

## THE KINGDOM OF SICILY IMAGE DATABASE\*

### 1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND PROJECT GOALS

Founded in 1130 by Roger II of Hauteville, the Kingdom of Sicily was the result of the long process of Norman domination over a patchwork of independent duchies and principalities stretching from the Abruzzi, East of Rome, through the boot of Italy and the island of Sicily. The conquest began in the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and culminated with Roger's coronation in 1130. In the creation of a new state, Roger, his heirs, and the subsequent dynasties of Hohenstaufen, Angevin and Aragonese rulers used art and culture to establish a distinct identity for each regime and to affirm their authority among many different audiences in Europe and the Mediterranean. While the rulers of the Kingdom of Sicily incorporated familiar imported elements from northern and central Europe, they also adopted components of the local cultures of South Italy and the Mediterranean. At the same time that these rulers were crafting the identities of the Kingdom, religious institutions, the nobility, and urban community were simultaneously affirming their own presence and power through the construction of monuments that drew upon a wide range of stylistic sources. The monuments of the Kingdom of Sicily were by definition therefore eclectic and heterogeneous (ENLART 1894; BERTAUX 1904; BOLOGNA 1969; LEONE DE CASTRIS 1986; D'ONOFRIO 1994; ENDERLEIN 1997; TRONZO 1997; DEMUS 1998; MICHALSKY 2000; ACETO 2001; BRUZELIUS 2004; ANDALORO 2006, 2011; VITOLO 2008; WARR *et al.* 2008; LUCHERINI 2009; BRENK 2010; LONGO 2014).

The diverse mix of protagonists of different national and religious origins in South Italy produced a rich cultural patrimony that created a fascinating prototype of multicultural state formation. The Kingdom became the site of a great social experiment, bringing together multi-cultural, multilingual, and multi-religious populations. This unique circumstance led to the creation of monuments of exceptional originality. An understanding of this phenomenon, however, is deeply complicated by the profound transformations that these sites have undergone over the centuries, such as urban expansion, natural disasters, modern warfare (bombardment), the remodeling of innumerable medieval buildings starting in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and, finally, modern repurposing. In the aggregate, these events impede our ability to identify and understand the complex cultural patrimony of South Italian cities, buildings and

\* This article is a collaborative effort with Caroline Bruzelius as the author of paragraphs 1 and 5, and Paola Vitolo of paragraphs 2, 3, and 4.

their decorative components. Modern change has transformed the visual and symbolic role of these representational monuments, their relations with the urban and natural landscape, and their importance for the visual cultures of the rest of Italy and the Mediterranean.

Historical images (photographs, drawings, maps and paintings) can, however, make a difference in reconstructing the appearance of monuments. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards (starting with Francesco di Giorgio Martini's rendering of the Capuan Gate) images were produced by artists, scholars, architects and travellers, for the most part with the intent of documenting historical or artistic monuments as a visual record of travel (especially during the Grand Tour), or as practical exercises in professional training. For example, northern European architects of the 19<sup>th</sup> century developed neo-medieval designs from South Italian monuments. In the centuries prior to the invention of photography, drawings, paintings and prints were the only way of recording the appearance of a landscape, a city, or an individual building: these images permit us to "see" monuments and urban or natural landscapes before the profound changes of the last century.

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, photographs taken for documentation (i.e. the collections of the local Superintendencies) and study purposes (i.e. the Pater Paul Mackey or the John Bryan Ward-Perkins Collections at the British School at Rome: <http://www.bsrdigitalcollections.it/>), or produced during the Allied campaigns in 1943-1944, have also become important documents for understanding restoration campaigns. The archives, libraries and museums of Europe and the USA contain thousands of such images that in spite of their importance for the history of art are for the most part unknown and unpublished.

The Kingdom of Sicily Image Database was initiated in 2011 by Professors Caroline Bruzelius (Duke University, North Carolina) and William Tronzo (University of California, San Diego) and Dr. Paola Vitolo (University of Catania, Italy), with 3-year funding from NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities, USA). The project, based at Duke University (<http://www.dukewired.org/>), was also supported by the Bibliotheca Hertziana (Max-Planck-Gesellschaft für Kunstgeschichte) in Rome, which offered a work area and a meeting space for the project and made available their collection of rare books and photographs. The purpose of this project is to create a database of documents on the medieval monuments of the Kingdom of Sicily from the 11<sup>th</sup> through the early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries to further scholarship on cities and sites over the centuries. This initiative is therefore not simply a "virtual catalogue": images have been selected and included on the basis of their historical and documentary importance for the historical patrimony of their geographical region.

The Kingdom of Sicily Image Database is available online (<http://kosimagedb.aahvs.duke.edu/>) and makes accessible to the scientific community

(as well as to local residents and travellers) a large body of information and knowledge that is dispersed through Italian, European and American collections. It will also provide a resource for teaching at all levels. A wide range of disciplines will be informed by this collection: Medieval, Modern and Contemporary History (i.e. the History of World War II), Mediterranean Studies, The History of Art History, The History of Travel and the Grand Tour, Literature, Sociology, and Cultural History.

