

Identification

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Nomination</i> | The Historic Centre of Naples |
| <i>Location</i> | Campania |
| <i>State Party</i> | Italy |
| <i>Date</i> | 11 October 1994 |

Justification by State Party

The manifold values of the historic centre of Naples relate to each of the criteria for inclusion on the World Heritage List. Masterpieces such as the conventual complex of Santa Chiara or the Castelnuovo are integral to the overall townscape and urban fabric of Naples, where successive interventions, without obliterating the characteristics of existing elements, create spatial situations that are unique and transcend their physical dimensions to merge indissolubly with the town. **Criterion i**

The oldest part of Naples was founded in the 5th century BC by Cumaean colonists, on the rectangular grid layout that is still discernible. It is a highly stratified town which often reveals ruins from different periods lying close to one another. **Criterion iii**

Naples is an outstanding example of a classical town in its layout, with later additions derived from Angevin and Aragonese town-planning traditions. The domestic architecture is also noteworthy, especially that of the 18th century, where the "open stairs" constitute a very original solution to the problem of space. **Criterion iv**

The abundant buried remains of the earlier history of Naples, both in the central nucleus and along the coast of Posillipo, with its wealth of Roman villas, are constantly at risk from modern development as well as progressive natural degeneration. **Criterion v**

Naples is closely associated with many events and individuals of great importance in the early history of Christianity. The catacombs of S. Januarius and S. Gaudioso, which date back to the 2nd century AD, became places of pilgrimage and received the mortal remains of many saints and holy men. **Criterion vi**

Category of property

In terms of the categories of property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, Naples is a *group of buildings*.

History and Description*History*

Naples (*Neapolis* = New City) was founded in 470 BC, close to a Cumaean trading port of the 7th century BC, Partenope (later to become *Paleopolis* or Old City when it merged with Naples), after the battle in which the combined forces of Cumae and Syracuse defeated the Etruscan fleet and ended its ambitions to dominate the Tyrrhenian Sea. The city was enclosed by walls and laid out on a regular grid, with fine public buildings. The city maintained good relations with Athens, which it supplied with grain from its fertile hinterland. It entered the Roman orbit in the late 4th century BC as a loyal ally during the Samnite Wars, but retained its close cultural and linguistic links with Greece.

Excavations in recent years have revealed a great deal about the history of the town. In the Imperial period it expanded to the south and the east. The earthquakes of AD 62 and 79 caused considerable damage, but the town was quickly rebuilt and recovered its importance. However, the later 3rd century saw a decline, illustrated by the abandonment of certain areas, followed by repairs to the defences in the 4th and 5th centuries. In the first half of the 6th century Justinian's general, Belisarius, brought Naples back into the Byzantine orbit, where it remained until it came under Norman domination in 1139/40; at first a dependency of Ravenna, the city became autonomous from 763 onwards, when Stephen became Duke. The cultural connections between Naples and Ravenna are manifested by the architecture and decoration of the many churches and monasteries dating from this period. The town itself stayed roughly the same size, but there was considerable rebuilding.

The surrender of the keys of the city to the Norman King Roger II of Sicily saw the initiation of the south Italian kingdom that was to endure, under different names and royal houses, until 1860. A dynastic marriage saw Naples pass to the Swabian Hohenstaufen family in 1189, whose most famous member, Frederick II, founded a university at Naples in 1224 which boasted among its students St Thomas Aquinas. Hohenstaufen threats to the Papacy saw Charles of Anjou, brother of St Louis, crowned as King of Sicily in 1265. He moved the capital of his kingdom to Palermo, but Naples prospered and expanded during the two centuries of Angevin rule, as both administrative centre and port, and it was embellished with many artistic and architectural treasures, such as the convents of Santa Chiara and San Lorenzo Maggiore and the churches of Donnaregina and l'Incoronata.

In 1442 the Angevin dynastic crisis led to the accession of the first Aragonese king, Alfonso I, who was responsible for much building in Naples, including the Castelnuovo, largely in the Tuscan style, and considerable remodelling of its street pattern and defences. Following a short period of French rule (1495-1503), Naples came under the rule of a viceroy as a province of the Spanish empire. This was a period of great misery for most of the south of Italy, including Naples, even though some improvements were carried out in the city, notably by the viceroy Pedro Alvarez de Toledo (1532-33).

