of Rossano, and husband of Ferrante's sister Eleonora—in an effort to come to terms. At the meeting's end,

Marzano and his two companions attacked Ferrante and attempted an assassination. Ferrante defended himself with a sword until supporters came to his rescue and put the assailants to flight.[22]

Ferrante's early response to the barons' threat helped to fix upon him the reputation for treachery and vindictiveness that has long marred his memory. Under pretext of reconciliation, he entrapped and imprisoned several barons, including Marino Marzano and his five-year-old son, both of whom spent the next thirty years in the dungeon of the Castelnuovo. Furthermore, after coming to terms with Jacopo Piccinino, the Angevin condottiere, Ferrante lured him to Naples and executed him. The antifeudal cast of Ferrante's domestic policy thus manifested itself almost at the beginning of his reign. Ferrante confronted the most powerful of the barons, even if not by his own choosing, and repressed them in a more thoroughgoing way than Alfonso would ever have done.

The antifeudal policy, however, also had its more positive aspect. Ferrante sought to undermine the barons' position by encouraging economic and social development in the Mezzogiorno.[23] The major towns of the Regno enjoyed a shower of royal grants, exemptions, and privileges during Ferrante's reign. He never surrendered ultimate royal control, especially over finances, but he allowed the towns a large measure of autonomy in matters of local importance, and even in the mechanics of tax collection. Ferrante also sought to remove baronial obstacles to the development of Neapolitan commerce. In 1466 he issued two proclamations that provided for the free circulation of goods in the Regno and ended the monopolies and tolls previously enjoyed by the barons. In later years he removed the barons' monopoly on inns and taverns, forced barons to reopen pasture lands that they had en-

[22] For early accounts of this episode, see Ferrante's own description of the attack in a letter to his wife, published in Pontieri, *Per la storia del regno di Ferrante I*, pp 158–59, and Giuniano Maio, *De maiestate*, ed F Gaeta (Bologna, 1956), pp 31–34

[23] For the economic history of Aragonese Naples, see Ludovico Bianchini, *Storia delle finanze del Regno delle due Sicilie*, ed L de Rosa (Naples, 1971), pp 155–214

closed in recent times, and provided that any subject could freely produce and trade goods without hindrance from the barons and without need of any special privilege Finally, Ferrante positively encouraged the development of certain industries He introduced the manufacture of silk into the Mezzogiorno, granted privileges that enabled entrepreneurs to mine and produce iron in Calabria, and generously supported printers who opened shops in Naples Although agricultural and industrial production increased during Ferrante's reign, his efforts did not entirely succeed the barons did not always cooperate well, and the merchant and industrial classes failed to develop into social groups powerful enough to counterbalance the entrenched baronage Yet Ferrante's policy remains impressive as a creative and realistic approach to the chief domestic problem of fifteenth-century Naples—the excessive power wielded by the barons in their own narrow and largely selfish interests

If Ferrante displayed more imagination than Alfonso in the development of domestic policy, he exhibited more caution in the management of foreign relations Throughout his reign Ferrante schemed, maneuvered, and manipulated issues in the interests of his own realm—as did political leaders in all parts of Italy without exception, even in the years after the Peace of Lodi and formation of the Italian League Yet he did not inherit Alfonso's expansionist ambitions, and he never attempted to extend Neapolitan influence over the entire Italian peninsula, as his father had done He resorted often to bluff, bullying, or browbeating, but rarely to outright hostilities Indeed, between the conclusion of his battle for the throne and the end of his thirty-six-year reign, Ferrante engaged Naples in open warfare for a period just short of a decade (1478–1487), and much of that time he fought only because others had foisted war on his realm

Unstable relations between Naples and the papacy help to explain a great deal of Ferrante s foreign policy His close alliance with Pius II helped him first to gain, then to retain his crown, but the death of Pius (1464) brought the election of a more prickly

character, Paul II (1464–1471), with whom Ferrante always had tense relations. Almost immediately, a dispute arose over the annual tribute paid by the kings of Naples to their feudal overlords, the popes. Since the earliest days of the Angevin monarchy, the kings had presented a white riding horse and a large sum of money (of variable amounts) to the popes on the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. Alfonso had gained a lifetime exemption from payment of the tribute in his settlement with Eugenius IV, and Pius II had voluntarily released Ferrante from his obligation, in view of the Angevin invasion and the barons' revolt When Paul II demanded payment of the tribute, Ferrante sent no money, but only the white palfrey, which Paul angrily returned Though ostensibly a small matter, the question of tribute clouded papal relations during the whole of Ferrante's reign During the papacy of Paul II alone, it complicated other disputes over territory in the papal state, and it helped to create such a tense political environment that Ferrante and Paul stood on the brink of war during much of Paul's reign.

