

Thursday the 14th of July 2009

After two overnight stops in Sorrento, we took the train to Naples. This is a panoramic view of Naples with Vesuvius in the background



Approximate the following can be read in Det Store Norske Leksikon about Naples:

Italy's third largest city, lies in Campania and is South Italy's economical and cultural center;

1 002 600 inhabitants (2000). It lies around Golfo di Napoli (Naples bay), and between the Flegrei plateau in west and Vesuvius's volcanic cone in the east. The Naples bay is partly protected by peninsulas and islands, a.o. Ischia and Capri. Vesuvius, Pompeii, Capri and the beautiful landscape has laid the foundation for a considerable tourism in the Naples area.

Neapolis, «The new city», was founded as a Greek colony from Kyme (Cumae) in the 600s BC, apparently named Parthenope. The city was a center of the Greek Campania. Roman ally from 327 BC. It retained its Greek character well into the imperial times, was a popular residence of emperors and poets.

In the end of the 400s Naples came under ostrogothic rule, but in 536 it was recaptured for the Byzantium by Emperor Justinian's commander Belisarius. From the 800's the city claimed an independent status until it in the 1000's was incorporated in the newly established Norman state on Sicily. From 1194 ruled by the Hohenstaufers, who in 1266 was followed by the French dynasty of Anjou.

The city was from 1282 to 1860 the capital of the kingdom of Naples, and it played a significant role in the visual arts in the Renaissance period, in Baroque painting and in the 1700s church music and opera (Neapolitan school). During World War II, Naples was exposed to a violent bomb attacks until the Allies took the city in October 1943. The Germans did also large devastations before their retreat. The townscape is after the reconstruction greatly changed, especially in the harbour area.

Since the 1800s, the city has grown rapidly, an increase that largely because of the favorable location as a gateway into the populous surrounding areas. The strong growth has resulted in large housing problems. The slum is tried to be restored by house building by government, but a large proportion of the population still live under miserable conditions. The city is also notorious for its crime, and thefts flourish, especially in the tourist season. In addition, there are major pollution problems. Several swimming places near the city is closed, and the beautiful landscape around the Gulf of Naples is often enveloped in a haze of pollution from industrial and vehicular traffic.



We had booked at hotel A. Viola. It was close to the railway station, on the east side.

The hotel was in a way OK, but the surrounding area was quite shabby. It was more like a slum area. It was so bad that we didn't go out after dark.





Kjell on the balcony



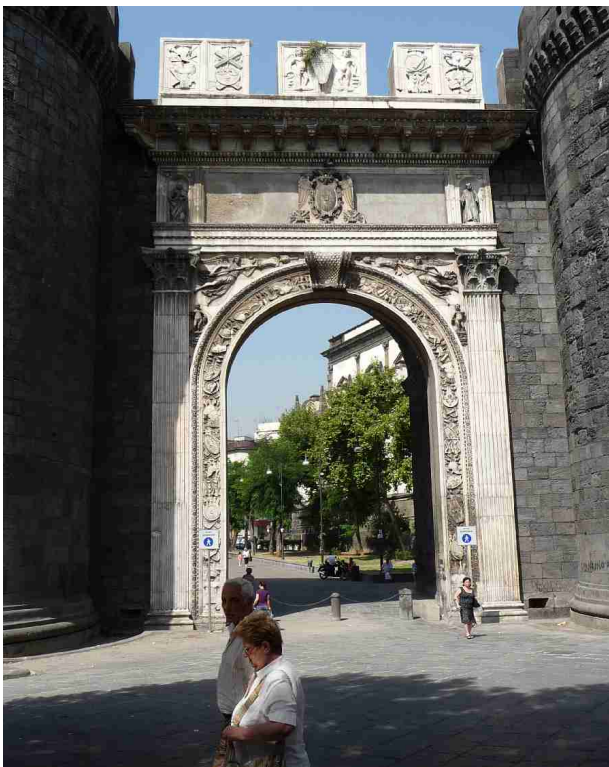
The facades were not very maintained



The plastering is flaking off and there is growing weeds in the rain gutters.



The next day we went for a sightseeing round and came first past Castel Capuano og Porta Capuana.



Porta Capuana



Castel Capuano was commenced by the Norman king Vilhelm I and was finished by Fredrik II. It was a kings palace until 1540, when it became a court house.





Chiesa di Santa Caterina a Formiello. This church was commenced in 1510 and was finished in 1593. It was then part of a convent. In the 1800s it was used as a wool factory.



A statue of St. Gennaro



Naples' cathedral (Duomo de Napoli)

This cathedral, built around year 1300, is dedicated the city's tutelary saint St. Gennaro and is Naples' most important church building. Twice a year (the first sunday in Mai and 19. September) the whole city's attention is attracted to St. Gennaros chapel, where the rest of the saint's blood is shown, and it becomes liquid again. The legend tells that a catastrophe will occur in Naples if this should not happen.



Here we are in Naples' historical center. The street is Via San Gregorio Armeno and is known for its crèches. At Christmas time over half a million tourists come to watch the crèches. In the rest of the year there is also displayed all kind of miniaurer figures, and it is possible to buy all kind from kitchen equipment to whole mountains. Everything is hand made.



Here are some of the Christmas cribs



The church Santa Donna Regina Vecchia is in bad shape.



La fontana della Sellaria is standing in the foreground



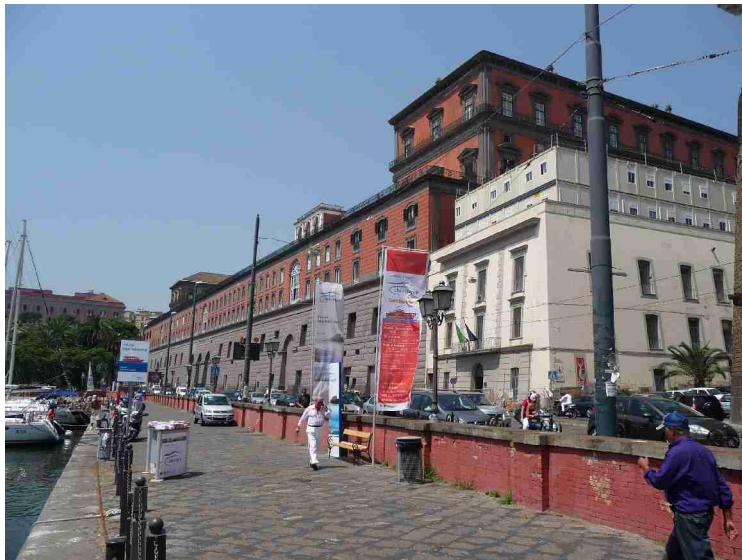
The fountain was commenced in 1649 and finished in 1653. It stood first in Piazza della Sellaria, but was moved here to Piazzeta del grande Archivio in 1889.



The old church is surrounded by new buildings



Here we have reached the south western harbour area where Castel Nuovo lies. This Castle was built for Karl of Anjou in 1279-1282. The castle was the king's main residence.



This is Palazzo Reale. It was commenced in 1600 for the Spanish vice kings and became Naples king's palace



At the entrance to Castel Nuovo. We sat for a while under the trees in the park outside, for it was quite hot. We saw that there was a wedding that day.



This is Palazzo Reale seen from the park at Castel Nuovo



Up on the hill is Certosa di San Martino, which earlier was a convent. Early in the 1800s the monks left the convent and it is now a museum.



This is inside Galleria Umberto I, which is giant shopping center.

At this time we had been walking all the day. We had been walking for about 5 kilometers in the baking hot sun, so we were tired. We therefore found a bus that went back to where we were staying.