The Treaty of Vienna in 1738 recognized Charles II, son of Philip V of Spain, as King of Naples and Sicily, and Naples became once again the capital of an autonomous kingdom. Like the rest of Italy, Naples came under French rule in the Napoleonic period, and benefited from some ambitious urban projects. With the return of the Bourbons in 1815, Ferdinand IV took the name and title of Ferdinand I, King of the Two Sicilies. The tyrannous regime that ensued was brought to an end with the entry of Garibaldi's army in 1860

Description

Much of the significance of Naples is due to its urban fabric, which represents twenty-five centuries of growth. Little survives above-ground of the Greek town, but important archaeological discoveries have been made in excavations since the end of World War II. Three sections of the original town walls of this period are visible in the north-west. The surviving Roman remains are more substantial, notably the large theatre, the cemeteries, and the catacombs. There are also substantial remains of an exceptionally luxurious extra-mural villa, known as the Pausilypon, large enough to house its own theatre. The street layout in the earliest parts of the city owes much to its classical origins.

The period that followed the collapse of the Roman Empire in the west saw the beginning of church-building on a substantial scale, and churches such as those of San Gennaro *extra moenia*, San Giorgio Maggiore, and San Giovanni Maggiore have elements of 4th and 5th century architecture surviving. The chapel of Santa Restituta in the mainly 14th century cathedral is reputed to be the first Christian basilica in Naples, but it has undergone much subsequent reconstruction and redecoration.

The Castel dell'Ovo is one of the most substantial survivals from the Norman period. Built as a fortress-monastery on the site of the villa of Lucullus, it was subsequently remodelled on several occasions, and given its present form at the end of the 17th century. During the Norman-Swabian period the city remained largely within its classical walls, but the arrival of the Angevin kings saw it begin to expand and to absorb the suburbs and neighbouring villages. The influence of western art and architecture began to assert itself at this time, replacing the Greek and even Arab elements that can be recognized in earlier constructions. French Gothic pervaded both religious and domestic architecture. From the Angevin period date religious structures such as the new Cathedral, the churches of San Lorenzo Maggiore, San Domenico Maggiore, Santa Chiara, Santa Maria Donnaregina, and others and secular buildings like the Castel Nuovo, the Castel Capuano, and the Palace of the Prince of Taranto. The strongest influence came from southern France, and there is much fine Provençal Gothic architecture in the 14th and 15th century churches of Naples.

The accession of the Aragonese dynasty saw much building and rebuilding. The town walls were refurbished and rationalized. The Renaissance heritage of Naples is mainly the work of Italian architects, with some from Catalonia. The San Severino Palace, now demolished, was one of the most lavish buildings of its period (its Baroque marble facade now graces the late 16th century Church of Gesù Nuovo). A number of major churches date from this period, notably Santa Caterina a Formiello and the Monteoliveto complex (Sant'Anna dei Lombardi).

The early 16th century saw the beginning of two centuries of Spanish rule, and the strengthening once again of the defences, particularly during the twenty years of the viceroyalty of Pedro de Toledo, who initiated a planning policy for the city as part of his efforts to carry out a social reorganization (largely for the benefit of the wealthier elements of society). The Royal Palace was built in 1600 and fills one side of the imposing Piazza del Plebiscito; it is just the most impressive of a series of palaces built in this period. Church building was not neglected, and included such foundations as the Monte dei Poveri Vergognosi charitable institution, the convent of Sant'Agostino degli Scalzi, and the Jesuit College on Capodimonte.

Suburbs continued to grow outside the gates in the extended defences and these, too, saw the erection of large religious and secular structures. The relationship of these dependent areas to the early centre is well illustrated by the modern street plan, spreading in all directions, and especially along the coast. Quarters both inside and outside the walls became specialized according to nationality (ie the Spanish group had a quarter distinct from the rest), social grade, and trade. The port, too, grew and extended to meet the city's increasing requirements in the 17th and 18th centuries. The 19th century saw more radical changes in the street plan, notably the creation of the Piazza Mercato during the reign of Ferdinand IV after an area of wooden barrack buildings was destroyed by fire.

