THE OXFORD COMPANION TO Italian Literature

Edited by

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N

NADAL, GIOVANNI GIROLAMO (also Natali) (d.1383). *Venetian *merchant and politician, and presumed author of the *Leandreide*, a retelling in **terza rima*, heavily influenced by *Dante, of the story of Hero and Leander. It includes a famous catalogue of poets ancient and modern, partly delivered by a character representing Dante himself. [SNB]

NADI, GASPARE (1418–1504). Master mason, whose *diary, written in idiomatic *Bolognese, records not only details of the architectural projects he oversaw for the city's pre-eminent family, the Bentivoglio, but also personal and political comments. In this, as in other respects, his *Diario bolognese* resembles the family diaries which survive more abundantly in *Tuscany. [CJ]

NALATO, G. UGO, see GIAN DAULI.

NALDI, NALDO (*c.*1436–1513). *Florentine poet of considerable refinement and a scholar of Greek and Latin culture. Received at the *court of the *Medici, and mentioned in Angelo *Poliziano's poetry, he was a friend of Pietro *Bembo and mixed with the scholars of the *Platonic Academy. In 1476 he entered the service of Pino Ordelaffi in Forlì. After a period in *Venice, he was appointed professor of humanities at the University of Florence, and then at *Pisa. He wrote various Latin poems, including *Bucolica* modelled on *Virgil, an *epic poem on the capture of Volterra by *Federigo da Montefeltro (*Volaterrais*), and a poem on a the Medici tournament of 1475 (*Hastiludium*). [LChi]

NANI, GIAMBATTISTA (1616–78). *Venetian patrician and historian. Nani combined intellectual activities with a distinguished public career, notably as member of the Venetian senate, where his speeches were heard with great attention, and as ambassador to France between 1643 and 1648. Appointed historian to the Republic in 1652, he wrote about the period 1613–71. His *Istoria della Repubblica Veneziana*, composed in a deliberately plain style, was published between 1662 and 1679, and translated into French and English. [See also HISTORIOGRAPHY.] [UPB]

NANNINI, REMIGIO (*c.*1521–81): *Dominican friar, author of secular and religious works, including *Poesie in lode della Madonna*, editor, and translator. His *translations include the biblical *Epistole e Evangeli con annotazioni morali* (1570), *Ovid's *Heroides* (which he afterwards disowned), Aemilius Probus, and *Petrarch. He edited works by *Guicciardini, *Pontano, and St Thomas *Aquinas. [CG]

Naples

1. Before 1600

Consisting roughly of the southern half of the Italian peninsula, the Kingdom of Naples, during the *Renaissance, was the largest state in Italy and its key political player. Founded in 1130 as a single entity with *Sicily by Norman invaders, who had united the various Greek and *Lombard principalities of the area, it was subsequently ruled by the *Hohenstaufen (1189–1266), the House of *Anjou (1266–1435), and the House of *Aragon (1435–1501), before falling to the kings of *Spain, who ruled it as a colony, under a viceroy, from 1504 until 1713. When the Anjou kings were expelled from Sicily and their capital Palermo in 1282, Naples became a separate and independent kingdom, and remained so until the advent of the Spanish, except for a brief period of reunion (1442–58) under Alfonso I 'the Magnanimous', who took the title of 'King of the Two Sicilies' in 1403. The city of Naples became the capital, and other cities, some of which had once flourished as independent states, gradually succumbed to the centralizing policies of the monarchy and the relentless exactions of the powerful *feudal lords who held sway in most areas of the kingdom. A cosmopolitan and multilingual country, it was the scene of much violence and warfare, suffering repeated invasions and internecine feuding. Consequently there was little solidarity between or within classes, and only minimal loyalty to the state.