The long papacy of Sixtus IV (1471–1484) brought relief on the issue of the tribute—Sixtus remitted it entirely, though Ferrante pledged to send the white horse anyway—but it entangled Naples in an alliance with a determined and martial pope. In his effort to impose firm control over the papal state, Sixtus inspired deep suspicion on the part of Lorenzo de' Medici and the Florentines. The Pazzi conspiracy, the assassination of Giuliano de' Medici, and the attack on Lorenzo himself led to outright war between Florence and Sixtus in 1478. Almost two years of fighting ensued. Ferrante's eldest son, Alfonso, duke of Calabria and later King Alfonso II, led the Neapolitan army in Tuscany, in the autumn of 1479 he might even have seriously menaced Florence itself, except that he did not follow up a surprise victory over Florentine forces. The war came to an end only after Lorenzo de' Medici traveled personally to Naples and spent almost four months in negotiations with Ferrante (December 1479 to March 1480) Their conversations resulted in more than peace, however, since they identified

common interests and agreed to cooperate in an effort to limit the expansion of Venice and the papacy. The new alliance represented a victory for both parties. Florence extricated herself from an increasingly difficult military and diplomatic position, while Ferrante gained the most useful and reliable of all his allies in the years that followed.

The war ended at a convenient time for Naples as well as for Florence. barely two months after peace was made, the Turkish admiral Ahmed Pasha appeared off the Italian coast with a fleet of some 140 ships carrying 18,000 soldiers and 700 horses. Acting with the benevolent neutrality, or possibly even with the malevolent encouragement of Venice, on 28 July 1480 Ahmed landed his forces near Otranto in Apulia.[24] By 11 August he had captured the city and begun to secure it for use as a point from which to extend Turkish power in Italy. The bloody fate of the city's inhabitants has inspired numerous accounts of the episode over the centuries. The invaders murdered Archbishop Stefano Pendinelli at the high altar of the cathedral. On 14 August they marched eight hundred inhabitants of Otranto to a hill near the city and executed them all for refusing to convert to Islam. Of the city's twenty thousand inhabitants, twelve thousand died at Turkish hands, including the entire male population. Yet the invasion produced no long-term benefit for the Turks. A large Neapolitan army led by Duke Alfonso of Calabria, freshly returned from Tuscany, succeeded in confining the Turks to the city and placing them under siege. On 10 September 1481, after eleven months of siege, Otranto fell back into Aragonese hands.

Though angry at Ferrante for making a separate peace with Lorenzo de' Medici, Pope Sixtus energetically contributed to the ef-

[24] See Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, trans R Manheim (Princeton, 1978), pp 389–96, Kenneth M Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, 4 vols (Philadelphia, 1976–84), 2 339-45, 364–80, and Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent The Renaissance Image of the Turk (1493–1517)* (Nieuwkoop, 1967), pp 131–39 A large literature has appeared, much of it in recent years, on the episode at Otranto See the four bibliographical notes in Lucia Gualdo Rosa et al , eds , *Gli umanisti e la guerra otrantina* (Bari, 1982)

fort to expel the Turks. Within a year's time, however, he concluded an alliance with Venice and prepared for war against Naples and Ferrara, whose duke, Ercole d'Este, had married Ferrante's daughter Eleonora in 1474. The resulting War of Ferrara (1482–1484) revealed perhaps more clearly than anything else the shortsightedness of Sixtus' martial policy. In its first phase (April to December 1482), the war pitted Sixtus and Venice against Ferrara, Naples, Florence, and Milan. At the head of the Neapolitan army, Duke Alfonso ravaged the papal state, while Venetian pressure brought Ferrara to the brink of collapse. Meanwhile, however, Sixtus grew increasingly fearful of Venetian power, thus during the war's second phase (April 1483 to August 1484), he abandoned Venice and allied with his former enemies The locus of fighting shifted Duke Alfonso cooperated with Milanese forces combating the Venetian condottiere Roberto Sanseverino in Lombardy and the Veneto, while in May 1484 Venetian naval forces captured Gallipoli and other ports in Apulia. Only the withdrawal of Milan from the alliance forced the parties to come to terms. The Peace of Bagnolo (7 August 1484) returned affairs to an approximation of the status quo ante, the martial Sixtus IV survived the settlement by only a few days.

Sixtus' death, however, did not bring an end to Ferrante's problems The new pope, Innocent VIII (1484–1492), came from a Genoese family with strong Angevin sympathies, indeed, Innocent's father had fought with René d'Anjou against Alfonso in the years after 1438 Disputes over territorial rights and the annual tribute caused relations between Rome and Naples to degenerate immediately after Innocent assumed the papacy. The development that led to the rupture of relations and eventually to war was the second barons' revolt against Ferrante, in which Innocent supported the rebels.

