Giuliano da Sangallo in the Kingdom of Naples: Architecture and Cultural Exchange

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In 1488 the Florentine architect Giuliano da Sangallo brought to Naples the model of a new royal palace commissioned by Lorenzo de’ Medici for the king of Naples, Ferrante of Aragon. The model is missing, but its scheme is known from three plans drawn by Giuliano in his sketchbooks (Figures 1–3). Giuliano da Sangallo, Lorenzo de’ Medici’s personal architect, was one of the major architects of the fifteenth century. The royal palace for the king of Naples is the first of a series of palace projects on a monumental scale that Giuliano designed under commission from the Medici. Although never executed, the design of the Neapolitan *reggia* may be considered one of the most ambitious conceived at the time, both for its dimensions and for the richness of its cultural references, and it influenced both contemporary and later palace projects throughout Italy.

Extensively studied since the end of the nineteenth century, Sangallo’s project for the king of Naples has been the object of much analysis and debate. Despite attempts to reconstruct the interior and exterior elevations of the building, major questions remain concerning its specific architectural details. In large part these stem from a lack of documentary or other evidence that could shed light on the final appearance and architectural idiom envisaged for the building (Figure 4). In the 1970s George Hersey and Roberto Pane further complicated the history of the palace by calling into question the function of the building, suggesting that it was not intended to be a royal palace but was conceived instead to house the law courts of the kingdom. Even if this suggestion has not found a significant following in modern scholarship, and I believe it should be rejected, it gives an idea of the complexity of the problems related to the project of this palace, which, had it been executed, would have been one of the major dynastic residences of fifteenth-century Europe.

Giuliano’s design has been regarded as a case of the one-way exportation of architectural knowledge from Florence to Naples. If instead one looks at it from the Neapolitan point of view, a rather different and more complex picture emerges. This article examines Sangallo’s palace design within the context of diplomatic relationships and cultural exchanges between Naples and Florence. It relates a telling case of the ways in which architecture was a crucial aspect of the diplomatic activity of the Italian Renaissance states and of the growing networks of communication that attuned governments to intelligence gathering and reciprocal dialogue. When not fighting on the field, rulers engaged in a courtly game focused on the art of building, competing to demonstrate the splendor and magnificence of their residences but also exchanging architects as well as architectural models and drawings as diplomatic gifts. While we are well aware of Lorenzo’s diplomatic gifts, no attention has hitherto been paid to the fact that the Neapolitan royals used this political and cultural strategy with great skill when dealing with the other rulers of the Italian Peninsula, as with those of more distant courts. The case of the design for a royal palace sent to Ferrante of Aragon shows, I will argue, how Lorenzo’s cultural diplomacy was not a one-way street; rather, it relied on a dual exchange between the Aragonese and Medicean courts. Moreover, I would maintain that the overall history and conception of the project had an intrinsic diplomatic character: Giuliano was sent as an informal ambassador to the court not only to export the architectural language of Florence to
Naples but also to negotiate the project’s final features with the recipients of the gift, the Aragonese royal family.\textsuperscript{10}

When he arrived in Naples in 1488 to deliver the model, Giuliano found a lively cultural ambience, steeped in antiquarian culture, eager for new architecture, and enlivened by a courtly life that aimed to revive the customs of the ancients. In this article, by setting the palace plan into the context of other building activity undertaken by the royal family, especially that of Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, during Giuliano’s sojourn, I will demonstrate that the Florentine architect attempted to respond to the ceremonial and practical requirements of the Neapolitan court in his design, not only by integrating “foreign” models but also by incorporating ideas and formal elements that derived from local antiquities. Furthermore, I will clarify the chronology of Giuliano’s stay in Naples, identify antique buildings that he studied, and show how he incorporated elements from them into the design of his palace. My new reading of the context, sources, and features of the project for the king of Naples will make it evident that Giuliano’s knowledge of southern antiquities and of the Neapolitan context not only inspired specific elements of his design for the Neapolitan \textit{reggia} but also influenced his later works in Florence. The research presented here will also contribute to a better understanding of Neapolitan Renaissance architecture by providing deeper insights into the impact of Florence on the wider building activity in the kingdom and by illustrating the active and knowledgeable role taken by the Aragonese royals and the southern elite in the design of their buildings. As patrons, they understood ancient architecture and kept constantly abreast of the latest trends in the art of building.

The Palace Plan

The information available regarding Giuliano da Sangallo’s stay in Naples is sparse.\textsuperscript{11} Apart from a record dated

\textbf{Figure 1} Giuliano da Sangallo, design for the palace for the king of Naples (Siena, Biblioteca Comunale di Siena, Cod. S.IV.8, fol. 17v).
28 February 1488 tells us that the Duke of Calabria ordered a payment of one hundred ducats to be made to the architect, the main document relating his trip to Naples comes from Giuliano himself, who below the design of the palace on fol. 39 of his model book, the Vatican Codex Barberiniano 4424, wrote in capital letters that the drawing found there represented the plan of a model of a palace, sent by Lorenzo de’ Medici to King Ferrante of Aragon, which Giuliano had made and personally brought to Naples. He noted that this was in the year 1488 (see Figure 3). The three autograph drawings of the palace are the only surviving trace of the project, which was presented to the king in the form of a wooden model. Although the drawings date from different times and differ in their definition of minor details, they all represent essentially the same plan (see Figures 1–3). The sketch plan outlined on fol. 17 of the Taccuino Senese can be dated to 1488, the very year Giuliano arrived in Naples (see Figure 1). The drawing on fol. 8 of the Vatican Codex is a fair copy of the sketch in the Taccuino Senese and can also be dated around 1488 as part of the so-called libro-piccolo or “little booklet” from Giuliano’s early activity that he later incorporated into the larger Vatican Codex (see Figure 2). The only significant difference between fol. 17 of the Taccuino Senese and fol. 8 of the Codex Barberiniano is the addition of a detailed plan of the chapel in the Vatican drawing. The plan on fol. 39 of the Vatican Codex, known as the “large drawing,” was executed later, probably in the first decade of the sixteenth century (see Figure 3). Here we find indicated the thickness of the walls, a scale, and other measurements, as well as decorative elements such as columns, pilasters, and niches, all details that Sangallo seems to have added in order to leave a complete record of a project that was never executed and whose wooden model had probably already disappeared. The only one of the three plans to cover the entire page, the drawing on fol. 39 is complete with ornamental and constructive details and accompanied by the inscription in capital lettering recounting the story of the gift of the model from Lorenzo to Ferrante. It demonstrates a clear intention to create a beautiful drawing, an intention not evident in the two previous plans of the palace. The monumentality of the drawing matches that of the final layout of the Codex Barberiniano,
which had been conceived by Giuliano as a model book of an autobiographical nature compiled to transmit his knowledge to his son Francesco and to present his work to posterity.¹⁶

Even if some details appear only in the “big drawing” of the palace, the main architectural ideas had already been conceived at the time of the original 1488 sketch plan in the Taccuino Senese. With a rectangular plan developed around a symmetrical axis, the palace would have been raised on a platform similar to that of the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano, resembling the *basis villae* of antiquity (see Figure 4).¹⁷ A wide central staircase and two lateral sets of stairs rose from the ground level to a large open platform. A central entrance dominated by a portico, recalling an ancient triumphal arch, consisted of five arches on piers framed by freestanding columns. Following this portico was an unusual space consisting of a large room divided into three passages separated by colonnades. Attempting to re-create the form and sequence of spaces of an ancient *domus*, as scholars have noted, Giuliano proposed, probably for the first time, a vestibule (conceived as a portico) followed by an atrium divided by columns into three naves, which may reflect an erudite interpretation of the atrium based on a misunderstanding of its description in Vitruvius’s *De architectura* (IV, 7, 1–2). Vitruvius referred to wings (*alae*) in the atrium that seem to have been later interpreted as side aisles like those commonly found in a basilica. The first to define the *alae* explicitly as such was the erudite architect Fra Giovanni Giocondo da Verona (in his 1511 edition of Vitruvius), who may have based his understanding on Giuliano da Sangallo’s earlier plan.¹⁸ The three-aisle form can also be seen in Antonio da Sangallo the Younger’s interpretation of the atrium of Palazzo Farnese in Rome, as well as in later examples.¹⁹

If the detail of the atrium demonstrates Giuliano’s knowledge of Vitruvius, other parts of the project show his familiarity with the other fundamental text on architecture of his time, Leon Battista Alberti’s *De re aedificatoria*, written in the mid-fifteenth century and printed in Florence in 1485. Reflecting Alberti’s prescriptions on the core of the house, the center of the palace is formed of a large central sunken courtyard, resembling an ancient amphitheater transformed into a rectangular rather than oval shape, surrounded by steps with access points that recall the *vomitoria*—that is, the passages situated behind the tiers of seats in ancient stadia.

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¹⁶ For further details, see S. Salmi and L. Clovis, ‘“Il palazzo”: Giuliano da Sangallo e la creazione de “il modello delle vie della vita”’.