The cultural life of the kingdom was largely dependent on royal patronage, and thus centred on the capital and *court, though some feudal lords did promote cultural activity in the provinces (the *Acquaviva at Atri and Nardo for instance, or the Sanseverino at Salerno—which also boasted one of the oldest *universities in Europe, famous for its *medical school). Under the Hohenstaufen the court, in Sicily, was at the avant-garde of what was to become Italian literature [see FREDERICK II; SICILIAN SCHOOL]. Under the Anjous, in Naples, it mainly functioned as a vehicle for the transmission of French culture [see FRENCH INFLUENCES, I], but it continued to enjoy great renown (*Petrarch elected King Robert to be his examiner for the laureateship), and reached its apogee under the Aragonese, who, to boost their legitimacy and enhance their prestige, promoted *humanism (*Panormita, *Valla, *Pontano), though the Kingdom always remained a lively centre of *Aristotelian and *scholastic studies, based on the universities of Salerno and Naples [see NIFO, AGOSTINO]. Throughout the centuries it also kept alive its Greek heritage [see GREEK INFLUENCES; GREEK WRITING IN ITALY], especially in Terra d'Otranto (Il *Galateo), and it witnessed the production of a wealth of literature in Latin, especially at the time of humanists such as Pontano and *Sannazaro.

Much was also written in the local vernaculars, right up to the Renaissance and beyond (*Masuccio Salernitano, Diomede *Carafa, *Passero), but from the mid-14th c., when the *Florentines acquired a monopoly in economic and political affairs, Naples gradually succumbed to the linguistic hegemony of Tuscan, whose victory is normally dated to the publication of Sannazaro's **Arcadia* [see also QUESTIONE DELLA LINGUA]. Under the Spanish, who sought to impose cultural and religious conformity, the court lost its cultural prominence, but by then, and despite its political separateness, Naples had come to participate fully in the cultural trends of the rest of Italy. *Petrarchism enjoyed a great vogue in the 16th c., with Vittoria *Colonna, *Tansillo, *Terracina; there was hot debate, here as elsewhere, between the supporters of *Ariosto and Torquato *Tasso (Tasso, of course, lived in the South for many years); and in the second half of the century Naples produced some of the more original Italian writers of the day (*Della Porta, *Bruno, *Campanella, *Marino). [EGH]

See *Storia di Napoli* (1967–78); J. H. Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples* (1987); F. Tateo, *L'umanesimo meridionale* (1976).

2. 1600 onwards

In the early 17th c. **marinismo* and *dialect literature (*Cortese and *Basile) both flourished in Naples. In the 18th c. a thriving civic, political, and philosophical culture of European importance (the elder *Giannone, *Vico, *Genovesi) developed alongside a literature which operated as a closed circuit of communication between political elites and intellectuals in the Court (from 1734 the *Bourbon dynasty ruled the Kingdom of Naples, embracing all the mainland South and *Sicily), as well as in theatres, salons, and *academies. This was characterized by displays of technical dexterity in various registers of Italian, Neapolitan, and Latin.

The triumph of the reactionary movement *sanfedismo* (led by Cardinal Ruffo) after the revolution of 1799, and the subsequent restoration of the Bourbons (1815–60) after the *Napoleonic regime (1805–15), deepened the rift between *liberal intellectuals and the political system. *Publishers and *journalists geared literary production increasingly to the market and an enlarged reading public. Intellectuals emphasized the social uses of literature (Genovesi), the need to go beyond *purism (*Puoti), and the close link between content and form (*De Sanctis), and drew attention to the inadequacies of literary Italian and its remoteness from everyday language, which was still, for all classes and all purposes, dialect. Various forms of hybridism emerged, particularly after *Unification (1860). *Theatre, poetry, and song (*Di Giacomo) used an Italianized form of Neapolitan comprehensible in the rest of the peninsula, whereas prose fiction and journalism used Italian with dialect interferences (*Mastriani, *Serao). The best results of the interweaving of dialect and literary Italian are in Di Giacomo's prose fiction. There was also a new tendency for Neapolitan culture (evident in *Croce's historical work) to present itself as at once detached from and bound to the rest of the nation. The literary tradition was imbued with a sense of

daily life in Naples as a form of spectacle or theatre in itself (as Goethe was one of the first to note). The feeling that Naples was 'outside history' was related to the sense of provincial isolation produced by the Bourbon restoration and confirmed by the Unification, after which the city and its intellectuals became ever more marginalized with respect to wider Italian economic and political realities.