The goal of the database is intended to function on multiple levels as:

- an image and text resource for historic monuments, including geo-location;
- a list of the archives, museums and libraries with useful collections for research;
- a searchable tool on the artists who produced the images, with their dates and nationalities;
- a searchable tool of patrons and builders, as well as of specific stylistic features (such as domes and towers).

## 2. METHODOLOGY AND DATABASE STRUCTURE

The Department of Art, Art History and Visual Studies (AAHVS) at Duke University provided technical infrastructure and scientific expertise for this project through Duke's Information Technology office in Trinity Technology Services (TTS). These entities continue to provide ongoing technical expertise and infrastructure support for the project, including developing a sustainability plan to allow the website to be an open access online repository that can grow and evolve as new information is found and becomes accessible<sup>1</sup>.

In the first phase (2011) the Research Team initiated a systematic survey of figurative documents in Italian and European collections, created a masterlist of monuments/sites relevant to the project, and developed the nomenclature and structure for the database. The group created a Digital Asset Management Advisory Committee to develop a data collection template in accordance with VRA Core and Dublin Core metadata guidelines for each component of the project that would ensure the integrity and usability of the database. These metadata templates were created to maintain data consistency, to guide data collection in the field, and to provide a framework for describing and contextualizing the visual representations of evidence.

The project followed the cataloguing guidelines developed for the SAHARA project created by The Society of Architectural Historians (<http://www.sah.org/publications-and-research/sahara/>); for questions related to art historical terminology, we consulted the Getty Art&Architecture Thesaurus (<http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat/>) as the authoritative

<sup>1</sup> We are grateful to David Tremmel for collaborating on this paragraph.

source. Assistance with both the data collection templates and with categories and nomenclature was provided by John Taormina, Director of the Visual Media Center in Duke's Department of Art, Art History and Visual Studies.

The database consists of two linked parts: Images (historical images) and Works (monuments and sites).

## 2.1 Images

For each individual Image, data records include five sections, with specific types of information (Figs. 1-2).

### 1. Overview

- Title: title assigned to the image by the cataloguer;
- Description: description of the image;
- Given Title: title given by the artist when it exists (in the original language);
- Type: image type (drawing, watercolor, print, photograph, etc.);
- View Type: type of reproduction (entire or in detail);
- Period: chronological information;
- Analysis: iconographic description on the usefulness of the image for the work of art or architecture;
- Notes: particularities of the image (part of a larger collection, part of a *corpus*, links to related images, notes on the patron, occasion of creation – travel study, travel record, official documentation survey, etc. – image purpose, etc.). The cataloguer can also add a list of Keywords (not visible to the users) which include: monument/site title, region, artist name, patron name, image technique.

### 2. Image

Reproduction of the image – low resolution and not downloadable – with available information on format and resolution. Each image can be enlarged in order to examine details. In cases where we have not received permission to reproduce an image, we include a link to the online catalogue of the collection. In the rare cases where none of the above are possible, we offer a detailed description.

### 3. Creation

- Creation date(s): date of the image (documented or approximate);
- Materials;
- Technique;
- Measurements: dimensions of the image;
- Inscription: transcription of any texts, notes or signatures associated with each image;
- Creator/s: information on the artist/s (date of birth and date, years of activity, nationality and gender).



Fig. 1 – Example of an Image Entry (Catania, Cathedral). Overview field.



Fig. 2 – Example of an Image Entry (Catania, Cathedral). Creation field.

#### 4. Location

– Repository, City, Country, Region/Province, Repository Number: notes on the collection where the image is located and how to obtain further information including reproductions and publication rights. When we refer to an online database we include a Collection Link.

## 5. Research

- Preliminary bibliography;
- Link to Google search;
- Link to Google Images.

## 6. Cross-reference to the related Work/Works entry/entries

To avoid problems of inconsistency, the lists of Creators and Collections and the Bibliography are managed in general sections where information can be found by all cataloguers and new data can be added to.

## 2.2 Works

The designers of the database decided that although the primary focus of the database is the historic images, and while recognizing that most of the monuments have a highly complex history, some basic information on each site might be useful and relevant for users. Therefore in the “Works” entries we have attempted to furnish the following information (Fig. 3):

### 1. Overview

- Title (variant): the title of the monument and variations;
- Description: a schematic description;
- Type: work type (Cathedral, Caste, Bridge, etc.);
- Style/Culture: information on architectural style;
- Period: an overall chronological information;
- Notes: notes of various kind, i.e. the present use and function of the building, etc.

The screenshot shows a web interface for 'The Medieval Kingdom of Sicily: A Database of Monuments and Sites'. The main navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Collections', 'Monuments/Sites', and 'Images'. On the left, there are filters for 'Sites for City: Catania' and 'Cities'. The main content area is titled 'Site/Monument Details' and shows 'Catania, Cathedral (Sant'Agata)'. Below this, there are tabs for 'Overview', 'Location', 'Condition', 'Creation', 'Visual Docs', 'Images', and 'Research'. The 'Overview' tab is active, displaying a table with the following information:

Title (variant)	Sant'Agata
Description	Built on the site of Roman baths and in part reusing antique materials, the cathedral has a basilican plan with a nave and two aisles originally divided by columns with piers, a transept, and three apses. Parts of the Norman building are visible in the apses, transept, and in parts of the internal side of the facade.
Type	Cathedral
Style/Culture	Baroque; Norman; Romanesque
Period	11th Century; 12th Century; 18th Century
Notes	

Fig. 3 – Example of a Work Entry (Catania, Cathedral). Overview field.