¹⁸ For a discussion of these and other interpretations of the atrium, see S. Salmi, ‘Giuliano da Sangallo and the “Villa of the King of Naples”’, in B. H.积水 (ed.), Giuliano da Sangallo: The Man Behind the Buildings (Vienna, 2005), pp. 141–53.

and amphitheaters. In line with the entrance there is a large fountain (or possibly a statue on a pedestal), and at the end of the building the main hall or sala, like the sala at the Medici villa of Poggio a Caiano, is covered by a barrel vault. This central axis culminates in a centrally planned chapel that anticipates projects by Giuliano executed just after 1488, such as the Church of the Madonna dell’Umiltà in Pistoia and the sacristy of the Church of Santo Spirito in Florence.20 To either side of the central axis we find six apartments, four identical and mirror images of each other and two larger ones flanking the short ends of the rectangular courtyard, located in the center of the two sides of the palace, together with gardens and loggias. The doors and windows of the single spaces are aligned, and the services are located at distance from the more representative rooms. At the same time, the hierarchy of the rooms within the single apartments reflects the sequence of spaces with different forms and dimensions of the ancient thermal baths, which would have generated a succession of images for the viewer in motion. The dimensions of Sangallo’s plan are truly monumental: each side of the square base was to measure 194 meters, an unheard-of scale in the late fifteenth century and one that recalls the great complexes of ancient Rome, such as the imperial baths or the so-called Palace of Maecenas on the Quirinal Hill.21 We cannot, however, discount that Giuliano might have been aware of enormous royal residential complexes built at this time both within and beyond the Italian Peninsula, and the scale of his Neapolitan project might have been partly inspired by them.22

Cultural Diplomacy and the Exchange of Gifts

In his life of Lorenzo de’ Medici, Niccolò Valori recounts how King Ferrante, desiring to build a new royal residence for himself, requested and obtained from Lorenzo the model of a new palace.21 A portrait of Lorenzo painted at the end of the sixteenth century by Girolamo Macchietti depicts a letter ostensibly sent by the king of Naples to Florence on 4 April 1488 mentioning specific features that he wanted for his new royal residence. This story, however, is clearly an ingenious invention.24 There is no specific documentary evidence to support the notion that the project actually originated in a formal request sent from Ferrante to Lorenzo. Recently published evidence reveals, however, that Lorenzo had been
aware of Ferrante’s desire to have a new palace for nearly a year. In August 1487 the Ferrarese ambassador in Florence, Aldobrandino Guidoni, wrote: “Bernardino, chancellor of the Lord Duke of Calabria, departed yesterday morning, which was 29 August; he has left a copy of the trial documents against the barons, and brought two beautiful mules for the Magnificent Lorenzo; Lorenzo is also making a model of a palace for his Majesty the King [Ferrante], which he says he wants to create to rehouse His Majesty, who no longer wishes to reside in the castle in Naples.”

Guidoni’s letter takes us to the heart of the mechanisms of informal international diplomacy that characterized the political relationship between the Kingdom of Naples and the Florentine regime, in which Ferrante and Lorenzo were accustomed to exchanging the finest products of the territories that they respectively ruled. Together with the thoroughbred mules, which the Aragonese valued highly, Ferrante had sent Lorenzo a printed copy of the proceedings of the trial against the two leading barons who had rebelled against him: Antonello Petrucci and Francesco Coppola. The proceedings, printed in a small folio volume dated 14 July 1487, represented a masterpiece of typography. Ferrante, an enthusiastic promoter of the art of printing, had produced what is perhaps the first example of a printed legal account of this kind. At the cost of 1,450 ducats, two hundred copies were made, destined for the leading rulers in Italy and throughout Europe. Lorenzo would surely have been interested in, and possibly taken aback by, not only the publication’s innovative character but also its contents. Following the official account of the proceedings, the volume chronicled and presented direct testimonies about the cruel executions meted out to Antonello Petrucci and Francesco Coppola, both of whom Lorenzo knew very well, having been their guest when he stayed in Naples. More important, he was also in debt to them for considerable sums of money.

Lorenzo reciprocated in an equally original way, by sending Ferrante an actual model—rather than a mere drawing—of a palace, together with the architect who designed it. Up to that moment, the long tradition of exchanging presents between Naples and Florence had included gifts of drawings, paintings, sculptures, and works of literature, as well as singers, clowns, and preachers, but never an actual architectural model; furthermore, diplomatic gifts were usually presented by humanists, merchants, or ecclesiastics who had been specially recruited to accompany the official ambassadors. This exchange thus created a double novelty: an architectural model as the object of the diplomatic gift and the architect himself as the person delivering this gift. Giorgio Vasari’s account reveals how exceptional it was that such an important political and cultural mission was delegated to an architect by emphasizing the wonder with which Giuliano was received in Naples.

As we will see, Giuliano da Maiano, another architect, carried two architectural models from Florence to Naples in 1488. This was not part of a diplomatic mission, however; it was the result of a specific commission from Alfonso, Duke of Calabria. Sangallo, in contrast, arrived in the kingdom not as a mere master builder with the obligation of carrying out the project but as an informal ambassador sent by Lorenzo with the intellectual responsibility of illustrating his design and explaining—as Vasari recounts—“the difficulties that he had faced.” A similar scenario would be repeated in 1492 when Giuliano carried a model of Lorenzo de’ Medici’s suburban villa of Poggio a Caiano as a diplomatic gift for the Duke Ludovico il Moro in Milan. In the Milanese gift, Giuliano was presenting a model of a totally Florentine project, the construction of which was already well under way. In the case of the project for the king of Naples, he was sent not only to export the Florentine architectural language but also, I would maintain, to negotiate the final features of the project with the Neapolitan royals.

The Projects of Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, and Their Importance

When Giuliano arrived in Naples with the model of the new royal palace in 1488, three building projects were already under way in the city for Ferrante’s son, Alfonso, Duke of Calabria: one to refashion Castel Capuano, his main residence in Naples; another to construct the Duchesa, the luxurious dépendence built in the garden of the castle; and a third to build Poggioreale, a suburban villa a few miles outside the city (Figure 5, nos. 2, 3, 6; Figure 6). From a building account dated 1488, it is clear that all three projects were being carried out simultaneously and that all were supervised by the Florentine architect Giuliano da Maiano, whose name appears on almost every page of the document, alternately organizing the transport of ancient columns found in Naples to Poggioreale, supervising the painting of the rooms of the apartments in Castel Capuano “a lo modo fiorentino” (in the Florentine manner), and providing the nails to hang tapestries on the walls of the Duchesa.

Giuliano da Maiano had already worked in Naples in the period 1485–86 on rebuilding the old Angevin city walls. He had been sent from Florence in response to Alfonso’s request to Lorenzo de’ Medici for an architect and therefore occupied a different role from the one filled by Giuliano da Sangallo a few years later. The work on the walls had to be interrupted in 1486 because of the Barons’ Revolt; it was resumed once royal power had been reestablished in 1487. For the first time, the new wall circuit included Castel Capuano within the city perimeter, and Alfonso was therefore able to view his residence as a potential palace rather than as a fortress. He also conceived it as the center of a new
urban system that included the Duchesca and Poggioreale, as well as a renovated Porta Capuana and Santa Maria dei Martiri, a new church dedicated to the martyrs killed by the Turks during the sack of Otranto in 1480 (see Figure 5, nos. 2–6). From the diary of the Duke of Calabria we know that on 17 February 1487 Alfonso “gave orders to [start] building” and sent for “Messer Juliano [da Maiano] draftsman [designatore] in Florence.” This event initiated a period of extensive architectural exchange between Naples and Florence: requests for projects and the sending of drawings, architectural models, and architects would culminate in the months from summer 1487 to 1488 and with the arrival of Giuliano da Sangallo with his model of the new royal palace for King Ferrante, Alfonso’s father.

Between the interruption of building works in 1485 and their renewal in 1487 something very important took place that has not been given its due significance in the architectural literature. On 31 August 1486, Alfonso stayed at Borgo San Sepolcro, where he received a special visit from Lorenzo de’ Medici. The meeting with Lorenzo was part of an extensive tour that Alfonso had begun with his troops in order to confront the rebel barons headed by the Count of Caiazzo, Roberto Sanseverino. During this military campaign, from December 1485 to December of the following year, the Duke of Calabria crossed the territories belonging to the pope and, after having built a wooden bridge and a bastion on the river Tiber near Monterotondo, was put up as a guest in the Orsini castle at Bracciano. After traveling past the ancient baths of Viterbo and the cities of Montepulciano and Cortona, Alfonso stayed for nearly two months at the Orsini residence in Pitigliano. Even after he had defeated his enemies in Montorio on 7 May 1486, Alfonso continued his tour of the countryside, remaining in the area to the north of Rome, until he went to meet Lorenzo in Borgo San Sepolcro at the end of August.

Among the many things Lorenzo and Alfonso discussed on this occasion, they probably talked about architecture, not only as a generic interest they had in common but also as something on which they were actively collaborating. Lorenzo would have wanted to be updated on the works being carried out in Naples, for which he had provided the architect Giuliano da Maiano, and Alfonso on his side must have been interested in the new building site at Poggio a Caiano: only a few months earlier, in April 1486, Alfonso had sent Lorenzo thirty of his best bullocks to do the plowing of the dairy farm. It may have been on that occasion too that Lorenzo awakened Alfonso’s interest with the appealing idea that he too could have an all’antica suburban villa of the same type as Poggio a Caiano (see Figure 6).