From the late 19th c. the cultural industry in the city favoured the development of close relations (and conflicts) between Neapolitan writers, which led to striking family resemblances in their work, whatever genre they practised. Figures such as Mastriani, Di Giacomo, Serao, *Bracco, Ferdinando *Russo, Raffaele *Viviani, and the *Futurist *Cangiullo were often at the same time journalists, novelists, *diarists, and dramatists. Nearly all of them also wrote songs, as if the Neapolitan literary language demanded to be recited or sung. The song-publishing business in the city distributed its products internationally in this pre-mass media period, and perfected a form of self-presentation in which otherness and marginality were translated into the eternal typology of 'art'.

After *World War II Neapolitan culture was subjected to the industrialization and modernization that occurred in the country as a whole. Its fiction, song, and *cinema became 'genres' produced in *Rome or *Milan. Local cultural production collapsed, and many intellectuals left the city, including *De Filippo, *La Capria, *Marotta. Those who remained (such as *Pomilio, and *Prisco) tended to find themselves alienated from the nation and from the city itself. By the 1990s, however, there were some welcome signs of local cultural regeneration. [See also POPULAR SONG.]

[MLS]

Napoleon and the French Revolution. Although the *Enlightenment ideas which fostered the French Revolution were widespread among Italian intellectuals, many were horrified by the course it took, though some tried vainly to promote middle-of-the-road reformist projects. A few welcomed the Revolution—for instance Filippo Buonarroti, an Italian *Jacobin émigré who agitated for the invasion of Italy. The Directory, however, was more concerned with French security than with exporting revolution, and launched Napoleon's Italian campaign of 1796–7 as a way to acquire both military bases and counters to be used in truce or peace negotiations. One of Napoleon's first acts was to hand *Venice over to *Austria with the Treaty of Campoformio, arousing the odium of *Foscolo and other Italian patriots. The first and most important of the Italian republics, the Repubblica Cisalpina, was founded in 1797. By 1805 it had become the Kingdom of Italy, with Napoleon himself crowned in *Milan. Similarly the Parthenopean Republic, founded in *Naples in 1799, became the Kingdom of Naples under the rule first of Joseph Bonaparte and then of Joachim Murat.

French government, particularly in Naples, was not always unpopular, but in general it subordinated the interests of the Italian people to those of France. French laws and regulations were often introduced, high taxes were imposed in the occupied regions, and large numbers of art works were expropriated to the Louvre. Nevertheless, between 1799 and 1814 most of the Italian peninsula had its first taste, if not of freedom and autonomy, at least of political unity. Many *Risorgimento fighters trained in Napoleon's army, and many protagonists of *Romanticism were, at some time or other, officials in his bureaucracy. Many influential Italian writers, including Vincenzo *Monti, *Giordani, *Gioia, and the young Foscolo, praised him publicly at some stage in their career, whatever their reservations and later criticisms; the most balanced assessment of his impact was offered by *Manzoni in 'Il cinque maggio', the poem he wrote on Napoleon's death in 1821. Napoleon used modern forms of patronage, such as state bureaucracy, incentives to publishers and printers, better educational provisions to gain the consensus of the intellectuals, with the result that more writers than ever could derive an income, or even make a living, from their work. The benefits of Napoleonic rule for Italy's cultural life, social and political cohesion, and economic advancement can be measured by the failure of *Restoration governments to set the clock back. [GC]

See S. Woolf, *A History of Italy 1790–1870* (1979); J. A. Davis, 'War and Society in Napoleonic Italy', in J. A. Davis and P. Ginsborg (eds.), *Society and Politics in the Age of the Risorgimento* (1991).