The barons feared royal plans to diminish their powers.[25] Long

[25] A modern study of the barons' revolt remains a great desideratum, since it could throw light on the political, constitutional, and social history of Aragonese Naples For the present, besides the more general works cited above, there is the

known for his antifeudal sentiments, Duke Alfonso saw an opportunity after the Otranto and Ferrara wars to increase the authority of the monarchy. He spoke openly of his plan to establish around the city of Naples an immense royal demesne in which no feudal holdings or armies would be allowed, and he persuaded Ferrante to support the project. During the early months of 1485, the barons responded by organizing among themselves and seeking an alliance with Pope Innocent. By the summer of 1485, Duke Alfonso's readiness to implement his plans prompted the barons to take more definitive action. They encouraged the city of Aquila to rebel and expel the royal garrison in September 1485, and they offered to support Ferrante's second son, Federico, in a bid for the throne. Federico scornfully rejected the barons' offer of his father's throne, but the combined efforts of Innocent and the barons caused serious difficulties for Ferrante and Duke Alfonso. Innocent obtained the services of the Venetians' chief condottiere, Roberto Sanseverino. In perhaps his most threatening move, he even invited Duke René of Lorraine—who claimed the inheritance of his now-dead cousins, René and Jean d'Anjou—to enter the fray and make good his claim to rule Naples Finally, Ferrante suffered the betrayal of two especially powerful ministers, Francesco Coppola and Antonello Petrucci Coppola's father had risen from poverty to wealth as a merchant, gaining a title of nobility along the way. Francesco followed in his father's steps. through skillful business practices and royal favors he became fabulously wealthy and powerful. On several occasions he came to the aid of Ferrante with money and galleys from his own fleet, in return he gained the county of Sarno, the office of admiral of the realm, and a post as royal counsellor, as well as numerous other rewards. Petrucci had risen even more dramatically. Born into a peasant family, he entered the service of a Neapolitan notary, then came to the attention of King Alfonso's royal secretary, Juan Olzina, who appreciated Antonello's talents.

classic sixteenth-century account of Camillo Porzio, *La congiura de' baroni del regno di Napoli contra il re Ferdinando il primo*, ed E Pontieri (Naples, 1964), also Enrico Perito, *La congiura dei baroni e il conte di Policastro* (Bari, 1926)

Alfonso and Ferrante protected and promoted him, and Petrucci eventually became royal secretary to Ferrante, as well as holder of other offices, a knighthood, and many fiefs.

Despite insurrection, betrayal, and the threat of foreign intervention, Ferrante prevailed handily over his enemies. He had the diplomatic support of Milan, Florence, and his son-in-law, King Mathias Corvinus of Hungary. More important, he had an effective army led by Duke Alfonso, who ravaged the papal state, routed the forces of Roberto Sanseverino, and repressed individual rebel barons. Thus by 11 August 1486 Innocent came to terms with Ferrante. The king made large concessions on paper he agreed to honor the papacy, to pay the annual tribute faithfully, to pardon the rebel barons, and to restore them in their holdings [26]

In fact, however, Ferrante never intended to observe the treaty's provisions, all of which he instantly violated. He honored the papacy only with scorn, and he never sent tribute money, but only the white horse to the pope in following years. Furthermore, even as Duke Alfonso ratified the pact on 13 August 1486, two days after its completion, Ferrante began to take his revenge on the barons He struck at a banquet held at the Castelnuovo to celebrate the marriage of Francesco Coppola's son. His forces arrested at least ten of the celebrants, including Coppola, his two sons, Antonello Petrucci, his wife, and his two sons. Three months later a tribunal read sentences of death in the cases of Francesco, Antonello, and Petrucci's two sons. Executions of the two younger Petrucci took place on 11 December 1486. Francesco Petrucci, a surly man and one of the most determined leaders of the conspiracy, was drawn in disgrace through all sections of the city of Naples, then quartered, his brother Gianantonio, a lover of letters and a poet who joined the rebellion through family connections rather than political ambition, was paraded through the city, then beheaded Five months later, 11 May 1487, similar public cere-

[26] On the making and breaking of this peace of 1486, see P Fedele, 'La pace del 1486 tra Ferdinando d'Aragona ed Innocenzo VIII,' *ASPN*, 30 (1905), 481–503

monies preceded the beheading of Antonello Petrucci and Francesco Coppola. But Ferrante had not completed his revenge. New rounds of suppression in June and July 1487 resulted in the arrest and interrogation of numerous other barons, including several of the most powerful ones of the realm. Though not formally tried for their activities, they languished for years in the dungeon of the Castelnuovo, where presumably they made up the contingent of political prisoners that Pontano said provided amusement for Ferrante.

