

Giulio Genoino. *Memoriale dal carcere al Re di Spagna*.

Ed. and trans. Rosario Villari. Fondazione Luigi Firpo Centro di studi sul pensiero politico: Studi e testi 34. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2012. xvi + 64 pp. €14. ISBN: 978-88-222-6227-1.

Rosario Villari has published two previously unknown manuscripts from the Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, related to the failed reform of Naples under Spanish rule at the time of the viceroy Pedro de Téllez-Girón, Duke of Osuna (1616–20). Both documents are a self-described “external appendix” to chapter 4 in Villari’s recent magisterial account of the 1647 revolt of Naples (*Un sogno di libertà: Napoli nel declino di un impero 1585–1648* [2012]). After Villari’s short introduction and note on the texts, Giulio Genoino’s memorial from prison — dated between November and December 1620, with four appendixes — and his interrogation of 3 August 1621 provide extraordinary insight into the persona and voice of Genoino, his reform program, its support by Osuna, the popular movement it engendered,

and the Spanish court's mishandling of the political situation in Naples. These documents confirm the revisionist reinterpretation of the so-called Revolt of Masaniello as a concerted political movement of the nonnoble professional and commercial classes against noble elites, rather than an ephemeral tax revolt led by a simple plebe gone mad with the burdens of power.

Villari's classic account of the origins of the Neapolitan revolt (*La Rivolta antispagnolo a Napoli. Le origini, 1585–1647* [1967]) has had its six chapters revised and incorporated into the eighteen chapters and 715 pages of *Un sogno di libertà*, his much-awaited concluding study that now narrates the long gestation period of the revolt, its short ten-day leadership under Masaniello in July 1647, and the course of debates and decisions during its nine-month standoff with Spain before the compromise and Spanish reconquest in April 1648. The Neapolitan "dream of liberty" is grounded in the nitty-gritty of local Neapolitan politics, the rivalry between nobles and *popolo* in the capital, insurrection in the countryside, and endemic corruption under Spanish rule, all of which is situated in its wide European context of the seventeenth-century crisis, the Thirty Years' War, the decline of imperial Spain, and the persistent ideology of republicanism. Explicit throughout Villari's painstaking reconstruction of the contingencies of the rebellion in its exhaustive collection of rediscovered primary sources and its meticulous analysis of the concerted opposition to reform is a laser-like focus on the Neapolitan hopes for the establishment of a republic and the political acumen of Giulio Genoino, the man behind these aspirations for freedom.

Chapter 4, "Un tentativo di riforma," the first new chapter in *Un sogno di libertà*, introduces the anomalous stranglehold that the Neapolitan nobility held over the city council of Naples with six votes from its five noble wards (*seggi*) that could effectively override the single vote from the one city-wide ward represented by the people's *eletto di popolo*. Genoino first held this office in May 1619 and with Viceroy Osuna's approval began to lay out a plan for the revitalization of *popolo* power. Fiercely opposed by the nobility, Genoino and Osuna became the objects of false accusations. Osuna was removed from office a year later in June 1620; Genoino was charged with sedition at the end of September 1620; and Osuna himself was arrested in Madrid one week after the death of Philip III in April 1621 with no explicit charge, but his real crime had been to support the reform of Neapolitan institutions.

This prerevolt reform program of 1620 and the events surrounding the arrest of Genoino are the central topics of the newly discovered documents. The memorial of Genoino offers direct testimony rebutting the false charges against him, confirms his collaboration with Osuna, reports on the opposition of his adversaries, and establishes his character and faith in his idealist political convictions of parity between the Neapolitan nobility and *popolo* that would resurface as the intellectual foundation for the revolt of 1647. Genoino emerges with a distinctive political language and thought that makes him one of the principal Neapolitan political actors of the first half of the seventeenth century. Genoino's dream of political parity in the internal government of Naples and in its rapport with the monarchy in Madrid

was illusory. Release from imprisonment in a Spanish fortress in North Africa after more than twenty years only to have his political reform program flame out a second time in 1647 resulted in a final exile and the silence of a forgotten history.

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