

VASES & VOLCANOES: NAPLES & THE HAMILTONS

WEDNESDAY 6 – TUESDAY 12 OCTOBER 2010
(7 DAYS)

LECTURER: TOM DUNCAN

£1895

- Relive a Grand Tour of Naples
- Pompeii and Herculaneum explored in depth
- Explore further afield when we visit the Greek city at Paestum
- Trace the development of Renaissance and Baroque art and architecture
- Enjoy the comforts of an excellent hotel on the famed Bay of Naples



The “Hamilton Vase” as engraved for d’Hancarville’s edition of Sir William’s collection

OVERVIEW

Sir William Hamilton was British envoy to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies from 1764 to 1800. His period in office coincided with the “rediscovery” of Pompeii, Herculaneum, Paestum and a host of other sites. He possessed a wide range of influential friends and one of his most extraordinary achievements has to have been his marriage to the infamous Emma Hart, the later *confidante* of Nelson.

It was in the mid eighteenth century that the famously lethargic Bourbon dynasty finally authorised systematic “archaeological” exploration of the extraordinary places within its control. Hamilton, an intelligent, sophisticated and particularly acquisitive individual, was ideally placed to make the most of such unprecedented opportunities. Sir William moved suavely about with royal approval, excavating and collecting until he had amassed the finest non-royal collection of antiquities assembled at that time. Choice pieces were eventually published in a series of luxury folios, the most famous of which are the four volumes edited by Baron d’Hancarville, illustrating his collection of vases and other treasures.

Ours will be a journey in the manner of a true “Grand Tourist” as we move in the footsteps of the Hamiltons and their friends, shadowed by Vesuvius, as we too seek to find that “attic grace” so beloved by the eighteenth century, a grace captured in the “Hamilton Vase” once owned by Sir William and pictured above.

We stay at the very comfortable 5* Grand Hotel Santa Lucia, situated picturesquely on the shores of the Bay of Naples. It is an easy walk to and from the city centre, though strategically placed at enough distance from its many disparate temptations!

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Wednesday 6 October – We fly from Gatwick mid morning with BA to Naples. We transfer by coach to our hotel, the **Grand Hotel Santa Lucia** and we begin with an orientation walking tour of the centre of **Naples**. There will be a group dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 2: Thursday 7 October - We spend the day visiting the remarkable Greek temples and Museum at **Paestum** on the Gulf of Salerno. This was a Greek colony taken over by the Romans and then abandoned with the fall of the Empire. The temples are the finest surviving examples of the Greek Doric style on the Italian mainland. We will have a group lunch at Paestum and on our return to Naples the evening will be free.

Day 3: Friday 8 October - The buried city of **Herculaneum** is a remarkable site, the first indication we will see of the power of Vesuvius when it exploded that fateful day in August, AD 79. After some free time for lunch we visit

the nearby Roman Villa at **Oplontis**, said to be that of Nero's wife, Poppaea, famed for its frescoes. The evening will be free.

Day 4: Saturday 9 October – **Pompeii** needs no introduction. It remains utterly impressive in its mute testimony to the quality and range of Roman life, love and death. We spend a day slowly making our way round all the major surviving public monuments and a representative selection of the city's private houses and nearby villas. There will be a break for a simple snack lunch on site and on our return to Naples there will be a group dinner later that evening.

Day 5: Sunday 10 October – This morning we visit the huge Baroque palace at **Caserta** built for the Bourbon dynasty who ruled from Naples from the eighteenth century onwards. After a free period for lunch, which is not included, we return to Naples. The **Archaeological Museum** has an unrivalled collection of antiquities including the most interesting finds from Herculaneum and Pompeii. The evening will be free.

Day 6: Monday 11 October - **Naples** (from the Greek *nea polis*, or new city) is a talisman for many of the places we visit: originally a Greek colony, then a Roman city, followed by decline during the "Dark Ages" the city was subsequently revived in late medieval times under the House of Aragon dynasty. This led to a flowering of visual culture during the renaissance and spectacular versions of the Baroque and Rococo styles under the Spanish Habsburgs and Bourbons. A representative selection of churches and votive chapels (many decorated with wildly enthusiastic plasterwork!) are included in the morning's walking tour. The remainder of the day will include free time for a visit to the islands of Ischia or Capri. We meet again in the evening for our final group dinner.

Day 7: Tuesday 12 October - The **Capodimonte Museum** is full of great masterpieces, not least the collection of paintings and sculptured formed by the Farnese family of Rome and Parma and which came to Naples through marriage. This will be our final visit before we drive to the airport for our return flight to Gatwick with BA.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £1895

Deposit £195

Price without flights £1720

Single Supplement £395 (Double for Sole Use)

Hotel 6 nights with Breakfast at 5* Grand Hotel Santa Lucia

Tour Manager James Hill

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA2610** Depart London Gatwick (North Terminal) **1055** arrive Naples **1435**

Return: **BA2611** Depart Naples **1520** arrive London Gatwick (North Terminal) **1705**

Price includes 3 Dinners & 1 Lunch with water, wine & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities

Not included Travel to & from Gatwick, 3 Dinners & 5 Lunches

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