Though difficult to justify morally, Ferrante's policy certainly proved effective, at least in the short run. Innocent VIII never again exhibited much determination to move against Ferrante. Despite the constant pressure of Giuliano della Rovere—nephew of Pope Sixtus IV, later Pope Julius II himself, and one of Ferrante's most outspoken enemies in the college of cardinals—Innocent took no decisive action, even in the face of Ferrante's constant taunts and threats. Meanwhile, the barons had no desire to confront Duke Alfonso's army, now for the first time in almost ten years unencumbered by the need to fight foreign forces Nor did Ferrante's foreign enemies take advantage of the natural opportunity to intervene in Neapolitan affairs—thanks partly to an energetic diplomatic effort discussed in later chapters.

Thus Ferrante's last years brought no major threat to his rule, not even after the death of Innocent VIII and election of Rodrigo de Borja as Pope Alexander VI (1492–1503). Alexander inherited the antipathy of his uncle, Calixtus III, toward the Aragonese dynasty in Naples. Though always uneasy, relations between Alexander and Ferrante never degenerated to the point of serious tension Ferrante behaved with unusual caution when involved in territorial disputes with the second Borgia pope. For his part, Alexander recognized the legitimacy of Ferrante's rule and Duke Alfonso's right to succeed him as king of Naples.

Yet in these same years political developments and changes in leadership set the stage for the tragedies suffered by Naples and Italy after 1494. In 1490 the death of King Mathias Corvinus of

Hungary deprived Ferrante not only of a loyal son-in-law, but also of a staunch source of diplomatic and political support. In 1492 the death of Lorenzo de' Medici deprived him of his most reliable ally in Italy and placed the leadership of Florence in the hands of the undependable Piero de' Medici Meanwhile, Milan moved increasingly into the French orbit As early as the mid-1460s, Francesco Sforza had begun to seek improved relations with France, and in 1468 his son and successor, Galeazzo Maria (1466–1476), married Bona of Savoy, cousin of King Louis XI of France. The establishment of truly close ties, however, came only after Ludovico il Moro gained influence in the making of Milanese foreign policy. Ludovico served as power behind the throne for his nephew, Duke Giangaleazzo II (1476–1494), then usurped the duchy in 1494 and ruled in his own name until deposed by the same French whom he had cultivated (1500). Nervous about the illegitimacy of his position and unable to find reliable peninsular allies, Ludovico looked beyond the Alps for the diplomatic and military muscle that would enable him to retain his hold on Milan. His interests coincided neatly with the juvenile dreams of young King Charles VIII of France (1483–1498), who planned to conquer the kingdom of Naples, which he claimed by virtue of his Angevin inheritance, then to lead a crusade to the Holy Land, win himself an imperial crown, cleanse the papacy, reform the church, and establish his reputation as a courageous and chivalric hero

The kingdom of Naples and the Aragonese dynasty thus stood at a perilous pass on 25 January 1494, when death put an end to Ferrante's long reign That event encouraged a rapidly increased tempo in Neapolitan affairs.[27]

[27] On the period from the French invasion of 1494 through the imposition of the Spanish viceroys, see d'Agostino, *La capitale ambigua*, pp 56–174, Mallett, *The Borgias*, esp pp 117–265, and Luigi Volpicella, *Federico d'Aragona e la fine del regno di Napoli nel MDI* (Naples, 1908) On the military history of the period, see Piero Pieri, *Il Rinascimento e la crisi militare italiana* (Turin, 1952), esp pp 320–535

The Invasions of Italy and the Collapse of the Aragonese Dynasty of Naples

The duke of Calabria succeeded Ferrante as Alfonso II. Although many barons continued to hold grudges against Alfonso, the urban nobility and the inhabitants of the city of Naples cordially received the new king as one born among themselves. Alexander VI rebuffed the French claim to the Neapolitan throne and dispatched a cardinal to crown Alfonso on 8 May 1494.

Alfonso's early diplomatic triumphs did nothing, however, to diminish Charles VIII's enthusiasm for his visionary projects. Reports arrived regularly in Naples with news of Charles's plans to invade Italy and conquer the Regno. Against this possibility Alfonso undertook both diplomatic and political initiatives He sought to strengthen or repair relations with Florence, Milan, Venice, and other powers. But only with Alexander VI did Alfonso succeed in establishing a reasonably close rapport He eagerly submitted to Alexander both the white horse and the tribute money that had so often served as bone of contention between Ferrante and various popes Alfonso also gave his illegitimate daughter Sancia in marriage to Alexander's illegitimate son Jofrè. And he showered all three of Alexander's sons with benefits Jofrè became prince of Squillace, Juan became prince of Tricaria, and Cesare received numerous valuable benefices in the Regno. Alexander of course never desired a fresh and vigorous French monarchy in Naples. But the prospect of bringing considerable advantage to his own house certainly contributed to his policy of supporting the Aragonese monarchy in Naples, at least during the early days of the conflicts that began in 1494.