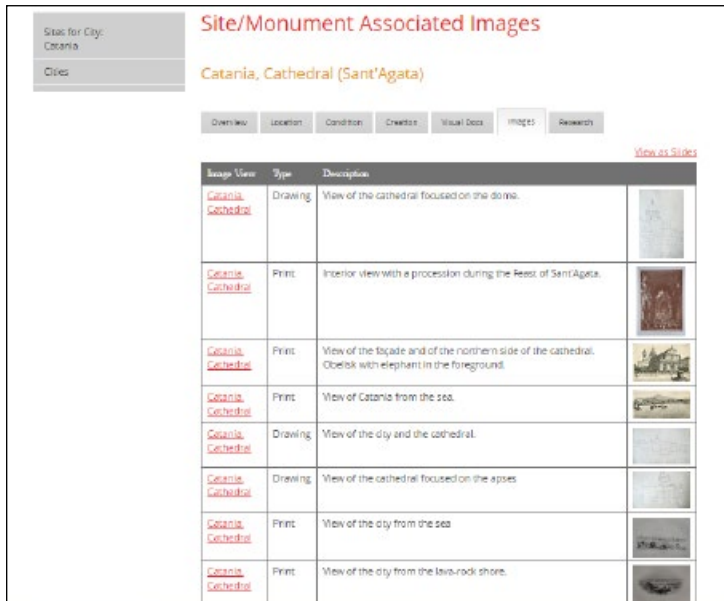


Fig. 4 – Images related to the Work Entry “Catania, Cathedral”.

## 2. Location

– City, Country (historical), Region, Province, Quarter, Address, Site/building, Geo-referenced coordinates.

## 3. Condition

- Extant/Non extant: present condition;
- Restoration/Refurbishment: information on restorations and the present state of conservation;
- Displaced Elements: information on material (i.e. sculptures, paintings, etc.) displayed in local Museums or elsewhere.

## 4. Creation

- Creation date, Foundation date, Consecration date;
- Reign: schematic information on the political context in the time of foundation (i.e. Duchy of Capua, Kingdom of Sicily, etc.);
- Building phases: major changes and transformations over the centuries;
- Materials, Measurements, Technique;
- Creator/s: the name of the architect with their dates (when known) of birth and death, with nationality and gender;
- Patron/s: the patron (when known) with dates (when known) and gender.

## 5. Visual Docs

- Published plans, elevations, sections, photographs.

## 6. Images

Cross-reference to the related Image/Images entry/entries, listed with the following synthetic information: Image view, Type, Description, thumbnail image. It is also possible to visualize Images as slides (clicking on “View as Slide”), where each Image is accompanied by Title, Given Title, Creator and Creation date.

## 7. Research

- Preliminary bibliography;
- Link to Google search;
- Link to Google Images.

The creation of the database structure and the fine-tuning of the cataloguing criteria are the results of three phases of revision of a preliminary selection of material (ca. 300 entries) from the initial data collection effort. The heterogeneous nature of the documents led us to develop a revised procedure that resulted in a sufficiently flexible structure to permit us to include extensive information for each kind of image. The revised database concept also allows us to enlarge and improve our cataloguing system as new resources and collections, as well as new types of scholarship, emerge.

Data collection was originally done using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. We gathered our initial team of four post-doctoral researchers (Gabriella Cianciolo, Alba Irollo, Ruggero Longo, Luciana Mocchiola), trained them with the methods of collection and data entry, and organized their questing work, directing them towards collections that were rich in relevant resources in Italy, Germany and France. At the same time we began developing the database in FileMakerPro. This database tool was chosen because technical and infrastructure support was available from Duke University, and because it could accommodate both the internal data collection and editing needs and external web dissemination goals of the project. Advantages of using FileMaker included that it is easy to customize, flexible, and scalable, cross-platform, and with a modest learning curve. The database and web site were created by David Tremmel, Technical Consultant and Web Developer in TTS. Additional technical support was provided by William Broom (AAHVS), who continues collaborating on the project as editor.

The database was designed using standard relational database techniques. This facilitates creating relationships within the data (e.g. between Images and Works), and the standardization of data during data entry. To streamline data entry and avoid duplication, lists of standard entries are maintained for the following data elements:



- Repositories: including metadata about the city, province and country where it is located;
- Creators and Patrons: including metadata about their nationality, gender, office and dates;
- Keywords;
- Bibliographic entries: including metadata dependant on type (book, book chapter, journal article, etc.) and based on standards used in EndNotesoftware.

The database is housed on a FileMaker server at Duke. This allows for multiple simultaneous users of the database, as well as for publishing views of the database on the web. We used SuperContainer, a plug-in for FileMaker, to facilitate the storage and retrieval of images.

Initially, all data collectors used FileMakerPro software on their laptop computers to access the database. Collaborators, dispersed in many locations throughout Europe, were able to work on the project “long distance”. Images and their metadata were gathered on site in Italy and in various locations in Europe by the members of the Research Team, which regularly send new entries back to the central database. All entries were initially marked in the database as being “under review”, for editing and standardization before being marked as complete. We have recently moved the internal access to the database by collaborators to a protected web interface using Web Direct technology recently added to FileMaker. Collaborators no longer need FileMakerPro software, but can create entries using a browser. The review workflow remains the same.

