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*The Art of Annunziata: A hospital church in Sant'Agata de' Goti*

My dissertation, *The Art of Annunziata*, engages the frameworks of mobility and port cities to consider the dissemination of Neapolitan artists, artistic techniques, and ideologies in smaller towns in Campania in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. My principal research site, the town of Sant'Agata de' Goti, is located approximately forty kilometers northeast of Naples and is home to a church called SS. Annunziata that is rich in fresco fragments. These wall paintings have a storied past. They were painted at the turn of the fifteenth century, completely hidden by plaster decoration in the 1860s, rediscovered during a destructive thunder storm a century later, and restored from 1968 to 1977. The apse features life-size standing portraits of saints—including Leonard of Noblac, Elizabeth of Hungary, and Nicholas of Bari—accompanied by episodic scenes of their lives and miracles. The counterfaçade displays a spectacular Last Judgment hierarchically topped by Christ in Majesty, who gestures to welcome the blessed to heaven and condemn the damned to hell. His right palm is positioned face up and his left turned down, clear signs of hospitality and banishment. The economic disparity between those in heaven and hell is also striking. Saint Peter leads impeccably clad saints, royals, ecclesiastics, and nobles through the Gates of Paradise while workers labor away at their various trades in the Inferno, their naked bodies bitten by serpents and licked by flames.

My research will expand existing analysis of the frescoes to consider SS. Annunziata in the context of its status as a hospital church. The site in Sant'Agata de' Goti was part of a group of welfare institutions in the Kingdom of Naples called the Casa Santa dell'Annunziata. Numbering about thirty sites, the first Annunziata were founded around 1318 in Naples, Capua, and Aversa and maintained by nobility, confraternity members, and working-class citizens. In the following decade, hospitals based on this model were established in the smaller towns of Melfi, Gaeta, Sulmona, Benevento, Sala Consilina, Marianise and Casertavecchia. More Annunziata appeared throughout the kingdom in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and provided charitable services to local communities. These included food and shelter for the poor, temporary lodging for pilgrims and travelers, and resources to house and care for abandoned children. The church of SS. Annunziata in Sant'Agata de' Goti was recorded as a Casa Santa in 1354, although little evidence survives of its services and impact. My dissertation uses the frescoes to write a social history of the ways in which the painted images reflect the pious values, civic governance, and charitable culture of the institution. Chapters about materiality, artistry, and patronage will allow for this work to serve as a case study for the exploration of lesser-known anonymous frescoes in the Kingdom of Naples and set the stage for future work on the art and architecture of Annunziata churches.