Alfonso's military preparations seemed likely to thwart Charles VIII's plan to conquer the kingdom of Naples. Alfonso strengthened defenses, rebuilt walls, and provisioned fortresses, both in the city of Naples and in other parts of the realm. He sent his brother Federico at the head of a fleet to aid Genoese exiles in their

effort to expel the dominant Adorno faction—allies of Milan and France—and thus to remove Genoa as a source of supply and support for French invaders. Finally, Alfonso sent his son Ferrante (generally called Ferrandino so as to distinguish him from the elder Ferrante) at the head of Neapolitan and papal ground forces into the Romagna, where he could threaten Lombardy and any French invaders who appeared there.

The defensive measures, however, all went for naught. In September 1494, Charles VIII crossed the Alps with a force of some forty thousand men Federico suffered naval defeat at Rapallo, so that Charles gained the use of Genoa Charles's main force then evaded Ferrandino's army in Lombardy and progressed unmolested down the peninsula on a leisurely march to Naples. Charles entered Florence on 17 November, as the Medici regime crumbled, and on the advice of his astrologers, he entered Rome itself on 31 December. Several weeks of negotiations with the wily Alexander VI brought him much courtesy but no substantial aid. Thus when Charles left Rome (27 January 1495), he departed without Alexander's blessing and without the investiture of the Regno.

Meanwhile, after it had become plain that the road to Naples stood open to Charles, Alfonso II fell into a panic. Despairing of his chances to save his crown, he decided to entrust it to his son, in the hope that the more popular Ferrandino could rally the kingdom to repel the French [28] Thus about 23 January 1495, after less than one year of rule, Alfonso II abdicated the monarchy and retired to Sicily, where he died of an infection the following November.

Despite heroic political and military efforts during the next month, Ferrandino also failed to halt the French advance. Cities opened their gates to Charles, barons deserted the Aragonese monarchy, and the city of Naples itself fell into chaos. Finally, Charles

[28] On Ferrandino see Benedetto Croce, Re Ferrandino, ' in his *Storie e leggende napoletane*, pp 157–79

victoriously entered Naples, on 22 February 1495, the same day that Ferrandino escaped to Ischia.

Though warmly greeted at first, the French soon encountered difficulties in Naples The army made itself unpopular through its brutality, while Charles himself caused dissatisfaction in his distribution of lands and offices. Meanwhile, Ferrandino and Federico sparked insurrections, and King Ferdinand the Catholic of Spain prepared an army in Sicily to aid his Aragonese cousins in Naples Finally, the League of Venice (concluded 31 March 1495) joined a group of formidable powers—Pope Alexander VI, King Ferdinand of Spain, Emperor Maximilian I, Venice, and Milan—in a coalition determined not to allow the consolidation of a French monarchy in Naples.

Charles gradually realized the perils he faced, with few provisions, long supply lines, and numerous enemies blocking his path to safety. So he departed from Naples with about half of his army 24 May 1495 Ferrandino reentered Naples to great rejoicing on 7 July, but he did not succeed in expelling the remaining French troops from the city until almost the end of the year. Liberation of the entire kingdom required almost another whole year. only after the French capitulation at Atella (23 June 1496) could Ferrandino turn his attention to the business of governance. In fact, however, he had no opportunity to rule in a more or less normal way, for Ferrandino's own time had almost expired Barely three months after his expulsion of the French, a virulent illness struck him. He was carried into Naples in grave condition 5 October 1496, and two days later the popular young king lay dead.

Thus came to the throne Federico, second son of the elder Ferrante, younger brother of Alfonso II, and uncle of Ferrandino. Under normal circumstances, Federico might have built a reputation as the most successful and accomplished of all the Aragonese kings of Naples He possessed military skills, attractive personal qualities, and the ability to inspire confidence and loyalty His humanist tutors had instilled in him an appreciation for high culture, but he also enjoyed great popularity among the common people of the

Regno. He based his rule on the sensible principles of forgetting old hostilities and addressing instead the current difficulties that plagued the kingdom. Thus he concentrated his efforts on solving economic problems, aggravated by several years of dubious financial management, and on eliminating hunger and famine, caused by several years of warfare in the kingdom.