We established a separate communication platform by using a Blog software program (WordPress). This permitted the research team, dispersed in the field, to create a virtual office to track who was doing what, answer questions about data entry on the catalogue, engage the directors on the resolution of possible problems and obstacles, and provide new information or materials that updated the masterlists of sites, monuments, artists or images.

In order to disseminate the information in the database to a broad audience, we have been developing a searchable web site. Searches can be made through:

- Collections (listed in a drop-down menu);
- Cities/Sites (alphabetically listed) with related lists of monuments;
- Creators (alphabetically listed);
- Advanced search (through image title, image type, creator nationality, materials, date, keywords, etc.).

The website was designed with standard web technologies (HTML, PHP, CSS, Javascript) with Filemaker Server as the backend data source. The website will include Works entries that correspond to images in the database. In the first phase of the project, Works entries were intended as a collective

enterprise, with each one of the collaborators creating an entry related to a new Image entry, or adding information to an already existing entry. We have since added two more collaborators, PhD researcher Francesco Gangemi and PhD candidate Joseph Williams, to expand the Works entries in preparation for the website launch.

The website will also include a crowdsourcing component for involving users in identifying “mysterious” images, adding information or comments about monuments/sites or images, or inform us about collections relevant to the project. It will also be possible for visitors to register for our mailing list so that they can be informed as new material is incorporated.

### 3. COLLECTIONS

To date the Kingdom of Sicily database contains about 1,300 catalogued images. Although some are already known to scholars from specialized studies (TUZET 1988; SCAMARDI 1998; COMETA 1999; DE SETA 2001, 2006, 2007; MANGONE 2002; GIUFFRÈ *et al.* 2006; SMECCA 2006; CIANCIOLO COSENTINO 2007; GRINGERI PANTANO 2009), a large number are new and unpublished. This initial body of material is, however, just the “tip of the iceberg:” many more images need to be identified and catalogued, and the team discovers more and more material as the investigation proceeds.

To date images have been gathered in the following Italian and European collections:

- Italy. Photographic collections of local superintendencies and of diocesan archives (Napoli, Salerno, Catania, Palermo, Roma); National Libraries (Roma, Napoli); Bibliotheca Hertziana (Rare Books and Photographic collections); Palermo, Fondazione Sicilia; Palermo, Biblioteca regionale; Catania, Biblioteca Regionale and Biblioteca Ursino Recupero; British Academy in Rome; American Academy in Rome.
- Germany. München: Architekturmuseum der Technischen Universität, Residenzmuseum, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek; Berlin: Architekturmuseum der Technischen Universität, Kunstbibliothek-Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett-Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, National Galerie-Handzeichnungen-Sammlung; Museumslandschaft Hessen; Graphische Sammlung Kassel.
- Austria. Wien: Albertina Museum.
- United Kingdom. London: Warburg Institute, Courtauld Institute, Victoria and Albert Museum Print Room; British Museum Print Room, Society of Antiquaries.
- In France. Paris: École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-arts, Bibliothèque de l’Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art.

The following collections have been only partially explored and need further work in order to be completed:

- Italy. Photographic collections of local superintendencies and of diocesan archives.
- United Kingdom. London: RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects), British Architectural Library - Drawings and Archives Collections, RA (Royal Academy of Arts), Tate Gallery, University College-Special Collections, National Library, Soane Museum, Conway Library at the Courtauld Institute, Victoria and Albert Museum-Print Room; Chatsworth: Devonshire Collection.
- Sweden. Stockholm: Konstakademien, Arkitektur Museum, National Museum.
- Germany. Frankfurt am Main: Städel Museum Graphische Sammlung; Chemnitz: Städtische Kunstsammlungen; Dresden: Staatliche Museumsammlungen Kupferstichkabinett; Gera: Kunstgalerie; Bremen: Kunsthalle; Darmstadt: Hessisches Landesmuseum, Landes und Hochschulbibliothek; Basel: Öffentliche Kunstsammlung.
- France. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Académie d'architecture, Musée du Louvre-Département des arts graphiques, Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Photothèque de la Bibliothèque Nationale-collection Société de géographie, Collection Société Française de Photographie, Archive Photographique S.P.A.D.E.M; Lyon: Bibliothèque de l'Académie.

We have yet to explore the potential of the following collections for our database: Finland: Helsinki, Suomen Rakennustaitteen Museo; Ireland: Dublin, National Library; Norway: Oslo, Norsk Arkitekturmuseum and Nasjonalgalleriet; France: Paris, Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie Jacques Doucet; United Kingdom: Stourhead, Sir Richard Colt Hoare and Oxbridge College Library; Holland: Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, Print and Drawings Department; Denmark: Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst and Nationalmuseet; Russia: Moscow, Puskin Museum, The Russian Academy of Arts; St. Petersburg, Hermitage Museum, Russian Museum, St. Petersburg Academy of Arts; Spain: Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España; Barcelona, Real Academia Catalana de Bellas Artes de San Jorge.

Two undergraduate students at the Duke University (Michael O'Sullivan and Jessica Williams), under the supervision of Joseph Williams, are collaborating with the project, searching for material in museums and libraries in New England. O'Sullivan has in particular focused on World War II photography gathered from online and printed sources.