After having met Lorenzo, Alfonso continued his political, military, and architectural tour. In September 1486 the Duke of Calabria was received at Castel Bolognese, the residence of the ruler of Bologna, Giovanni II Bentivoglio; he then passed through Rimini and finally stayed in the Palazzo dell’Imperatore in Pesaro. From there Alfonso went to visit the convent-fortress and pilgrimage center of Santa Maria di Loreto. From Loreto, the duke would have also admired the new work Giuliano da Maiano had undertaken in the convent after the architect had to interrupt his work in the kingdom. From Loreto, Alfonso visited the Benedictine monastery near Giulianova and then the city of Giulianova itself, which had been newly founded in 1470 by the Duke of Atri, Giulio Antonio Acquaviva, thanks to the privileges granted by Alfonso himself and by his father, Ferrante. Moving along the Adriatic coast, he then went to Puglia to check on his territories and his barons, returning to Naples only in December 1486.
During this tour, Alfonso had the chance to visit and admire the principal residences and other buildings constructed for the rulers of the various states in the Italian Peninsula, as well as the major monasteries that were on his route; this experience must have encouraged him to recommence the works of urban renewal that he had begun in Naples before the Barons’ Revolt. The order calling “the Florentine Giuliano” to recommence building was issued by Alfonso only a month and a half after his return to Naples. The Giuliano in question was certainly Giuliano da Maiano. In several payments made between 29 May and 8 August, the duke compensated Maiano “for some drawings” through the services of the Florentine banker Giuliano Gondi. At the end of August, da Maiano left Florence for Naples preceded by two models for a palace, perhaps both for Poggioreale or possibly for the double complex formed by Castel Capuano and the Duchesca. When Giuliano da Maiano left for Naples to supervise three building projects for Alfonso of Calabria, work on the model for Ferrante’s royal palace was still under way in Florence, according to the letter dated 30 August 1487 written by the Ferrarese ambassador. The palace for the king of Naples would thus be the fourth Aragonese building project, carried out in parallel with the three for Alfonso. It is in this light that Giuliano da Sangallo’s project should be interpreted—that is, in the context of the other building projects that were already under construction in Naples as well as Castel Nuovo, the old and by then inadequate royal residence (Figure 7).

**Sangallo’s Palace Plan, Castel Nuovo, and Other Royal Residences**

Founded in 1272 by King Charles I of Anjou, Castel Nuovo had been rebuilt in the mid-fifteenth century by King Alfonso I of Aragon, partly reusing the medieval structure of the Angevin castle. Reconciling the wide range of practical and ceremonial functions related to the life of the state and the life of the court was a common problem in the architectural efforts of the Renaissance rulers who tried to refashion their residences as princely palaces. As the major dynastic residence of a sovereign who ruled over half the territory of the entire Italian Peninsula, Castel Nuovo presented an extreme version of such problems. It required continuous updating and rethinking of its spaces in order to respond adequately to court functionality and at the same time represent the integrity of monarchical power.

While rebuilding Castel Nuovo, Alfonso I eagerly sought information on the residences that other rulers were creating. In 1456 he engaged in a genteel competition on the art of building with the Duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza, trying to find out from the Milanese ambassadors in Naples the main features and measurements of the castle of Porta Giovia in Milan, also under construction in those years, as well as details of the other castles in the duchy. Thirty years later, King Ferrante I and his son Alfonso would have certainly looked with interest at other dynastic palaces that were recently built or still under construction as they began to bring their own residences up to date. As noted above, Duke Alfonso had personally visited several fortresses and princely residences during his tour in the central and northern Italian territories in 1486. He might have known of others through his diplomatic and artistic contacts. For example, the dynastic residence of the major enemy of the Kingdom of Naples, the new and magnificent royal palace of the Topkapı in Constantinople, built by the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II between 1459 and 1478, was surely known at the Aragonese court. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the kingdom had become the leading outpost in the defense of the Christian West against the Ottomans. The need for up-to-date information about the kingdom’s opponents had become an
element of vital importance, as shown by the proliferation of historical and literary accounts on the usages and customs of the Turks and on the figure of Mehmed II. Furthermore, behind the historical hostility, diplomatic contacts and commercial exchanges between Naples and Constantinople had always been continuous, both before and after the Turkish conquest of Otranto and the Turks’ subsequent defeat and expulsion in 1481. In certain periods Ferrante’s peace overtures to the sultan were also reinforced by diplomatic gifts that would have contributed to Mehmed’s notable art patronage. In 1478, the very year the Topkapı was being completed, Ferrante sent his artist Costanzo de Moysis to the Ottoman court, probably to assist in the decoration of the palace. Officially knighted by the sultan while in Constantinople, Costanzo executed a portrait medal of Mehmed as well as other works of art before he returned to Naples after the sultan’s death in 1481. Accounts of the palace from ambassadors, spies, and merchants would have been helpful, but the report of an artist would have been even more valuable and accurate. Once back in the kingdom, the same Costanzo de Moysis was engaged in important royal commissions. In 1488 he was involved in the decoration of Castel Capuano and the Duchesca, both residences that, as we have seen, were being renovated at the same time Giuliano da Sangallo’s project for the large royal palace was presented to the king. Seen from Naples, Mehmed’s palace would have seemed a magnificent residence. With its unmatched dimensions and interior splendor overlooking two seas, the Topkapi would have provided an inspiring example of a palace conceived to serve simultaneously as a stage set for the representation of dynastic power, an administrative center for a vast empire, and a residence for the royal family. The Neapolitan royals would have likely felt stimulated to compete. The princely residences Alfonso had visited throughout Italy and the accounts of the Topkapi would have made the Neapolitan Castel Nuovo seem even more inadequate and outdated.

Despite the efforts made first by Alfonso I and then by Ferrante to modernize its architecture and improve its comfort, Castel Nuovo never managed to lose the defensive character of a fortress. Furthermore, Castel Nuovo was a congested building that included prisons, part of the law courts, and several workshops that produced both necessities and luxury objects (such as majolica vases and manuscripts) for the court. Such inadequacies must have caused serious problems for Ferrante. During this period, under both Alfonso I and Ferrante, important officials and foreign guests who visited Naples were accommodated in the modern and
comfortable palaces of certain barons, such as the Count of Maddaloni, Diomede Carafa, rather than in Castel Nuovo. Lorenzo himself had stayed in the palace of the royal secretary, Antonello Petrucci, in 1466, and in 1479 he stayed in the palace of the Count of Alife, Pascasio Diaz Garlon. During his Neapolitan visits, Lorenzo must have understood how inadequate the castle was as a residence for a modern prince and, at the same time, must have become aware of the requirements of the Neapolitan court, of its ceremonies and of the tastes of the local elite. Such information would be useful for Giuliano da Sangallo in his work designing a new royal residence that would enhance court functionality. Seen from this point of view, Giuliano’s design for a palace for the king of Naples can be interpreted as a radical rethinking of the type and arrangement of spaces that were already present in Castel Nuovo. Sangallo’s new building would be capable of fulfilling both the ceremonial rituals of the court and the functions of a modern reggia.

If the scale of ancient buildings such as the Palace of Maecenas and the imperial baths served as inspiration for Sangallo’s project, it is equally true that the goal of building a royal palace on the monumental scale of a castle was a crucial stimulus. Sangallo’s new palace would have to accommodate the requirements of the large and complex court of the only kingdom that existed in the Italian Peninsula in the Quattrocento. Furthermore, the gigantic scale on which the project was conceived seems to have been dictated by Castel Nuovo itself (Figure 8). A quick comparison of the dimensions of the two buildings supports such a hypothesis. Not only is Sangallo’s new palace significantly larger, but also each of the main elements of its design outmeasures the corresponding element in Castel Nuovo. The overall length of each side of the palace designed by Giuliano, according to the metrical scale that appears in all the three versions of the project, is approximately 194 meters, whereas the sides of the existing castle alone (i.e., without the original gardens and the external fortifications that surround it) measure about 130 meters. According to the measurement on Sangallo’s plans, the courtyard (cavaedium) measures 78 by 34 meters; the polygonal courtyard of Castel Nuovo measures approximately 50 by 50 meters (Figure 9). Compared to the 26 meters of each of the four sides of the Gran Sala in Castel Nuovo, Sangallo’s Gran Sala has equally impressive measurements: 53 by 20 meters.