Despite his good intentions and undeniable talents, Federico did not succeed in mending the social and political fabric of the Regno. As the fourth Aragonese king of Naples in less than three years' time, he sat upon an unstable throne. Ever eager to diminish royal power and authority, many barons deserted the Aragonese cause and intrigued with the French More significantly, in 1498 Alexander VI also abandoned Federico, who had recoiled violently at the proposal to marry his daughter Carlotta to the pope's illegitimate son Cesare. In the aftermath, Alexander concluded an alliance with King Louis XII of France (1498–1515) and married Cesare to a French princess (1499) Meanwhile, in an even more ominous development, King Ferdinand the Catholic began to develop his own Neapolitan ambitions. Ferdinand had long played a role in Italian affairs. he had aided Ferrante during the second barons' revolt; he had supported Alfonso II and Ferrandino against Charles VIII, and at century's end his army enabled Federico to retain his hold on the monarchy. About that same time, however, the combination of instability and opportunity in Naples tempted Ferdinand to undertake action there on his own behalf.

The year 1500 marked the beginning of the end for the Aragonese monarchy of Naples In November, Louis XII and Ferdinand the Catholic secretly concluded the Treaty of Granada, by which they agreed to conquer and partition the kingdom of Naples. Unaware of the pact, Federico called for Spanish aid when Louis's army invaded Naples in 1501. He soon discovered that Ferdinand's general, Gonsalvo de Córdoba—*el gran capitán*, who had conquered the Moors in Granada in 1492—no longer sought to bolster the shaky monarchy, but rather to establish Spanish hegemony over the provinces of Apulia and Calabria, leaving the re-

mainder of the kingdom, including the city of Naples, to the French. The Spanish and French armies quickly subdued the Regno, but the new lords almost immediately quarreled over their spoils. Already by 1502 they were to fight over disputed territories. In 1503 Gonsalvo took the field against the French, and by 1 January 1504 he had evicted them from all their Neapolitan holdings He then became the first in a long series of viceroys, who for the next 210 years ruled Naples in the name of the kings of Spain.

Federico surrendered to the French in 1501. Louis XII granted him the duchy of Anjou as his reward, and the former king lived in France until his death at Tours in 1504. His son Ferrante, the last of the Aragonese dukes of Calabria, fell prisoner to Spanish troops when Gonsalvo de Córdoba captured the city of Taranto in 1502. Packed off immediately to Spain, the young duke lived more or less quietly under the close watch of King Ferdinand and later of Charles V—despite one attempt at escape, which led to ten years of imprisonment (1513–1523), and despite intermittent hopes on the part of disenchanted Neapolitans that he would return to the kingdom and reestablish the Aragonese dynasty there. He eventually became a grandee and died, childless, as viceroy of Valencia in 1550. The Aragonese monarchy of Naples had come to an end.

Renaissance Naples

The kingdom of Naples thus played an important role during the Quattrocento in the political affairs both of Italy and of states beyond the Alps. In fact, its political significance alone would seem to warrant for the Regno far more attention than historians have devoted to it. But fifteenth-century Naples figured also as one of the most outstanding and influential cultural centers of Renaissance Italy. Some of the most illustrious and creative of all the Italian humanists lived and worked at the court of Naples, and they contributed to humanism, the single most important cultural movement of the Renaissance, several of its distinctive elements.

Meanwhile, other men—not humanists, but lawyers, theologians, philosophers, political thinkers, educators, and moralists—helped to define the characteristics of Renaissance culture in a more general way. The analysis of Neapolitan culture in the Quattrocento can thus lead to an improved understanding of cultural life in Renaissance Italy as a whole.

Naples and southern Italy figured more or less prominently in the development of humanism from the earliest days of its history. Petrarch chose King Robert the Wise (1309–1343) as his sponsor when seeking coronation with the poet's laurel, he traveled to Naples to submit to examination by Robert in 1341, and returned there on a papal mission two years later Boccaccio spent many of his most productive years at the Angevin court of Naples, which he preferred to his native Florence because of its peace and stability Both men developed circles of friends, admirers, and imitators in the kingdom. Meanwhile, an old tradition of Greek learning flourished in the Mezzogiorno during the Hohenstaufen and Angevin monarchies. Both Petrarch and Boccaccio sought Greek instruction in the kingdom, for lack of any other available source [29]

After the death of King Robert the Wise, however, Naples suffered factional struggles, disputed successions, and eventually the turmoil that ended with the establishment of the Aragonese dynasty there. For almost a century, then, the kingdom could not offer the security and patronage required by the fledgling humanist movement. The cultural initiative passed to the cities of central and northern Italy, where followers of Petrarch and Boccaccio imparted to humanism a thoroughly urban spirit Developed under the tutelage of educators like Vittorino da Feltre and Guarino da Verona, of professional administrators like Coluccio Salutati and Leonardo Bruni, and of moralists like Francesco Barbaro and Pog-

[29] On the cultural history of Angevin Naples, see Francesco Sabatini, *Napoli angioina cultura e societa* (Naples, 1975) See also two articles by Roberto Weiss "The Translators from the Greek of the Angevin Court of Naples," *Rinascimento*, 1 (1950), 195–226, and 'The Greek Culture of South Italy in the Later Middle Ages,' *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 37 (1951), 23–50

gio Bracciolini, humanism in its formative years acquired a vocabulary and a set of concerns that reflected the interests of the early humanists' urban environments. Except for the century of disorder in the Regno, early humanists attracted to Naples and nurtured in southern courts might well have contributed an alternate set of feudal or monarchical values to the intellectual interests of humanism.