Given the variety of the material collected and catalogued, the acquisition of image rights and copyright fees for the database was assisted by Kevin Smith, director of the Office of Copyright and Scholarly Communication at the Duke

University. Images are always published in low resolution, not downloadable, and for research purposes only, in fulfillment of the “fair use” standards. Copyright of all images lies in any case with the named individual or institution, and permission to reproduce part or all of the images must be requested from the relevant source. During our experience we discovered, however, that a number of institutions have been willing to allow us to use the images without a fee: these have included for example, the British and American Academies in Rome, the Architekturmuseum der Technischen Universität, the Residenzmuseum, the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek and Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in München, the Städel Museum and the Graphische Sammlung in Frankfurt am Main, the Architekturmuseum der Technischen Universität in Berlin, the Museumslandschaft in Hessen, the Graphische Sammlung in Kassel, and the Bibliothèque de l’Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art in Paris.

#### 4. THREE CASE STUDIES

The material collected in the database allows scholars to find images that shed light on the history of individual monuments and sites. The database structure has the potential to recreate historical itineraries through the images, as they can be sorted by creation date, permitting users to visualize the search results in a chronological sequence. It thus becomes possible to reconstruct changes to monuments/sites, or their relation to the surrounding context over time. To further support research, we will create an augmented reality application for web and mobile devices in which historic images can be overlaid on current views of monuments.

Below we offer some examples that illustrate possible uses and interpretation of the material.

##### 4.1 *The Cathedral and the Ursino Castle in Catania*

The volcanic eruption in 1663 and the earthquake in 1669 radically changed the appearance of the Cathedral and the Ursino Castle in Catania, both built as symbols of political power and control over the region, exemplified by their original relation to the coast line. The Cathedral of Catania was founded in 1091 by Count Roger of Hauteville, as a monastery-cathedral, and a Norman monk, Ansger, was appointed bishop-abbot. Ansger erected a monumental Cathedral that loomed over the city and the port. The great scale of the church was a function of the new wealth and jurisdictional power bestowed upon Ansger, who acquired the possessions and rights of the last emir of Catania. The bishop governed the southeast corner of Sicily with the authority of its former Muslim ruler, Ibn ath-Thumnah, with full legal jurisdiction over Catania, its ports, waters and territories, and all rights of governance in the nearby communities.



Fig. 5 – Catania Cathedral in the carved reliefs of the tomb of Queen Mary of Sicily (d. 1401).



Fig. 6 –View of Catania (1584), detail with the Cathedral (A) and the Ursino Castle (B) (Biblioteca Angelica in Rome, BSNS 56/80).

The vast hulk of the Cathedral, built in the dark volcanic stone from nearby Mount Etna, exemplified his power. However, the Norman Cathedral was badly damaged by the earthquake in 1693, as shown in the painting *Catania dal tremuoto del 1669 al 1708* (Private collection): the roof and the inner walls and pilasters for the most part collapsed, and the building was largely rebuilt in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Some parts of the 11<sup>th</sup> century structure survive, along with archaeological excavations and a series of important historic views (for example the early 15<sup>th</sup> century carved reliefs of the tomb of Mary of Sicily, in the cathedral: VITOLO, in press; Fig. 5). These indicate that it was built in a distinctly Norman style and looked like a fortress, with the walls topped by crenellations (GANDOLFO 2007; BRUZELIUS 2014).

The cathedral complex emphasized the authority and visibility of the new bishop over the local population; it also was intended to be visible to travelers or traders who approached the city by sea. A city view by an anonymous artist for bishop Angelo Rocca in 1584 (today at the Biblioteca Angelica in Rome, BSNS 56/80) shows the cathedral with its imposing mass emerging above the coast along with the Ursino Castle. Both monuments dominated the urban landscape (Fig. 6).

Along with the 18<sup>th</sup> century reconstruction of the cathedral, the surrounding urban environment also changed over the centuries. The print, *The city of Catania and Mount Etna. Sicily*, created by William Leighton Leitch and W.R. Smith, and published by Clément Pellé in 1840 shows the incipient modern expansion of the coast area, with new buildings erected on the remains of the 16<sup>th</sup> century city walls. The height of the modern buildings reduced, *de facto*, the “out of scale” dimensions of the Norman cathedral in relation to the urban environment. Some years later a print published in Gino Chierici’s *La Sicilia illustrata nella storia, nell’arte, nei paesi* (Milan 1892, 233) shows the newly constructed railway bridge which, together with the expansion of the harbour area in subsequent decades, caused the distancing of the cathedral from the sea.

The 13<sup>th</sup> century Ursino Castle was erected by emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen as part of a general re-organization of the defensive structures of the region, including the restoration of the Norman fortresses and the erection of new castles (Catania, Syracuse and Augusta) (MAURICI 1997, 155-191; CADEI 1998; DI BLASI 2000). It was intended as a symbol of his power and control over the territory, and dominated the south side of the city. Its imposing quadrangular structure, surrounded by cylindrical towers, was built on a cliff overlooking the sea, as can be seen in the above mentioned drawing at the Biblioteca Angelica, and in another city view of 1598 (BRAUN, HOHENBERG, 5, 1598, tav. 69). As the result of the volcanic explosion of 1663, the lava flow filled the moat and extended the coastline, so that the castle is now a kilometer inland. The print published by Gino Chierici (1892, 245) shows the

castle before the excavation of the moat in the 1930s and before a multi-phase reconstruction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (the most recent in 2008: CAFFO 2009). A coastal profile at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century shows how urban expansion transformed the topographical concept of the castle, one that has repeatedly changed its function and has now become a Civic Museum.