The huge scale of the project raises the problem of where such a monumental construction could have been built; Ferrante, Lorenzo, and Giuliano must have had a possible site in mind from the outset. The highly built-up character of the historical center of Naples on one side and the presence of the sea and of hills on the other leaves the area to the west of...
the city, which at the time had not yet been developed, as the only possibility for a palace of such dimensions. It is possible that the palace was intended to be erected approximately on the site where fifty years later the Spanish viceroy Pedro de Toledo would build the new royal palace—that is, beyond the gardens of Castel Nuovo (Figure 10). Such a location would find an echo in Vasari's account, according to which the new palace was immediately begun near Castel Nuovo; it would also have re-created the relationship between the arx (fortress) and the reggia described by Leon Battista Alberti in the De re aedificatoria, leaving Castel Nuovo as the arx, with the sole function of a defensive fortress, whereas the new palace would have been a veritable princely reggia, connected to the arx through the castle's preexisting gardens. The concepts of Lorenzo and Giuliano’s design, inspired by Alberti’s treatise, would have been easily understood in the Neapolitan context, where Albertian culture was well known. Alberti’s visit to Naples in 1465 as a guest of Filippo Strozzi had been very influential, and copies of the De re aedificatoria circulated among the Neapolitan court. Following the topography of the site, the palace would probably have been oriented to have the main façade facing toward the ancient city and the main apartments toward the sea.

With the knowledge of the plan and distribution of rooms of Castel Nuovo, Giuliano’s project was able to satisfy the requirements of the court ceremonial. For example, the Gran Sala had to be directly connected with the courtyard, the royal apartments, and the palatine chapel, so that the king could go directly from his apartments to the Gran Sala, where the barons would be waiting for him, and from there proceed to the chapel. The presence of several apartments in addition to those of the king on one side and those of the queen on the other, the division of the king’s residential apartments into seven rooms of different dimensions, and the position of the chapel on axis with the main entrance to the palace are all elements that already existed in Castel Nuovo. Giuliano proposed them anew in his design with a better organization of spaces and in a new all’antica style, replacing, for example, the monumental Catalan stellar vault of the Gran Sala in Castel Nuovo with a large barrel vault similar to the one in Poggio a Caiano and envisaging a central-plan chapel in place of the Angevin chapel of Santa Barbara (see Figures 8 and 9). Furthermore, the basis villae envisaged by Giuliano, in which the residential quarters are elevated on a high base, may have been conceived as a solution that would have brought order to the provisional structures, such as the dwellings for slaves, cages for animals, and stables that crowded the moat surrounding the castle (see Figures 7 and 8). The conception of the façade insofar as it can be deduced from the plan seems to reflect and modernize the triumphal and theatrical features of the magnificent arch in marble built by Alfonso I at the entrance to Castel Nuovo, consisting of two superimposed all’antica triumphal arches divided by a frieze showing the king’s entrance into Naples in the guise of a Roman emperor. From the plan, it is clear that Giuliano conceived a façade with freestanding columns on pedestals that frame arches on piers, a typical feature of triumphal arches that, according to Alberti, was commonly found in ancient theaters and amphitheaters, as well as on the façades of ancient palaces. Probably the arch was intended to be
crowned by a tall attic, as in ancient triumphal arches; this would have allowed the insertion of figurative and narrative panels similar to the reliefs covering Castel Nuovo’s arch, which we can imagine as similar to those with which Giuliano had already experimented in the courtyard of the palace of Bartolomeo Scala in Florence.\footnote{71}

The most innovative element of Giuliano’s project is the courtyard, conceived as a rectangular version of an ancient amphitheater with a shallow \textit{cavaedium} at the center surrounded by steps. The courtyard had been one of the weakest points of Castel Nuovo from the beginning: already when the castle was still under construction it had been strongly criticized by Francesco Sforza’s ambassadors for its small size, which was in sharp contrast to the imposing appearance of the exterior (see Figures 8 and 9).\footnote{72} From later sources it also emerges that the courtyard did not offer an adequate space for the theatrical performances and feasts attended by large numbers of guests that were held there. For example, on the occasion of the wedding of the Duchess of Milan in 1485 a vast crowd of guests was crushed by the collapse of the external staircase leading to the Gran Sala, resulting in injuries to arms, heads, legs, and noses.\footnote{73} The palace proposed by Giuliano and Lorenzo was to include a T-shaped courtyard of dimensions superior to those of the Castel Nuovo courtyard. This feature would have satisfied not only the \textit{all’antica} taste of the Aragonese royals but also the ceremonial requirements of the monarchy. The sunken courtyard (\textit{cavaedium}) at the center offered a space for presentations and ceremonies that could be easily followed by members of the court, who could be accommodated in comfort and order on the surrounding steps. The presence of the \textit{scalaria} (steps leading to seats) and \textit{vomitoria} (intermediate passages), inspired by ancient amphitheaters, would ensure public order and give easier access to the seating. The part of the courtyard in front of the Gran Sala would have overlooked this space, like a real stage where the king would appear to his subjects, waiting in the \textit{cavaedium}, in a kind of epiphany. This would be similar to the occasions in Castel Nuovo when he appeared on the triumphal balcony from the Gran Sala.\footnote{74} The façade of the Gran Sala at the rear of the

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure10.jpg}
\caption{Hypothetical reconstruction of the site for the new royal palace in Naples (elaboration by author and Federica Ferrara).}
\end{figure}
courtyard recalled the same association between theatrical and triumphal motifs—formed of freestanding columns framing arches on pilasters—that is found on the external front of the palace. Together with the fountain (or possibly a statue) and peristyle of the court in front of it, the façade of the Gran Sala would thus have functioned as a permanent frons scenae (proscenium) for the public appearances of the royal family and for official celebrations, as well as for theatrical performances (see Figure 4).75

The Amphitheater Courtyard and Its Antique Precedents

One of the most innovative aspects of Sangallo’s Neapolitan palace design, the sunken courtyard with its theater-like seats, is also one whose origin seems tied to a Neapolitan context. A similar courtyard is found in Giuliano da Maiano’s Poggioreale and Duchesca, both designed for Alfonso, Duke of Calabria.76 The evident similarity between the courtyard of the palace designed by Giuliano da Sangallo for the king of Naples and those of Poggioreale and the Duchesca raises the question of who was responsible for such an original feature, which we will see again in Sangallo’s later designs for the temporary theater on the Capitoline Hill of 1513 and for the palace in Via Laura, dated to the second decade of the sixteenth century (Figures 11 and 12).77

Considering the evidence, I believe that the original idea of the courtyard may have been the result of shared reflection, matured during the summer of 1487 in Florence, among Lorenzo and his two architects, Giuliano da Sangallo and Giuliano da Maiano. Furthermore, this particular form of courtyard had not yet emerged in projects intended for the Florentine Medici. It therefore seems to have been conceived as a response to a complex cultural context of assumptions, requirements, and habits of attending theatrical spectacles and visiting baths that were shared by the Neapolitan and Florentine elites. The feature of the courtyard with descending steps seems to have been adjusted to the different natures of the two projects—that is, the need to host the performance of crowded triumphal celebrations in Ferrante’s royal palace and the need to accommodate guests at refined banquets in Alfonso’s suburban villas.

The rectilinear amphitheater might have originated in the well-established practice of installing theatrical spaces in the courtyards, chapel, and rooms of Castel Nuovo, where it had been the custom since the time of Alfonso I to erect temporary rectangular theaters for performances involving machines and ephemeral constructions, as well as those of major court artists and poets.78 Similar performances were also held in Castel Capuano, especially after the 1488 renovation, and in the residences of the local elites.79 The passion for all'antica theatrical representations in Naples is further shown by the ceremony of Alfonso’s coronation in the Duomo on 8 May 1494: for this large-scale spectacular event the new king commissioned the architect Francesco di Giorgio Martini to transform the cathedral into a vast all’antica theater, where wooden palchi would accommodate eight thousand spectators seated like “the ancient Romans in the theaters.”80 The description and plan of the coronation ceremony in the diary of Johannes Burchardus, the papal master of ceremonies, indicates that the theater was placed in the Duomo’s transept and had the structure of a rectangular amphitheater (Figure 13). Even though the shape of the Duomo’s theater was probably dictated by the constraints of the site, it is important to note the similarity of the all’antica theater in the cathedral to the ones designed by Giuliano for the royal palace and those built in Poggioreale and in the Duchesca.81

In addition to all’antica theatrical practices, the rectangular sunken courtyard surrounded by a colonnade common to the projects for the royal palace, Poggioreale, and the Duchesca may also have been inspired by Roman baths.82 A square courtyard surrounded by steps that descend into it similar to
those of the Neapolitan projects is known through a sketch made by Francesco di Giorgio Martini around the same time, identified as the “Baths of Trajan” in Pozzuoli (Figure 14). Another thermal complex near Lake Averno located in the Phlegraean Fields west of Naples, shown in another drawing by the same architect, might also have influenced the two designs (Figure 15). The sketch outlines a rectangular plan with another rectangle, possibly a pool, roughly centered within it, with descending ramps and couches on one side, a setting that would have evoked Pliny’s description of the banquets in his Villa Tuscolana, where guests lay on beds around a marble basin filled with water and with floating plates. Such a thermal complex, together with the Plinian passage, might have furnished the ancient precedents for the setting of banquets in the courtyard at the Duchesca, where the duke and his friends, like ancient Romans, would eat lying around the water, and at Poggioreale, in what was identified as a coenatio (dining room) hidden in the gardens, where the hosts reclined on couches as they drank from goblets that floated on the water, every now and then surprised by sudden floods. Together with ancient literary sources, the baths in the Phlegraean Fields might have inspired the banquet described in one of Lorenzo’s poems, the Simposio, where the guests lie on couches and gaze in admiration at floating goblets.