In the event, however, humanism returned to the Mezzogiorno at a time in which many of its characteristic traits had taken on recognizable shape. Humanism did not reappear as a natural expression of Neapolitan society and culture, but instead reentered the kingdom through the court of Alfonso the Magnanimous—a point of fundamental importance for the following study. Humanism in fifteenth-century Naples began by reflecting the taste, the interests, and the needs of King Alfonso. In later years humanism spread its roots throughout Neapolitan society, finding fertile ground for growth in the universities, the printing industry, and even the aristocracy of the kingdom. Yet throughout the dynasty, the Aragonese kings of Naples employed humanists in political capacities, as secretaries, diplomats, advisers, and spokesmen Furthermore, political questions dominated as the most important of all the issues treated by humanists and other cultural figures in fifteenth-century Naples. The following study therefore concentrates on politics—rather than economic or social structure, for example—as the most important influence on Neapolitan culture during the Quattrocento.

This is not the place to undertake a thorough review of the scholarly literature on Renaissance humanism, but I wish to draw attention to two especially prominent interpretations that have deeply influenced the following analysis The first is that of Paul O Kristeller, who almost single-handedly made it possible to speak meaningfully of humanism as a cultural movement.[30] Kris-

[30] For samplers of his voluminous work, see Kristeller s *Renaissance Thought The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains* (New York, 1961), and *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, ed M Mooney (New York, 1979)

teller rejected earlier scholars efforts to associate humanism with some specific philosophical doctrine, religious belief, or ideological stance Instead he relied on numerous empirical studies to characterize humanism as an educational, literary, and cultural movement of the period roughly 1300 to 1600 Humanists in general studied and appreciated classical literature, according to Kristeller, while cultivating the rhetorical and literary skills that helped to define the classical cultural tradition Renaissance humanism developed as the peculiar idiom of a sophisticated, cosmopolitan cultural elite Yet the literary, rhetorical, and philological interests cultivated by humanists had quite broad implications humanists restored currency to long-forgotten works of classical thought and literature, they reoriented philosophical, moral, and religious thought by establishing the nature and behavior of humanity as their central concerns, and they instituted the critical, philological, historical study of literature Thus humanism figured as an especially powerful cultural force in the transition from medieval to modern times

While Kristeller focused his attention on the cosmopolitan interests shared by all Renaissance humanists, Hans Baron concerned himself with the local pressures that led to the development in Florence of a peculiar strain of civic humanism [3] By Baron s account, civic humanism emerged in the period around the turn of the fifteenth century, as the Florentine republic defended herself from the military and political threats posed by expansionist regimes in Milan, Naples, and Venice The pressures of those years encouraged humanists—who had previously devoted their efforts largely to cultural pursuits without grounding themselves solidly in the broader society—to ally with civic patriots in defense of the republic As a result of the alliance, humanists like Leonardo Bruni focused their talents not only on literature and scholarship, but also on issues of immediate political and social relevance The civic commitments made by Bruni and others thus helped to bring

[3] See especially Baron s *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*

about several cultural developments that Baron presented as the hallmarks of civic humanism a new historiography, which brought humanist critical analysis to bear on the examination of coherent, well-integrated topics, a new social ethic, which emphasized the value and virtue of the active over the contemplative life, a new appreciation of vernacular literature, which possessed a beauty and dignity equal to those of the classical languages, and most importantly, a new commitment to republican political values, which served Florentines as a powerful ideological weapon in their conflicts with other states Once again, then, humanism figures as a potent force in western civilization, but this time as one that reflected local pressures more faithfully than cosmopolitan interests

The views of Kristeller and Baron do not cancel each other out, in my opinion, but rather complement each other as interpretations of Renaissance humanism Taken together, they suggest the value of studies that acknowledge the influence both of cosmopolitan interests common to all the humanists and of local circumstances that shaped the work and thought of individual humanists [32] Humanism always reflected to a large extent the interests of intellectuals in all parts of Italy and Europe, after all, but it inevitably acquired distinctive characteristics as individual humanists encountered the problems and pressures of a particular society The following analysis thus draws considerable inspiration from both Kristeller and Baron in its effort to understand Renaissance humanism in its Neapolitan manifestation