#### 4.2 *The Porta Somma and the Rocca dei Rettori in Benevento*

The Rocca dei Rettori was founded in 1321 on previous foundations (a Lombard fortification and an 8<sup>th</sup> century Benedictine monastery) on the orders of popes John XXII and Benedict XII. After the violent rebellion of 1316 against papal authority (the city was an enclave of the Papal State), in which the rector Ugo de Laysac was almost killed, John XXII requested that the governor, William of Balaeto, provide a safer residence for the papal rectors (SANTORO 1972; DE FELICE *et al.* 1990; BOVE 2014).

The location of the castle, on the fortified perimeter at the east gate, was strategic because on one side it dominated the city centre, and on the other controlled the main access road which connected Benevento and Avellino. The original structure had a *castrum* and a *palatium* with a courtyard in the centre, protected by walls and a moat. The keep, arranged with towers along its walls, is the only part of the structure that has remained relatively intact. The castle incorporated on the northeast side remains of an high medieval gate (the Porta Somma), that was rebuilt in another location.

The Rocca was an imposing building that loomed over the city of Benevento and was well visible from afar, as can be seen in various city maps and views. A 15<sup>th</sup> century engraving of a bird's eye view of Benevento, today at the local Museo del Sannio, is one of the oldest known. The view, probably made from the city's eastern side, shows the keep in the foreground, and on the right the entrance gate of Porta Somma. A drawing made by an anonymous artist in ca. 1583 (today at the Biblioteca Angelica in Rome, BSNS 56/57) (Fig. 7) and the engraving made by Donato Piperno between 1643 and 1673 (Benevento, Museo del Sannio, inv. 5387) show the city surrounded by walls, and its most important civic and religious buildings, including the city gates and towers (all the mentioned views are available on: <http://www.iconografiacittaeuropea.it/>). The Rocca emerges on the east side as the most impressive building near the walls. Finally, the print produced by Charles Bantley and J. Godden (WRIGHT 1851, 70) shows the castle from afar, as it would have been seen by a traveller approaching the city from the east (Fig. 8).

Porta Somma was demolished in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century after the Unification of Italy, as part of the modernization of Benevento, a process that entailed the creation of new spaces and arteries. Achille Vianelli painted a view of the "Largo del Castello" (which is today piazza IV Novembre), with the Rocca and the Porta Somma in 1861, before these radical interventions

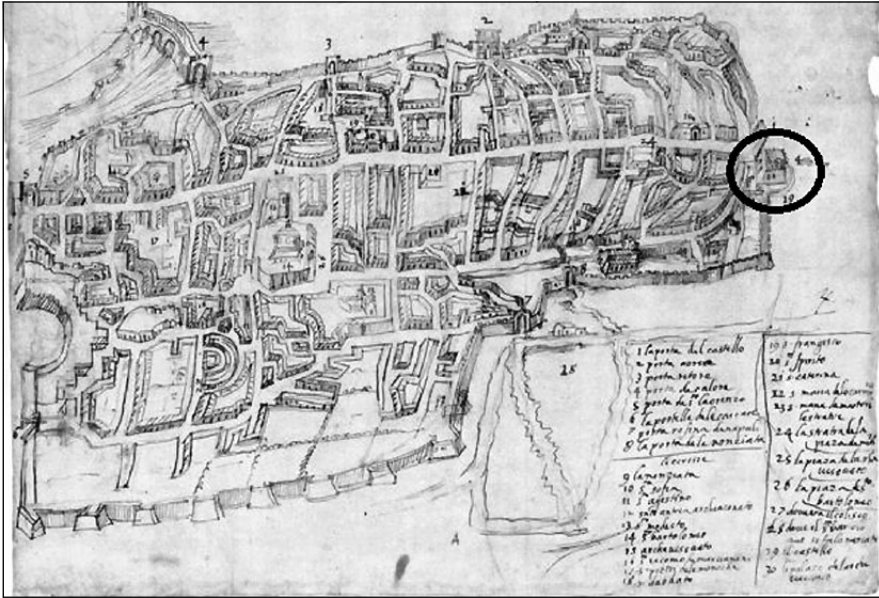


Fig. 7 – View of Benevento (1583), with the Rocca dei Rettori on the right (Biblioteca Angelica in Rome, BSNS 56/57).