Following unification in 1860, a great deal of planning and rehabilitation took place. What had become slum quarters were cleared, as a result of which many earlier buildings were swept away and new roads were built, cutting through earlier street patterns.

Management and Protection

Legal status

Ownership of the properties that make up the historic centre of Naples is spread across the National State, the Towns Council, the Archiepiscopal See of Naples, religious and secular institutions, and private individuals.

The 1972 General Town Plan (Ministerial Decree No 1829 of 31 March 1972) identifies the statutorily protected area of the historic centre. All interventions within that must be approved by the Superintendence for the Environmental and Architectural Heritage of Naples and its Province and the Archaeological Superintendence of Naples and Caserta. The provisions of Act No 47 of 28 February 1985 on "Norms pertaining to town planning and building control activity, sanctions, recovery, and redevelopment of abusive works" are also applicable to the area, and lay down specifications for building heights, spacing, etc. A large number of buildings in the city are also designated under the terms of Act No 1089 of 1 June 1939, the central piece of Italian legislation relating to heritage protection. Other national and regional statutes and regulations relating to planning control and heritage are also applicable to the historic centre of Naples.

Management

The responsible national agencies are the Ministry for the Environmental and Cultural Heritage (Superintendence for the Archaeological Heritage of Naples and Caserta; Superintendence for the Environmental and Architectural Heritage of Naples and its Province; Superintendence for the Historic and Artistic Heritage of Naples and its Province), the Museum of Capodimonte, the Campania Regional Council, the Provincial Council of Naples, and the Town Council of Naples. Collaborating bodies are the Ministries of Environmental Affairs, Education, Works, Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Tourism and Entertainment, Defence, and Scientific Research, Italia Nostra, Lega Ambiente (Environmental League), and Napoli '99 (Cultural Association for the Promotion of the Patrimony of Naples).

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

Much restoration work took place in Naples during the 19th century, though little of this would be considered to meet the standards of the present day. The latter part of the century saw the emergence of a greater concern for historical accuracy and authenticity and the foundation of specialized professional state agencies to protect, conserve, and manage the country's heritage.

The earthquake of the 1980s led to the establishment of a plan for the rebuilding and rehabilitation of areas of the city that suffered damage. This has a major heritage component in it, and appropriate controls are introduced to ensure that the quality of interventions is acceptable. A number of major restorations have been carried out on Neapolitan churches, eight of them since 1991. Important archaeological interventions have also been carried out at various points in the city, in connection with infrastructural and restoration projects.

Authenticity

The town plan has a high level of authenticity: evidence of the Graeco-Roman city and the checkerboard layout of the 16th century Spanish quarters is clearly visible at the present time. Many public and private buildings also retain absolute authenticity in terms of their function in the plan and their relationships with one another, as well as authenticity in their spatial, volumetric, and decorative features.

There is also remarkable authenticity in the use of materials, all derived locally and distinctive visual and material features, such as the basic yellow tufa, white marble, and the grey *piperno*. The techniques developed for the use of these materials survive to a considerable degree and are used in restoration and conservation projects.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

ICOMOS expert missions visited Naples in February and in June 1995. Comments were also received from the ICOMOS International Committee on Historic Towns and Villages.

Qualities

Naples is a city of great antiquity with an historical trajectory that has seen it exposed to a very wide range of cultural influences, all of which have left their traces in the city's urban fabric and its architecture.