The therapeutic effects of the air and the thermal baths of the Phlegraean Fields had been renowned and celebrated since ancient times. Having never been abandoned throughout the Middle Ages, the various ancient thermal complexes of the area still preserved their original structure and decorations in the fifteenth century and were frequented by the Aragonese royal family, the local nobility, and their foreign guests. The thermal pools and salubrious retreats of the Phlegraean Fields were illustrated by guides and celebrated in literary works by the court humanists, such as the collection of poems Baiae composed by Giovanni Pontano. The importance of these thermal pools, and of all’antica bathing at the Aragonese court, is evidenced by the illuminated copy commissioned in 1471 by Duke Alfonso of Pietro da Eboli’s De Balneis Puteolanis, an early thirteenth-century poem in Latin describing some thirty-five baths in the Bay of Pozzuoli and the diseases cured by each. The thermal baths are also found in rare bathing scenes represented in the illuminations of a manuscript produced in Naples in the 1470s. Here we find depictions of ancient baths such as Tritoli and Tripergole where all’antica bathers swim, rest, and change within colonnaded rooms or below barrel-vaulted halls completely covered with original hexagonal stucco coffers identical to the ones in Baia that attracted Francesco di Giorgio’s attention at the end of the fifteenth century.
It is easy to imagine that during one of his stays in Naples, Lorenzo might have seen one of the thermal complexes in the Phlegraean Fields. There he would have been able to bathe while appreciating the original architecture and stucco decoration of the building.93 Baths like the celebrated one at Tripogole, one of the royal family’s favorite sites, might have reminded him of a similar space divided into three rooms that Alberti describes in book 8 of the De re aedificatoria.94 In the same description of the thermal complex, Alberti includes a large courtyard surrounded by steps as if it were a theater. His description recalls not only the form but also the interplay of elements that are common to both ancient bath architecture and the sunken amphitheaters in the courtyards at the centers of the projects of the royal palace, Poggioreale, and the Duchesca.95 The new courtyard proposed for the royal palace and Poggioreale seems to be the result of a cultural mediation in which Lorenzo, thanks to his architectural skills and his direct knowledge of the customs of the Neapolitan elite, served as an interpreter between his architects working in Florence and the Neapolitan royal family.

Giuliano’s da Sangallo’s Study and Use of the Antiquities of the Kingdom of Naples

As shown by his drawings, Giuliano’s stay in Naples gave him time to study the thermal complexes of the Phlegraean Fields and other antiquities of the kingdom.96 According to Christian Hülsen’s reconstruction of the internal history of the Taccuino Senese and of the Vatican Codex Barberiniano, all the drawings of the antiquities of southern Italy relate to Giuliano’s visit to Naples in 1488.97 Even if some of the drawings in the Vatican Codex appear to be later in date, they are probably fair copies of sketches done during that visit. Furthermore, I would maintain that most of Sangallo’s studies of ancient monuments in the kingdom contained in the two codices, as well as a drawing in the Uffizi (UA 2045), reflect a desire to work out specific architectural problems that seem connected to his design of the royal palace. Several drawings of antiquities Giuliano executed during his stay in the kingdom may be linked to his need to define the details of the project. In this respect a small drawing in the bottom right corner of fol. 27 of the Taccuino Senese labeled “Le grade del Chuliseo da Chapua Vechia” illustrates the steps of the amphitheater in Santa Maria Maggiore Capua Vetere (Figure 16).98 This drawing is the earliest evidence we have for the study of one of the most important amphitheaters of the Roman Empire located on the original ancient site of Capua (i.e., before the city was refounded on a new site in the ninth century). We cannot be sure that Sangallo did not execute further drawings of the remains of
this monumental structure, as he did, for example, for the Colosseum in Rome. The sketch reveals that the amphitheater stairs were an element of considerable interest for Sangallo when he visited the site. Giuliano may have seen this detail as a solution for the steps of the new theatrical courtyard in the royal palace, a solution that could also be used in Poggioreale, where the courtyard was under construction at the time.99

Similar to his focus on the steps of the Capuan amphitheater, Giuliano appears to have paid close attention to the profiles of the column bases of the now destroyed Temple of the Dioscuri in Naples. Despite the fact that he had before him a rare example of a still-standing ancient temple, he chose to focus on the detail of the base of the columns. In this case he was probably attracted by the peculiarity of a receding dentil between the upper scotia and the torus (Figure 17);
such a detail was a variant of the attic base found very rarely
that had been reused in the internal arch built by Ferrante
at the entrance of Castel Nuovo. It is possible that Giuliano
intended to propose this detail in the new reggia.100

It is possible that Sangallo brought a preliminary plan
of the reggia with him corresponding to the one on fol. 39
of the Taccuino Senese, and that during his stay he began
to transform it into a detailed design for execution, search-
ing for solutions among the local antiquities that would
enable him to define his project and make it more in line
with Neapolitan taste. A trace of this way of proceeding
seems to emerge from the royal palace plan on fol. 8r of
the Codex Barberiniano, where the form of the palatine
chapel reproposes the so-called Temple of the Cumean
Sibyl on Lake Averno, drawn on the same page.101

Giuliano’s survey of the monument and its redeployment
is significant as the first visual record that identifies the
thermal baths on this site as the Temple of the Sibyl. It also
reflects the interest in these ancient remains among the
Aragonese literary elite, who regarded Lake Averno as the
original site of the Sibyl’s grotto described by Virgil in
book 6 of the Aeneid.102

The notable attention Giuliano devoted in his sketch-
books to mausoleums, thermal baths, and circular temples
of the Kingdom of Naples may derive not only from his generic
interest in central-plan buildings but also from the need he
felt to define the form and aspect of the palatine chapel in the
royal palace. Giuliano drew the main thermal baths and
temples of the Phlegraean Fields (such as those on Lake
Averno and in Cumna, Tripergo, the so-called Temple of
Mercury, and the Temple of Venus in Baia) as well as the
mausoleums he encountered on the road between Naples
and Rome (such as that of Lucius Munatius Plancus in
Gaeta). In this context, Giuliano’s Uffizi drawing UA 2045
recto (Figure 18) and verso seems essential to the study of
centralized structures in the Kingdom of Naples.104 The
sheet brings together drawings of centralized buildings and
is probably a fair-copy compilation of drawings executed on-
site. It may have functioned as a catalog of possible solutions
to show a patron, in this case the king of Naples. On the
verso we find two circular monuments on the Appian Way,
the baths of Tripergo and the mausoleum known as Carceri
Vecchie in Capua.105 On the recto Giuliano draws the pur-
ported study of the ancient Roman writer Marcus Terentius
Varro near Cassino, the so-called temple of the Sibyl on Lake
Averno and at the center of the sheet, an octagonal temple in
“Capoa vecia” (see Figure 18).106 The latter seems to have
particularly interested Sangallo, who not only drew the plan
but also attempted to reconstruct the building’s original
appearance on both the exterior and interior.107 The outside
of the monument is marked by shell niches separated by pro-
jecting columns and surmounted by an octagonal drum. The
temple terminates in a dome and an octagonal lantern above
decorated with pilasters and topped by a conical roof sur-
mounted by a ball. In the interior, columns on high pedestals

Figure 18 Giuliano da Sangallo, plan and elevations of a “temple” in
Santa Maria Maggiore Capua Vetere (center), plan of “Varro’s study” in
Cassino (top), and plan of the Temple of the Sybil on Lake Averno
(bottom) (Florence, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, UA 2045r).

Figure 19 View of the remains of the so-called Villa of Cicero in Formia
(Poliorama Pittoresco 9 [11 January 1845], 185).
separate the eight bays, which bear alternating pedimented doors and aedicules in the fascia connecting the capitals.

In the fifteenth century several ancient circular buildings survived in the area; evidence comes from drawings by later antiquarians and architects who visited the area just after Giuliano. He would not have failed to note how ancient circular constructions similar to the ones he had seen in the ancient Capua, in the Phlegraean Fields, and along the Appian Way had already provided models for new buildings at the beginning of the fifteenth century, such as the Caracciolo del Sole Chapel (ca. 1428–42), built behind the high altar of the monumental Church of San Giovanni a Carbonara in Naples. In addition, the triumphal arches that were still visible at the time, such as the Arch of Marcus Antonius at Aquino and the Arch of Trajan at Benevento, encouraged Sangallo’s personal interest in this type of building. Trajan’s arch in Benevento had already served as a model for the arch at the entrance of Castel Nuovo, and the ample array of figural reliefs with which it was covered could have provided Giuliano with a repertory of images for reuse on the attics of the external and interior façades of the new royal palace, reinforcing the connection between the Aragonese royal family and the Spanish-born Roman emperor who had been at the center of Alfonso I’s cultural propaganda.