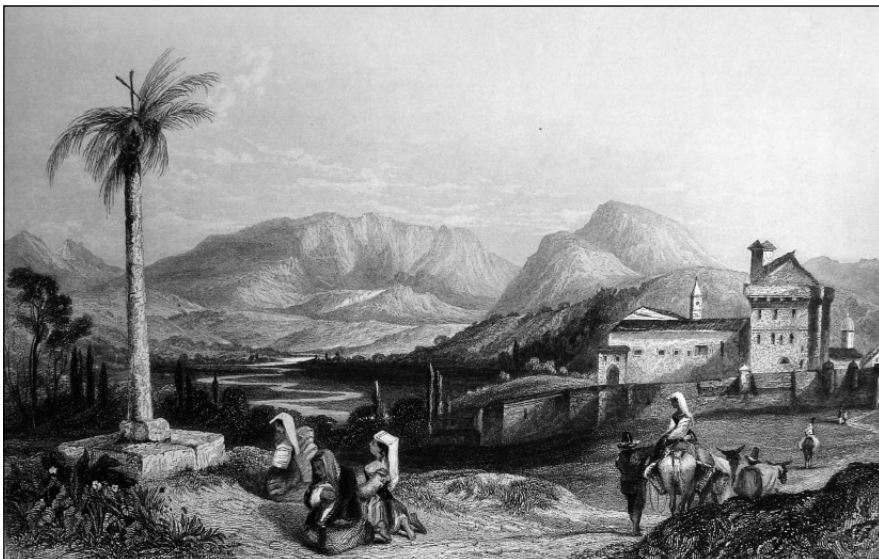


Fig. 8 – C. Bantley, J. Godden, Scene in Benevento. The Principality of Tallergrand. Calabria, in G.N. WRIGHT, *The Shores and Islands of the Mediterranean*, London-Paris 1851, 70.



(Benevento, Private collection). The current appearance of the Rocca is the result of numerous renovations and additions that begun in the 15<sup>th</sup> and continued through the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, when it was enlarged and became a jail, active until 1865.

After the 1702 earthquake the edifice was partially rebuilt under the design by Carlo Buratti, and subsequently restored by Almerico Meomartini in 1890. Further reconstruction was undertaken in the 1990s. The architectural design of the Rocca has been modified many times over the centuries, and its symbolic importance has been obliterated by the urbanization of the area. Indeed, as a result of the modern growth of the city, the Rocca is now located in the city centre.

### 4.3 The church of Santa Chiara in Naples

The church and double convent of Santa Chiara were founded in 1310 by king Robert of Anjou and queen Sancia of Mallorca as one of their first acts after their coronation in 1309. The church, which surpasses in scale any other convent of the Franciscan order, was erected to the southwest of the city centre, with the façade oriented towards the most densely used commercial artery of Naples. The plan consists of a long nave flanked by lateral chapels and terminating with the rectangular friar's choir, where the main altar is located. Beyond the flat end wall is the nun's choir, which is divided into three spaces by two piers. The church served in the 14<sup>th</sup> century as the setting for court ceremonies, and the annual procession of the *Corpus Domini* used to stop in Santa Chiara – the only church to enjoy this privilege – before returning to the Cathedral.

Robert of Anjou and his heirs were buried in the church. The imposing mass of the king's tomb, constructed by the Florentine brothers Pacio and Giovanni Bertini and located immediately behind the main altar, dominated the inner space. The Neapolitan aristocracy erected altars and tombs in the lateral chapels, recreating the structures of the court in the sacred space of the church. The interior, as described in documents and from surviving fragments, was lavishly decorated by frescoes, tombs, painted panels, liturgical furnishings and carved reliefs (BERTAUX 1898; BOLOGNA 1969, *passim*; VENDITTI 1969, 759-778; LEONE 1993; CHELAZZI DINI 1996; GAGLIONE 1996, 2007, 2008; ENDERLEIN 1997, *passim*; MICHALSKY 2000, *passim*; BRUZELIUS 2004, 133-153; LEONE DE CASTRIS 2006, *passim*; BALDELLI 2007, *passim*; VITOLO 2009, 2010; ACETO 2011, 190-192, 203-205, 207, 210; BOCK 2011, *passim*; LUCHERINI 2011; ACETO *et al.* 2014).

Between ca. 1742 and 1796 the church interior was completely encased in a sumptuous Baroque decoration designed by Domenico Antonio Vaccaro (Fig. 9). Only part of this inner ornament has survived, documented by photos taken by the local Superintendency at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning



Fig. 9 – Interior view of the church of Santa Chiara in Naples before 1943 (Soprintendenza per i Beni architettonici, paesaggistici, storici, artistici ed etnoantropologici per Napoli e la provincia).



Fig. 10 – Interior view of the church of Santa Chiara in Naples destroyed by fire after the bombing of 4<sup>th</sup> August 1943 (Rome, The British School, WP[PHP]-War01-0051).

of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Other images document the Angevin tombs located in the presbytery and other spaces of the church; the polychromed marble altar; the carved reliefs executed by the Bertini brothers and their workshop that probably were located on the choir screen. Many noble tombs, although dismantled and in a fragmentary state, have been preserved as symbols of the antiquity of family lineages.

The original structure underneath the Baroque decoration was revealed only in August 1943, when Allied incendiary bombs caused a fire that destroyed the roof, the stucco and painted Baroque decoration and calcinated the walls (Fig. 10). The church was subsequently restored in an austere reconstruction. The medieval tombs and carved reliefs, partially preserved, recovered and restored by the Florentine *Opificio delle Pietre Dure*, are today displayed in the church and in the Museo dell'Opera di Santa Chiara. Photos taken after the fire document the extent of the disaster and are indispensable tools for understanding the extent to which the present building represents a transformation. The destruction of Santa Chiara is fortunately richly documented by the photographic collections in the Superintendencies of Naples and Rome, the British School in Rome (<http://www.bsrdigitalcollections.it/>) and the Marburg Photo Archive (<http://www.fotomarburg.de/>).