Comparative analysis

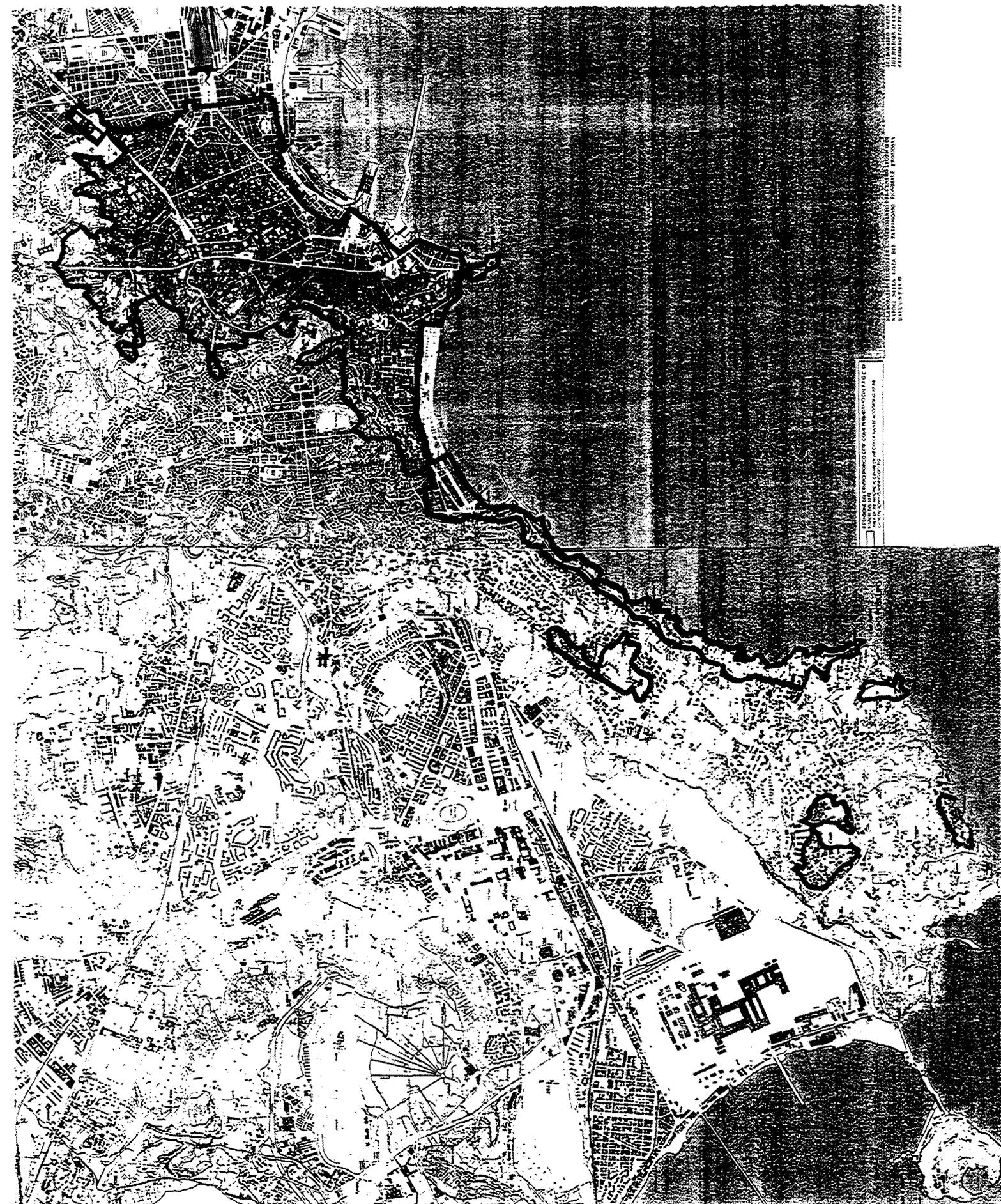
It is difficult to identify a city or cities with which Naples might be compared. Its cultural roots so completely different from those of any other Italian city that comparison would be worthless. It is equally difficult to equate Naples with other major Mediterranean cities such as Barcelona or Marseilles. Uniqueness is a quality that is hard to define, but Naples seems to come very close to having it, however defined.

Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of ***criteria ii and iv***.