He may have been aware as well that in proposing an atrium with three naves for the Neapolitan reggia, he was not only attempting a re-creation of the entrance of the ancient domus but also introducing an element that would be familiar to the Aragonese royal family. This type of atrium had strong connections to an ancient element in the so-called Villa of Cicero in Formia (Figure 19), a building very well known at the Neapolitan court, given that it featured in one of the exemplary episodes recounted by Panormita in his life of Alfonso. The use of a structure of this type within the new royal palace would have therefore been extremely familiar to King Ferrante and Duke Alfonso.

**Traces of Giuliano’s Activities in Naples**

Giuliano not only studied the monumental buildings of antiquity in the kingdom but also visited the palaces of the Neapolitan elite. This is clear from the drawings of the Bacchic relief divided between fol. 11v and fol. 28 in the Taccuino Senese (Figure 20), which can be identified with a marble relief originally in the collection of Diomede Carafa and transferred to the Vatican Museums in the eighteenth century (Figure 21). Carafa’s notable collection of antiquities was already familiar to Lorenzo de’ Medici, who had personally contributed to its growth through the gift of important pieces, such as a colossal bronze of a horse’s head sculpted by Donatello and seven ancient bronze statues.

On his visits to Neapolitan private collections, Giuliano would have been held in esteem as an expert on antiquities. This is made evident by a letter of 24 May 1488 sent by Francesco Nacci, the head of the Medici branch in Naples, to Niccolò Michelozzi in Florence. The letter references a plan to show Giuliano the torso of an ancient statue that had come to light in the ancient center of Naples during work on the palace of the Count of Venafro, Scipione Pandone. The intent in showing the torso to the architect was to get him to comment on the quality of the piece and advise on the possibility of sending it as a gift to Lorenzo.
This letter is important for several reasons. Even if we know that at the beginning of May 1488 Giuliano had already left Naples, the letter suggests that he was probably expected to return soon to the capital of the kingdom. Furthermore, it demonstrates that Giuliano’s antiquarian knowledge was already held in high regard long before the more famous incident in Rome where he was called upon, together with Michelangelo, to identify the newly excavated sculpture of the Laocoon unearthed in 1506. It also clearly reveals that he was in Naples in the role of a cultural ambassador for Lorenzo and was in close contact with both the members of the Neapolitan elite families and the Florentine community living in Naples, who shared commercial as well as antiquarian interests.

It was in the kingdom’s capital that Sangallo befriended the Florentine merchant and banker Giuliano Gondi. The Gondi had run the leading branch of their family-owned bank in Naples for more than two generations. Gondi would become one of Giuliano’s major patrons in Florence, and both his palace and his chapel in Santa Maria Novella bear unequivocally Neapolitan features. In particular those elements that have hitherto been considered backward-looking or unusual in the Florentine Renaissance context, such as the external staircase in the palace courtyard and the chapel’s lateral benches, can be easily explained as the result of a specific request from the patron to draw on the current leading fashions in residential architecture and funerary sculpture among the kingdom’s elite classes. Gondi had long been familiar with these fashions, and Sangallo would have found out about them during his stay in Naples. Like Sangallo’s design for the palace for the king of Naples, his work for Gondi demonstrates not only how architecture, as well as sculpture, was the result of a cultural exchange involving both patron and architect but also how Neapolitan features could be reinterpreted by a Florentine patron and architect in a Florentine context.

If on one hand Sangallo exported Neapolitan architecture to Florence, on the other the legacy he left in Naples was notable. We do not know if Giuliano ever returned to the kingdom, but his name has been linked significantly to the two major chapels built in the capital in the following decades, the Succorpo commissioned by Oliviero Carafa in the cathedral (1497–1508) and the Caracciolo di Vico chapel in the Church of San Giovanni a Carbonara (1507–13). Both chapels show relevant parallels with other works and drawings by Sangallo, suggesting that his language continued to influence Neapolitan Renaissance architecture, whether through his direct intervention during a possible later return to the kingdom, by means of his drawings that were sent there, or through the legacy he left after his 1488 sojourn.

In particular the plan of the Succorpo, divided into three naves by two rows of three standing columns, closely recalls the atrium Giuliano designed for the palace of the king of Naples. Such an innovative feature finds a close parallel with the reconstruction of the ancient domus designed by Fra Giocondo da Verona, who published the plan in his 1511 edition of Vitruvius’s De architectura but had probably conceived it already during his sojourn in the kingdom between 1488 and 1494 (Figure 22). Both the Succorpo and Giocondo’s reconstruction of the Roman domus are based on a deep understanding of the ancient model found in the so-called Ninfeo of Cicerone at Formia, the same model Giuliano used in designing the atrium of the palace for the king of Naples. In Fra Giocondo’s domus the sequence of spaces formed by the atrium, with its three aisles, open courtyard, and chapel, appears to be very close to Giuliano’s project for the palace.

Unfortunately, no evidence survives of a meeting between Sangallo and Fra Giocondo da Verona before the former returned to Tuscany, but the relation between their two designs is our
best proof of the fact that Giuliano’s presence in Naples proved extremely fruitful. Even if the project for the king’s palace was never executed, the drawings and the model that he left in the city after his departure would have been objects of study and sources of inspiration for the architects who came to work in the capital. Given Giuliano’s Albertian culture and knowledge of ancient architecture, his stay in Naples would have significantly contributed to and shaped the ongoing antiquarian and architectural debates that were taking place in the Neapolitan court. When Fra Giocondo and Francesco di Giorgio arrived in the kingdom shortly after Sangallo’s departure, they would have found a humanistic ambience in which the antiquarian and philosophical problems that interested them were already being discussed.122

Conclusion

The project for Ferrante of Aragon’s royal palace, far from being designed spontaneously in Florence by the ingenious mind of Giuliano da Sangallo and then sent to Naples, where it was passively received, was in fact the concluding episode of a long story of architectural exchange and diplomatic relationships between Naples and Florence. As we have seen, the main ancient models for Ferrante’s palace were Neapolitan: the courtyard and the Gran Sala drew upon the pools and thermal baths of the Phlegraean Fields, and the palatine chapel was inspired by the circular temples and mausoleums of Campania; furthermore, the atrium derived not only from a reading of Vitruvius but also from Cicero’s villa in Formia. These southern models were subsequently translated into modern projects in Florence and influenced buildings that were then in the course of construction, such as Poggio a Caiano, with its basile villa and sala covered by an all’antica barrel vault. When they returned to Naples, these design ideas were once again readapted, as in the new studies carried out by Sangallo, who examined the kingdom’s antiquities with the aim of resolving specific aspects of his project.

In this context, Sangallo’s design for the royal palace should not be examined in isolation, but should be seen as part of a shared reflection on an architectural theme that developed in Florence between Lorenzo and his two favorite architects, Giuliano da Maiano and Giuliano da Sangallo, and as a response to the ceremonial requirements and cultural influence of the Neapolitan royal family. The idea of a courtyard conceived as a rectangular amphitheater is found with slight variations according to the different contexts in which it was used: a royal palace, a suburban villa (Poggioareale), and the luxurious dépendence of a castle (Duchessa). This particular feature, derived from southern models, elaborated in Florence, and newly developed in Naples, was later reexported in projects commissioned by Lorenzo de’ Medici’s son Pope Leo X. It can be seen first in Rome in the theater on the Capitoline Hill created in 1513 to celebrate the Roman citizenship of the pope’s brother Giuliano de’ Medici and his nephew Lorenzo, and later in Florence, where around 1515 Sangallo adapted the design of the Naples royal palace to the design of a colossal residential palace in Via Laura (see Figures 11 and 12). Furthermore Giuliano’s experience of rethinking the spaces of Castel Nuovo in a new functional and all’antica palace would have been useful for Leo X’s new palace on Piazza Navona, where he organized a papal apartment outside the Vatican.123

While neither the palace for Ferrante in Naples nor the ones for the Medici in Florence and in Rome were built, Giuliano’s stay in the Aragonese capital produced notable results. On his departure from Naples, he left behind a cultural legacy that would be taken up immediately by Fra Giocondo and Francesco di Giorgio Martini. Apart from the gifts from the royal family, he brought to Florence sketchbooks and cases full of drawings of the antiquities he had seen in the south, fresh cultural and architectural influences, and new, important personal contacts.124 For example, it was in Naples that he met Giuliano Gondi, a Florentine who had resided in Naples and who became one of his major patrons in Florence. In the projects for Gondi, Giuliano exploited features that might have appeared eccentric or out-of-date in Florence but that evoked the contemporary fashions of the Aragonese elite, which his patron Gondi would have recognized and appreciated. An important episode in the long diplomatic and cultural exchanges between the Aragonese and the Medici, Giuliano’s trip to Naples opened the way to new cultural and architectural relationships whose innovative results would mark the subsequent history of Renaissance architecture.