NAPOLI-SIGNORELLI, PIETRO (1731–1815). *Neapolitan polygraph [see POLIGRAFI] who was long resident abroad, notably in Madrid (1765–88). His *Storia critica dei teatri antichi e moderni* (ten volumes in its definitive 1813 edition) was the first and for a long time the only work of its kind in Italian. A rich but uneven compilation, it asserts Italian *theatrical supremacy but is stronger in other areas such as Spanish drama. [JMAL]

NAPPI, CESARE (*c.*1440–1518). *Bolognese notary who collected in his vast *Palladium eruditum* both his own literary works, the best known of which is the facetious tale *I negromanti*, and the correspondence and poetry of his friends and fellow members of the Bolognese literary circle around Battista *Spagnoli. His *Memoriale* is among the few family *diaries surviving from Bologna. [CJ]

NARDI, BRUNO (1884–1968) was the first modern scholar to insist, against *Croce, on a knowledge of medieval science and philosophy for a correct understanding of *Dante's texts. His principal collections of writings are *Saggi di filosofia dantesca* (1930), *Dante e la cultura medievale* (1942), and *Dal 'Convivio' alla 'Commedia'* (1960). [DF]

NARDI, IACOPO (1476–1563) was an influential Florentine politician and patriot, eventually exiled for his anti-*Medici views. He wrote a history of *Florence, and two occasional *theatre compositions based on stories from the **Decameron*; like those of *Galeotto del Carretto, they represent a transition between medieval and *humanist conceptions of dramaturgy. [See also COMEDY.] [RAA]

NATALI, GIOVANNI GIROLAMO, see NADAL, GIOVANNI GIROLAMO.

Nationalism. Italian often restricts the term 'nazionalismo' to the ideology of the *Associazione nazionalista italiana* (see below), but the term may also refer to all kinds of thought about the Italian nation. The history of the terms 'nazione' and 'nazionalismo' is closely linked with further terms such as 'italianità', 'Italia', 'patria', 'popolo', and, from *Unification to the *Fascist period, 'razza' or 'stirpe italica'. This loose and protean vocabulary has been used to talk about a whole range of personal and collective problems.

It is *Dante's writings which effectively mark the beginnings of national or (on some readings) nationalistic discourse in Italy. Over the five centuries between Dante and the French Revolution the question of Italy keeps recurring, sometimes being given famous literary expression, as in *Petrarch's 'Italia mia' (*Canz.* 128), or the last chapter of *Machiavelli's *Principe*. There are in this period three dimensions to the issue. The first is linguistic and concerns the choice of a form of Italian as an intellectual and literary medium in preference to Latin or other European vernaculars (notably French). By the 16th c. that meant choosing the literary language of Dante, Petrarch, and *Boccaccio over other regional vernaculars. [See HISTORY OF THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE; QUESTIONE DELLA LINGUA]. The second dimension was a pride in Italians' cultural achievements and their privileged relationship to classical antiquity. The third was political: whilst it was only in rare cases (*Cola di Rienzo, for example) that any form of unified Italian polity was projected, the name of Italy did come to encode a concern to maintain local peace and freedom within the North and Centre of the peninsula in the face of external influences and intercommunal strife. But throughout this period the words 'nazione' and 'patria' were at least as likely to refer to a municipal community or place of origin—*Florence or *Siena, for example—as to Italy.

It is only with the *Enlightenment, and more dramatically with the French Revolution and the *Napoleonic era, that the language of nationalism is used to think about social issues and to express aspirations for an Italian state. French domination of most of the peninsula after 1796 introduced notions of national sovereignty and the popular will into government, and gave Italy's elites glimpses of the benefits (and dangers) of administrative and economic modernization. But those very developments were often frustrated by the arbitrary, expansionist nature of the regimes installed by Napoleon. Ugo *Foscolo is perhaps the emblematic literary figure to emerge from this contradiction. A soldier, *journalist, academic, and *exile, he attempts in **De' sepolcri* (1807) to found a patriotic myth, at once elegiac and defiant, around the tombs of the nation's great men.

During the *Risorgimento, different groups used the language of nationhood to project often diametrically opposed visions of a future Italy. For *Mazzini, for example, the Italian people had a divine mission to shake off the rule of monarchs and priests and become a unitary republic based on individual liberty. For Vincenzo *Gioberti, a socially conservative confederation of states under *papal leadership could re-establish the peninsula's cultural and religious primacy. After *1848, moderate opinion in Northern and Central Italy increasingly associated nationhood with law and order, monarchy, and a paternalistic vision of progress.

After Unification, the language of nationalism becomes implicated in a whole variety of ways with