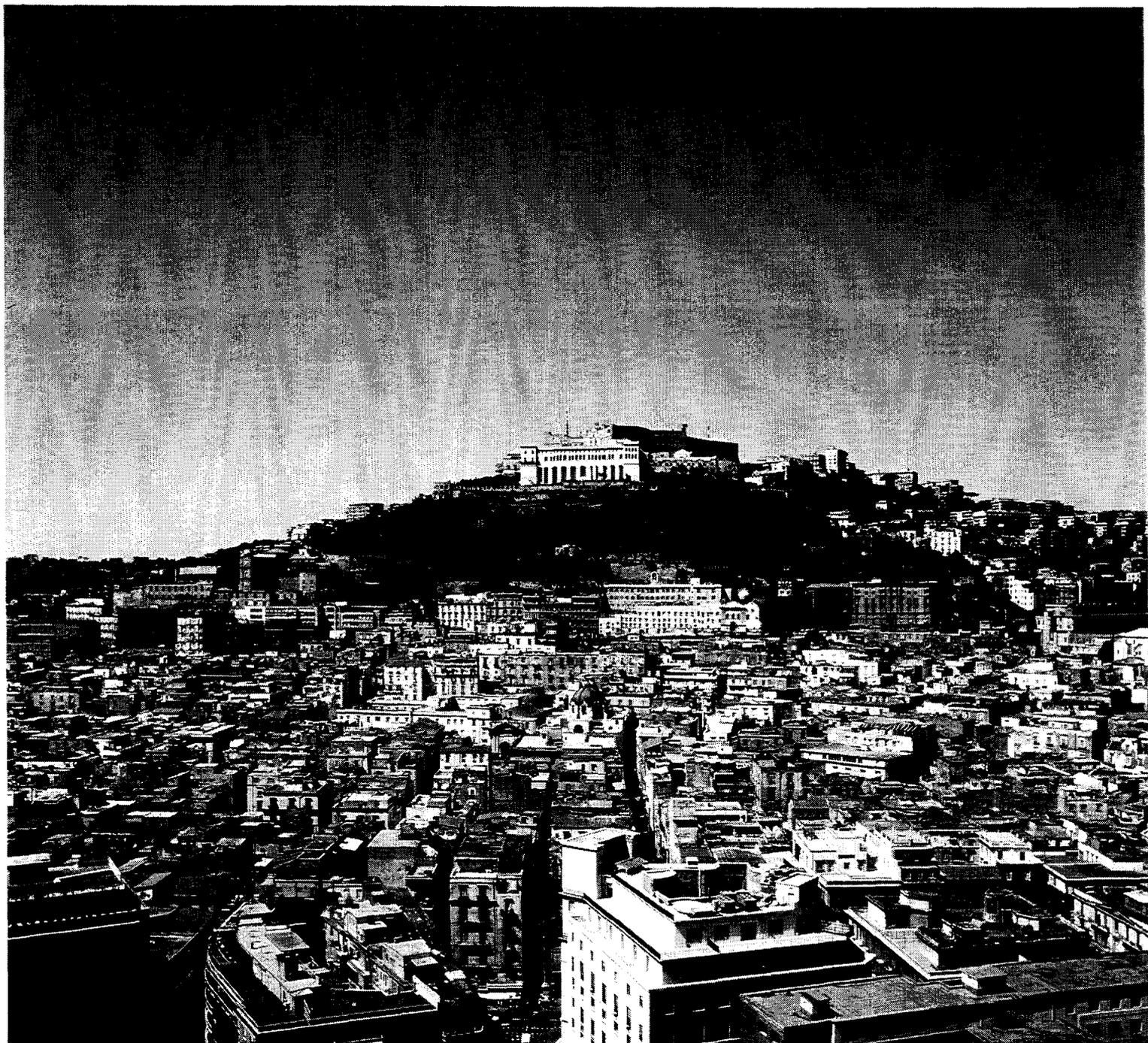
Naples is one of the most ancient cities in Europe, whose contemporary urban fabric preserves the elements of its long and eventful history. Its street pattern, its wealth of historic buildings from many periods, and its setting on the Bay of Naples give it an outstanding universal value without parallel, and one that has had a profound influence in many parts of Europe and beyond.

ICOMOS, September 1995



LE GOUVERNEMENT ITALIEN
MINISTRE DES CULTES, MONUMENTS ET BEAUX-ARTS
NAPLES, 1978. ÉDITÉ PAR L'INSTITUTO NAZIONALE DI STUDI
ARCHEOLOGICI E EPIGRAFICI
BULGNETSCO

Naples : carte indiquant les zones proposées pour inscription /
Map showing the nominated areas



Naples : vue d'ensemble du centre historique /
General view of the historic centre



Naples : la Piazza Municipio avec le Castelnuovo /
The Piazza Municipio with the Castelnuovo