



# Virgil's Golden Egg and Other Neapolitan Miracles: An Investigation into the Sources of Creativity: 0

*Michael A. Ledeen*

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## **Virgil's Golden Egg and Other Neapolitan Miracles: An Investigation into the Sources of Creativity: 0**

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Savvy Italians will tell you that Neapolitans are considered the cleverest, most imaginative, most romantic, and the most entertaining people in the country.

The world's finest men's fashions are Neapolitan, Italy's most celebrated popular songs and a high proportion of popular and operatic singers are Neapolitan—starting with Enrico Caruso. Sophia Loren and Totò are famously Neapolitan. Divorce Italian Style and Marriage Italian Style were based on plays written by the great Neapolitan Eduardo de Filippo. If you check the Italian literary awards year after year, you will find an amazingly high proportion of Neapolitans walking off with the highest honors.

Naples has been a great creative center for hundreds of years. Neapolitan creativity has survived centuries of foreign occupation, widespread misery, the end of its role as a great capital city, repeated natural catastrophes, and terrible epidemics. What accounts for the creativity of Naples? The sorcerer Virgil is said to have created a Golden Egg, inside a crystal sphere, to save Naples from natural catastrophe. The egg, locked in an iron cage, was buried beneath a castle—still known as the "Egg Castle"—to give it stability and to give eternal life to Naples. Michael Ledeen suggests some surprising answers in a highly original exploration of Neapolitan life and death that ranges from religion to organized crime, war and violence. His deep affection for this remarkable city and its people is evident on every page.

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