Notes

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2. The three drawings are Biblioteca Comunale di Siena, Cod. S.IV, fol. 17; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Codice Vaticano Barberiniano Latino 4424, fols. 8–39. The fundamental work on the Taccuino Senese (Biblio-
teca Comunale di Siena, Cod. S.IV, hereafter Taccuino Senese) and on the Codice Barberiniano (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Codice Vaticano Barberiniano Latino 4424, hereafter Codice Barberiniano) is still Christian Hülsen, Il libro di Giuliano da Sangallo: Codice Vaticano Barberiniano Latino 4424, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1910). For the dating of the Taccuino Senese, see Hülsen, Il libro di Giuliano, app. 3. See also Cornelius von Fabriczy, Die Handzeichnungen Giuliano da Sangallo: Kritisches Verzeichnis


4. Giuliano would later design for the Medici the temporary theater on the Capitoline Hill of 1513; the palace in Via Laura, dated to the second decade of the sixteenth century; and Pope Leo X’s new palace on Piazza Navona. On the theater on the Capitoline Hill, see Arnaldo Bruschi, “Il teatro Capitolino del 1513,” Bollettino del Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio 16 (1974), 189–218. Giuliano’s project for Via Laura has been convincingly dated by Caroline Elam to the years after 1512, when the Medici returned from exile, and was probably a Laurentian design revived by Leo X. See Caroline Elam, “Lorenzo de’ Medici: Urban Development in Renaissance Florence,” Art History 1 (1978), 44–66. Following Elam’s dating, Linda Pellecchia has hypothesized that the project was designed around the time of Leo’s entrance into Florence in 1513. Linda Pellecchia, “Reconstructing the Greek House: Giuliano da Sangallo’s Villa for the Medici in Florence,” JSAH 52, no. 3 (1993), 323–38; Linda Pellecchia, “Designing the Via Laura Palace: Giuliano da Sangallo, the Medici, and the Time,” in Lorenzo the Magnificent: Culture and Politics, ed. Michael Mallett and Nicholas Mann (London: Warburg Institute, 1996), 37–48. For a dating of the project prior to Lorenzo’s death in 1492, see Gaetano Miarelli Mariani, “Il disegno per esempio mediceo di Via Laura a Firenze: Un significativo intervento urbano prefigurato da Giuliano da Sangallo,” Palladio 22 (1972), 127–62. On Giuliano’s palace on Piazza Navona testified to by the drawing in the Uffizi UA 7949 A, see Tafuri, Ricerca del Rinascimento, 97–115. Giuliano inscribed some of the drawings in his sketchbook with “M. L.” as if to indicate the commission of the “Magnifico Lorenzo”—that is, Lorenzo de’ Medici. For these drawings, see Tafuri, Ricerca del Rinascimento, 95.


6. For an axonometric reconstruction that includes an interior section, see Biermann, “Das Palastmodell”; Biermann and Worgull, “Das Palastmodell”; Biermann, “Palast und Villa.”


11. No further evidence has emerged to support the suggestion that Giuliano da Sangallo was in Naples in 1483, when he was paid for executing the Adoration of the Magi for the sacristy of the Church of the Annunziata. Gaetano Filangieri, Documenti per la storia, le arti e le industrie delle province napoletane, 6 vols. (Naples: Società Napoletana di Storia Patria, 1891), 6:416.


14. On the Taccuino Senese and the Codice Barberiniano, see note 2.
15. The libro-piccolo is an older sketchbook, dated between 1488 and 1494, that Giuliano later enlarged by gluing parchment strips onto the smaller pages so that its dimensions would match the rest of the Vatican Codex. On the dating, see Hülsen, Il libro di Giuliano. The inscription at the center of the courtyard, “M. L.,” standing for “Magnifico Lorenzo,” could be interpreted as a first attempt to record Lorenzo’s gift, later developed into the long inscription at the bottom of the drawing on fol. 39. On the drawings inscribed “M. L.,” see Tafuri, Ricerca del Rinascimento, 95.
18. M. Virecuso per locandum edin castrigator factus cum figuris et tabulae ut iam legi et intelligi possit (Venetiis: Ioannis Tacuino, 1511).
22. Relevant examples of rulers’ residences would have been the Topkapi Palace in Constantinople, the Ducal Palace of Urbino, and the Villa dell’Imperatore at Pesaro. See the section of this article headed “Sangallo’s Palace Plan, Castel Nuovo, and Other Royal Residences.”


36. In the period 1485–87 the Aragonese Kingdom of Naples was the protagonist of an internal crisis that saw opposed to the crown some of the major barons, supported by members inside the court and by Pope Innocent VIII. This conspiracy is known as the Second Barons’ Revolt, to distinguish it from an earlier revolt among barons that took place after the death of Alfonso I of Aragon, from 1459 to 1462. The participation of the pope in the Second Barons’ Revolt spread the conspiracy beyond the borders of the kingdom, transforming it for a period into a conflict of larger dimension and involving the major Italian powers. Even if the first “active” phase of the Second Barons’ Revolt ended in August 1486, followed by executions and arrests of the main conspirators and the confiscation of their properties, an agreement between the pope and the king to which Lorenzo might have personally contributed.


39. On these payments, see Cornelius von Fabriczy, “Toscanische und oberitalienische Künstler in Diensten der Aragonesen zu Neapel,” Rerum für Kunstwissenschaft 20 (1897), 87; Percopo, Nuovi documenti, 97; Quinterio, Giuliano, 331–48.


51. Franz Babinger, Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time (1978; repr., Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 359. For a complete account of the relations between the Kingdom of Naples and the Ottoman Empire, see Cristian Caselli, “Napoli aragonese e l’impero ottomano” (PhD thesis, Università degli Studi di Pisa, 2009), esp. 196–237 on the proliferation of accounts of the Turks, with particular attention to the Aragonese context. Already in 1454, King Alfonso I of Aragon had commissioned the Venetian ambassador Nicola Sagundino to transform the account of his visit to Constantinople in 1453 into an oratio. Ad serenissimum principem et invictissimum regem Alboonsum Nicolai Sagundini oratio, ed. Cristian Caselli (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 2012).


55. On Ferrante’s spies visiting the city of Constantinople in 1485, see Cristian Caselli, “Spie italiane nell’impero ottomano: La Deposizione Antonii de Corsellis (1485) conservata presso l’Archivio di Stato di Modena,” Interpretes 20 (2001), 180–211. For discussion of the impact of his visit on the palace of Diomede Carafa, and in particular on his portal, see de Divitiis, Architetture e committenza, 65–76. For the manuscript copy of the De re edificatoria requested by Cardinal Giovanni d’Aragona in 1483 from the Florentine copyist Francesco Gaddi, see Tammaro De Marinis, La biblioteca napoletana dei re d’Aragona, 5 vols. (Milan: Hoepli, 1952–69), 188. Another manuscript was in the possession of Antonio Petrucci, who imitated Diomede Carafa’s Albertian portal. On humanists in Naples studying Alberti’s treatise, see Carlo Vecce, Gli zibaldoni di Jacopo Sannazzaro, 1, 2 (Venice: Marsilio, 2007).

56. On Alberti’s stay in Naples, see Luca Boschetto, “Nuove ricerche sulla biografia e sugli scritti volgari di Leon Battista Alberti: Dal viaggio a Napoli alla nascita del ‘De icarichia’ (maggio-settembre 1465),” Interpretes 20 (2001), 180–211. For discussion of the impact of his visit on the palace of Diomede Carafa, and in particular on his portal, see de Divitiis, Architetture e committenza, 65–76. For the manuscript copy of the De re edificatoria requested by Cardinal Giovanni d’Aragona in 1483 from the Florentine copyist Francesco Gaddi, see Tammaro De Marinis, La biblioteca napoletana dei re d’Aragona, 5 vols. (Milan: Hoepli, 1952–69), 188. Another manuscript was in the possession of Antonio Petrucci, who imitated Diomede Carafa’s Albertian portal. On humanists in Naples studying Alberti’s treatise, see Carlo Vecce, Gli zibaldoni di Jacopo Sannazzaro, 1, 2 (Venice: Marsilio, 2007).