Previous scholarship has resulted in several works of high interest for the understanding of Neapolitan culture, especially humanism, in the fifteenth century Eberhard Gothein produced a portrait of Quattrocento Naples, for example, that strikes readers

[32] See two especially wise articles that point in this direction George M Logan, Substance and Form in Renaissance Humanism, *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 7 (1977), 1–34, and Charles G Nauert, Jr , Renaissance Humanism An Emergent Consensus and Its Critics, *Indiana Social Studies Quarterly*, 33 (1980), 5–20

today—a full century after its original publication—as remarkable for its attention to the nuances of Neapolitan society [33] Antonio Altamura, Andres Soria, and Francesco Tateo have thrown useful light on the individual humanists and literary figures active in Renaissance Naples [34] Most sensitive and thoughtful of all, Mario Santoro has offered a survey of Neapolitan humanism that links cultural life more directly to the general experience of fifteenth-century Naples Santoro recognizes that in its early stages, humanism depended on the talents of foreigners attracted to the Regno by King Alfonso, but he argues that during the course of the Aragonese dynasty, humanism established itself as a genuine Neapolitan cultural movement By the end of the fifteenth century, natives of the city or kingdom of Naples had taken the place of foreign humanists, their works reflected not only the interests of the monarchs, but also the problems of the entire realm [35]

The following book does not pretend to supersede or displace the works mentioned here, but seeks instead to complement them and perhaps to augment them in a useful way It pays more attention than previous studies to developments in humanism and Renaissance culture in central and northern Italy At the same time, it concentrates more rigorously than any previous study on the interrelations between politics and culture in Quattrocento Naples This approach will make it possible to take into account both cosmopolitan influences and local pressures at work in fifteenth-century Naples More particularly, the study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the Renaissance on several different levels In the first place, most obviously, it seeks to throw light on the his-

[33] Eberhard Gothein, *Die Culturentwicklung Sud-Italiens* (Breslau, 1886), better known in the Italian translation, *Il Rinascimento nell Italia meridionale*, ed and trans T Persico (Florence, 1915)

[34] Antonio Altamura, *L umanesimo del Mezzogiorno d Italia* (Florence, 1941), Andres Soria, *Los humanistas de la corte de Alfonso el Magnanimo* (Granada, 1956), and Francesco Tateo, *L umanesimo meridionale* (Bari, 1976) See also Tateo s *Tradizione e realta nell umanesimo italiano* (Bari, 1967)

[35] See Santoro s book-length contribution, La cultura umanistica, in the *Storia di Napoli*, 7 115–291

tory of Naples, long and unduly neglected as a subject of research by Renaissance scholars In the second place, it also seeks to add texture to the understanding of Italian humanism by examining the work and thought of humanists operating in a specific political context Finally, the effort to interpret the political and cultural history of Naples in the light of the more general experience of fifteenth-century Italy will lead to an improved understanding of Renaissance civilization in general

The study proceeds by investigation of several themes that permit direct examination of the connecting points between the realm of ideas and the world of politics The first theme, royal patronage of cultural figures, examines the financial and professional relationships between the Aragonese kings of Naples and their protégés Issues addressed here include royal tastes and cultural preferences, but also, more importantly, royal investment in culture and the returns that the kings of Naples received from their investments The second theme, clientage and career prospects for humanists in Renaissance Naples, deals with similar issues, but from the viewpoint of men of culture rather than their royal patrons Considerable documentation survives to illuminate the careers of five Neapolitan humanists, the tasks they undertook, the fortunes they amassed, the powers they accumulated, the influence they wielded, and the legacies they left Analysis of their experiences will lead to an understanding of the benefits derived by humanists themselves from their relationships with the Aragonese kings of Naples The third theme, the development of a realistic approach to politics and statecraft, deals not so much with the history of ideas as with the influence exercised by events and experience on thought and culture The readiness of the Neapolitan humanists to reconsider western political ethics becomes comprehensible only in the light of their practical experience as secretaries, advisers, and diplomats for the Aragonese kings The fourth theme, the implications of humanism for Renaissance politics, expands somewhat the scope of the study This theme brings into focus the contributions of the Neapolitan humanists to the de-

velopment of a distinctive Renaissance culture and to the emergence of a secular political consciousness in early modern Europe The book continues with an investigation of the extent to which humanist values and insights penetrated the Mezzogiorno In studying the thought of five natives of the city or kingdom of Naples, it seeks to understand how humanism helped men of learning to interpret the turbulent political experience of Italy during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries A final, brief chapter assesses the contributions made by Neapolitan humanists to humanism as a cultural movement and to the broader cultural history of early modern Europe

The study begins on a more modest level, however, with an analysis of the material and monetary relationships between the Aragonese kings and their cultured clients