## 5. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

The next developmental phase of the project will be articulated on various levels:

- 1) Enlarge and expand the materials in the database, gathering new material in European and American collections. To this end we will also incorporate a crowdsourcing component to include private collections, such as the photographs and drawings of World War II veterans.
- 2) Enlarge the geographical representation and typology of materials, focusing on geographical areas not yet well represented in the collection (Basilicata, Molise, Calabria).
- 3) Amplify the typology of sources to include for example images in illuminated books.

To expand the utility of the database we plan to develop an interactive mapping interface. The project aims to emphasize the spatial/topographical relational evidence between monuments and their urban and landscape context. Medieval buildings have often been studied in isolation (a monastic church separately from the convent, a church with little concern for the urban topography in which it is located). A vital component of the study of the material past is the relationship of structures to one-another, and the creation of relational maps can be an important component of this. Contextual concerns are not only topographical, however, as they also involve the means of access,

communication and sources of building materials and labor. The database and the interactive map are intended to act as complementary modes of conceptualizing a historical situation that will allow a more complex picture of an important body of medieval architecture to emerge.

When this component is completed, the database will not only be consultable on its own, but will also be linked to interactive maps that show the locations of sites, roads, ports, and other modes of travel in relation to the geophysical and political features of the region. The maps will be conceived with overlays so that specific areas can be visualized as they changed over time during different political regimes (Norman, Swabian, Angevin and Aragonese), reflecting dynamic process as new institutions were introduced, or grew and changed over time. The maps will include monuments that no longer survive, and be searchable by types of institutions (specific religious orders, churches, castles, palaces, gates, bridges, towers) as well as by artistic styles. We hope that it will thus be possible to visualize the transformations of sites over time. The map will interact with the material on each specific site in the database in order to show the documentation for important changes as shown in archival collections. This tool will enable scholars to craft a personal approach to their research questions, for example identifying the spread of certain types of strategic foundations (such as castles or religious institutions), or considering issues such as “center” and “periphery,” analyzing the relations of monuments and territory in relation to symbolic or strategic objectives within different local conditions.

Finally, the map will also permit the study of the itineraries of artists, architects, scholars and travellers of modern periods, so that we may be able to reflect upon the accumulated knowledge derived from travel and movement through space. This feature may be useful for scholars of the Grand Tour, and may enable us to reflect on changes in types of travel (by sea or over land) in relation to phenomena such as the prevalence of malaria in certain places and at certain seasons.

The team continues to expand its research activities, examining the new types of questions that have been stimulated by the use of a digital resource for the history of art, architecture and cities. A series of case studies (such as those presented in § 4 of this essay) will be published as a book to demonstrate the utility of this type of data collection for scholarship: how access to fundamental but unpublished information in the database can transform the nature of scholarly research. As noted above, one of our aims is to represent the changing dialectic between monuments and the surrounding landscape. In relation to this approach, the proposed book will consider each monument individually, engaging with successive changes and transformations to present a more comprehensive and coherent understanding of certain periods of South Italian culture and their figural representation.

The research team is concerned with chronologically “transverse” themes that present contrasts between places and contexts, such as the different types and patterns of religious settlements, the cult of saints, the impact of the merchant classes, the reuse of antique elements (columns, capitals, *spolia* in general) and royal as well as local strategies of representation. The analysis of newly accessible visual and historical material will let researchers rethink traditional narratives in relation to our new evidence as part of understanding the “life of a place over time” (its architectural, decorative and structural transformations as a result of repairs or changing functions or tastes).

## 6. CONCLUSION

We hope this initiative will become a fundamental resource for the documentation and study of the rich historic patrimony (cities, works of art, buildings) produced by the Norman, Swabian, Angevin and Aragonese dynasties of South Italy. The project will have a significant impact on research, restoration, and appreciation of a historic legacy diffused throughout South Italy – not only in the major urban centers, but also in the smaller (but no less important) cities (such as Galatina, Nola, Nardò, for example) as well as the countryside. We are deeply concerned with the issue of monuments as part of the transmission of memory and identity, as well as the importance of historical preservation informed by the full range of documentary resources.

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#### ABSTRACT

The Kingdom of Sicily Image Database uses new media technologies to reframe our understanding of medieval Europe by focusing on the role of the built environment for the formation of state identity in the medieval Kingdom of Sicily ruled by Norman, Swabian, Angevin and Aragonese dynasties (950-1420). The theme is important for two reasons: the significance of South Italy as a prototype of multicultural state formation and the highly fragmentary (war bombardment, earthquakes, urban transformation) state of the sites that played a central role in the power structures of this new state. A comprehensive database of historical images of monuments and cities (prints, drawings, maps, photographs, etc.) made by scholars, artists and travellers from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, can enable scholars and the public to recover the appearance of the landscape, of cities, and of individual monuments prior to radical renovations or destructions. An interdisciplinary research team is conducting a systematic survey and critical cataloguing of images dispersed in the archives, museums and libraries of Italy, Europe and US.