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69. On the moats that surrounded Castel Nuovo, see ibid., 66.
70. Alberti, De re aedificatoria, bk. 8, chaps. 6–7, 718–19, 739–41.
71. Also, the bronze doors of Castel Nuovo, created around 1475, were formed by narrative panels recounting episodes of Ferrante’s war against the French pretender to the throne Jean d’Anjou and against the rebellious barons. See Filangieri, Castel Nuovo, 209, 217, 242, 251; Luigi Volpi-cella, “Le porte di Castelnuovo e il bottino di Carlo VIII,” Napoli Nobile-
72. See the letter to the Duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza, dated 6 December 1455 from the Milanese ambassadors Troilo di Muro and Orfeo Cenni in Dipizi Sforzeschi da Napoli, no. 120, 317. “E già fina hora havemo visto Castel-
telnuovo quale, come debbe havere inteso la signoria vostra, tutte ha ratificato con bellissime muray e torre et barbacani, che è una cosa meravigliosa dela grossese e ornamento dele mure in forteza et di bella dimostraione di fora. Ma dentro comprendemmo non possa fare quelle cose conseguente alle mure de fora per il pocho spaco, como vostra signoria è informat, e in questo credemo vostra signoria vinercerà, ma de la mure perderà; pure molto se sforsa de cunclarlo più ornatamente che l’o po’.” De Divitiis, “Alfonso I of Naples.”
74. Filangieri, Castel Nuovo, 80; de Divitiis, “Castel Nuovo.”
75. Bruschi, “Il teatro Capitolino.”
77. On the theater on the Capitoline Hill and the project for Via Laura, see note 4.
80. “Magistro Francesco senese architctore haveva ordinato palchi de ligname per videre molta gente comme stavano li romani antiqui neli teatri.” Vitale, Ritualità monarchia, 44–45; de Divitiis, “Fra Giocondo.”
81. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 5632, fol. 101. See Johan-
sis Burckhardt liber notarum ab anno 1483 usque ad annum 1506, ed. Enrico Celani (Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1907–10), 485–87. See also Maria Alasia, ed. Enrico Bruschi, “Il teatro Capitolino.”
82. On thermal baths during the Renaissance, see David S. Chambers, On thermal baths during the Renaissance, see David S. Chambers, 83. See also Maria Alasia, ed. Enrico Bruschi, “Il teatro Capitolino.”
mentis Signino et musivo opere vermiculatis, quadrata item septa porticu et nobili circa podium scannillorum persistitio.” From Giovio’s account it becomes clear that the flooding in Poggioreale did not take place in the main courtyard, as described by Sebastiano Serlio, but in a cenatio, an all’antica dining room that could be reached through the secret gardens. See the description by Paolo Giovio in Dialoghi de vivi et formosi aratea fontana florentins, analyzed by Maffei, “La villa di Poggioreale,” 165–66. See also Il terzo libro di Sebastiano Serlio bolognes, nel qual si figurano, e descrivono le antiquitá di Roma, e le altre che sono in Italia, e fuori d’Italia (Venetia: Marcello Minofor da Forli, 1540), 121–121v. For a different view, see Modesti, Le delizie ritrovate, 56–62, 93–96. Paolo Modesti interestingly argues that the dining room in the garden should be attributed to Giuliano da Sangallo. Modesti, Le delizie ritrovate, 145. On banquets with water games in the Duchesca and Poggioreale, see George Hersey, “Water-Works and Water-Play in Renaissance Naples,” Fons Sapientiae: Renaissance Garden Fountaine, ed. Elizabeth B. MacDougall (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1978), 59–93; Maffei, “La villa di Poggioreale,” 165.
86. Lorenzo de’ Medici, Simposio, vv. 46–57, in Tutte le Opere, ed. Paolo Orvieto (Rome: Salerno, 1922), 641–42. See Martelli, “I pensieri architet-
89. On the guides to the baths, see Livio Petrucci, “Le fonti della topogra-
90. The original manuscript is lost, but twenty copies survive; ten of these are illustrated, and among these is the 1471 copy commissioned by Alfonso, now preserved in Milan (Biblioteca Ambrosiana 1.6, Inf.). See Kaufmann, Baths of Pozzuoli, 21–22; Fikret K. Yegül, “The Thermo-Mineral Complex at Baiae and De Balsuis Puteolanae,” Art Bulletin 78 (1996), 138.
91. The manuscript is now preserved in the Edinburgh University Library (Ms. 176). See Kaufmann, Baths of Pozzuoli, 64, 83–86; Keller, “Die Zeich-
93. On Jacopo Sannazzaro’s guiding important foreign guests to the Campi Flegrei, see Vecce, Gli zibaldoni, 60; de Divitiis, “Fra Giocondo.”
94. Yegül, “Thermo-Mineral Complex.”
95. Alberti, De re aedificatoria, bk. 8, chap. 10, 768–77. On Alberti and ther-
96. Vasari, “Vita di Giuliano.”
98. The Taccuino Senese, fol. 27, contains a plan of Battistero di San Gio-
vanni, the Pisa Baptistry, that covers almost the entire page. Below the baptistry, Sangallo drew a centering for a hemispherical dome not related
to the centralized structure. Giuliano’s drawing of the Colosseum depicts only four steps, each separated from the next by a fillet. However, it does include measurements. For example, he gives the width of the tread as 1
(braccio), that is, 58.3 centimeters. The height of each step is marked as ½, or 38.8 centimeters, and the height and tread of the fillet or footrest is ¼, or 14.5 centimeters. The sketch may correspond to the section of the sca- lara positioned between the stepped theater seats that allowed spectators to reach their places, but it might also represent a study of the footrests that were placed behind the seats in such amphitheaters so that the spectators could rest their feet without disturbing those sitting in the row below them. A reference to this drawing is found in Hülsen, I libro di Giuliano, LIV. While Hülsen mentions the baptistery and the centering, he does not discuss the amphitheater’s steps. Borsi also refers to this drawing, but he does not mention the steps. Borsi, Giuliano da Sangallo, 285.

99. See note 33.


114. The palace of Scipione Pandone corresponds to the actual Conca palace in Piazza Bellini, and in 1488 it was being rebuilt. See Antonio Colombo, “Il palazzo dei principi di Conca nella strada di Santa Maria di Costantinopoli,” Napoli Nobilissima 9 (1900), 25–132, 172–75, 185–90.

115. Giuliano received his last payment in Naples in February 1488. Percopo, Nuovi documenti, 316; Fabricriz, “Giuliano da Sangallo,” 4. We know that Giuliano would have carried to Florence a letter written by Alfonso of Calabria to one Giovanni Strozzi in Florence with the ambiguous dating “1488 da Napoli e a di 19 Aprile de di viii di marzo.” See Francis William Kent, “Più superba di quella de Lorenzo: Courtly and Family Interest in the Building of Filippo Strozzi’s Palace,” Renaissance Quarterly 30 (1977), 322n43. According to a document published by Morselli and Corti (ASP, Patrimonio Ecclesiastico, Opera di S. M. delle Carceri, n. 1286, c. 35), on 5 May 1488 he was in Prato to work on the church of Santa Maria dei Carceri. See Morselli and Corti, La chiesa di Santa Maria, 108.


117. According to Vasari, Giuliano had “stretta dimistichezza” with Gondi during the architect’s stay in Naples. Vasari, “Vita di Giuliano.” As we have seen, Giuliano Gondi was responsible for making the payments to Giuliano da Maiano on behalf of Duke Alfonso, and evidence that he still held a residence in Naples in 1494 is given in a letter sent by Bernardo Rucellai to the Dieci di Balia. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Dieci di Balia, c. 81v. On Gondi, see Stefano Tabacchi, “Gondi, Giuliano,” in DBI, vol. 57 (2001), 656–59.

118. On Giuliano Gondi’s palace in Florence, see Andreas Tönnes- mann, Der Palazzo Gondi in Florenz (Worms, Germany: Werner, 1983); Linda Pellecchia, “Umtimely Death, Unwilling Heirs: The Early
On the external staircase of the Gondi palace as an outdated evocation of the archaic staircases in Palazzo Vecchio and in the Bargello, see Andreas Tönnemann, “L’escalier du palais Gondi et la tradition florentine,” in Les escaliers dans l’architecture de la Renaissance (Paris: Picard, 1985), 133–34. Gondi’s staircase may be interpreted in the light of the contemporary fashion in the kingdom for similar staircases deriving from the Catalan models that had been imported by the Aragonese court, such as the ones in Castel Nuovo in Naples, in Onorato II Caetani’s palace in Fondi, and in the Antignano Palace in Capua, as well as the ones in the Petrucci and Marzano palaces in Carinola. See Giovanni Pesiri, “Il Palazzo Caetani a Fondi: Prime indagini,” in Scritti per Isa: Raccolta di studi offerti a Isa Lori Sanfilippo, ed. Antonella Mazzon (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 2008), 94–118; Riccardo Filangieri, “La casa di Marino Marzano principe di Rossano in Carinola,” in Miscelànea Puig i Cadafalch (Barcelona: Institut d’Estudis Catalans, 1947–51), 1:37–40. In addition, the plan to place an antica gialla on the two sides of the main altar recalls the original arrangement of the Cappellone del Crocifisso in San Domenico Maggiore, where funerary monuments with benches belonging to the Carafa and other Neapolitan noble families were lined up against the walls, creating a veritable choir mausoleum, as is found in the Gondi chapel. See Francesco Caglioti, “Antonello Gagini e le tombe Carafa di Castelvetere,” in La Calabria del vecchio spagnolo, ed. Alessandra Anselmi (Rome: Gangemi, 2009), 337–85n80. On the Cappellone del Crocifisso, see de Divitiis, Architettura e committenza, 142–65.


Fra Giocondo was surely in Naples from 5 July 1488 to revise the epigraphic sylloge intended for Lorenzo de’ Medici, but we cannot rule out that he might have been in the capital earlier. See Michael Koortbojian, “A Collection of Inscriptions for Lorenzo De’ Medici: Two Dedicated Letters from Fra Giovanni Giocondo,” Papers of the British School at Rome 70 (2002), 297–98; de Divitiis, “Fra Giocondo.” On Fra Giocondo, see Pier Nicola Pagliara, “Giovanni Giocondo da Verona (Fra Giocondo),” in DBI, vol. 61 (2001), 326–38.

On Francesco di Giorgio in Naples, see note 83.

On Giuliano’s palace on Piazza Navona, affirmed by the drawing in the Uffizi UA 7949A, see Tafuri, Ricerca del Rinascimento, 97–115.