

NEAPOLITAN BISHOPS AS PATRONS OF ART:  
FROM ANJOU TO ARAGON

*LOS OBISPOS NAPOLITANOS COMO PATROCINADORES DE ARTE:  
DE ANJOU A ARAGÓN*

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*Abstract:* Among the Neapolitan nobility, the Carafa were certainly the most faithful and devoted to the House of Aragon. From 1458 to 1576 the Carafa held the office of the Neapolitan archbishopric nearly without interruption. Their patronage –the refurbishing of the apse and crypt around 1500, the *Succorpo di San Gennaro*–, is put into a long-term perspective of Neapolitan episcopal patronage. The aim is to show how the existing fabric of the cathedral determined the actions of each patron from Angevin times onwards.

*Key words:* private chapel; ecclesiastical space; family patronage; relics; architectural history around 1500; Early Christian revival.

*Resumen:* Dentro de la nobleza napolitana, los Carafa fueron sin duda los más fieles y devotos a la Casa de Aragón. Desde 1458 hasta 1576, la familia Carafa ocupó el arzobispado napolitano casi sin interrupción. Su mecenazgo –la restauración del ábside y la cripta de la catedral alrededor de 1500, el *Succorpo di San Gennaro*–, se sitúa en una perspectiva del patronazgo episcopal napolitano a largo plazo. El objetivo es mostrar cómo la fábrica existente de la catedral determinó las acciones de cada patrocinador desde los tiempos angevinos.

*Palabras clave:* capilla privada; espacio eclesiástico; patronazgo familiar; reliquias; historia arquitectónica en torno a 1500; renacimiento del cristianismo primitivo.

SUMARIO

1. Introduction.– 2. Angevin Beginnings: Episcopal Patronage between *famiglia episcopale* and *consanguinitas*.– 3. Demonstrating Episcopal Supremacy.– 4. Claiming Urban Presence.– 5. Dissolution in Unity: the Carafa, the Aragon and the *Succorpo*.– 6. Cited Bibliography.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between art and episcopal power has always been close. Naples is no exception, and the cathedral is, quite naturally, one of the city's most imposing churches. The building and its monuments stand for the glory and continuity of episcopal power. Starting in Early Christian times, the archbishops of Naples engaged in various construction campaigns and embellished their church with mosaics, sculptures and painted images. What today appears as a rich and compact unity is, however, the result of a long historical process, during which the church's appearance changed profoundly and repeatedly. Episcopal interventions are not chronologically consistent but rather form a loose sequence. Periods without any remarkable artistic patronage were followed by more intense phases with more incisive actions.

Several phases still determine the cathedral's appearance today: the first phase, around 1300, included the construction of the present gothic building and its first programmatic decoration accentuating episcopal succession; the second phase, around 1400, added a lavishly sculpted portal to the façade, giving it outstanding visibility in the urban context; the third phase took place around 1500, when the area of the presbytery was completely transformed to include a strikingly modern altar piece by Perugino and a vast new crypt, the so-called *Succorpo di San Gennaro*. The privatization of ecclesiastical space reached here a new quality. Each phase had therefore its particularities and protagonists, and although the theme of episcopal patronage seems to be clearly defined, the Neapolitan evolution shows the difficulties arising from a too narrow definition focused only on bishops as actors. Canons and cardinals need to be taken into account as well when considering episcopal patronage.

Looking at episcopal patronage with a long-term perspective can help to better understand the individual decisions and actions of each patron. Each episcopal intervention had to take into account what had been built before. Each intervention had to be carefully weighted programmatically: to which tradition did the patron wish to adhere? What had been done before, and what could still be done when the patron decided to intervene on the existing fabric of the cathedral? Regarding Naples, one could say that the fabric of the Angevin cathedral determined episcopal patronage under the Aragonese. The patronage of the Carafa during the fifteenth and sixteenth century must therefore be seen as being part of a long tradition, in which it is thoroughly embedded and to which it refers.

Another pertinent aspect in the study of episcopal patronage in Naples is linked to the question of the patron's origin. One of the most impor-

tant dilemmas in episcopal patronage was the question of which “family” the bishop wanted to honor, and which he wanted to promote most: his physical *consanguinitas*, or the episcopal lineage he belonged to. Analogically to the discussion about double motherhood in patristic literature<sup>1</sup>, one could postulate that *habet matres duas episcopus*. For Naples, this question is of considerable importance, as the choice of officeholder underwent a fundamental change in ethnicity and origin during the period in question. Starting with the arrival of the Angevins in 1266, a series of French clerics rose to the Neapolitan episcopate. The local nobility, however, also strove for the episcopal office, and increasingly succeeded in assuring this honor for themselves. After the outbreak of the Great Schism in 1378, no more French clergymen rose to the Neapolitan cathedra. The question of origin is directly related to the character of episcopal patronage. As foreign clerics normally had no local family bonds, their patronage tended primarily to underline episcopal succession and ecclesiastical dignity, whereas bishops from the local nobility were more likely to consider their family’s interests and to prefer investing in private chapels<sup>2</sup>. The episcopal monuments visible in the cathedral today still attest to this divergence of choice and to the role the local bishops had in the growing privatization of the ecclesiastical space.

A further change occurred when competition between local families for the Neapolitan cathedra temporarily came to a halt. Starting in 1458, the Neapolitan see was firm in the hands of one family, the Carafa, which provided nearly all archbishops for over a hundred years, until 1576<sup>3</sup>. It is therefore not surprising that the patronage of the Carafa marked a profound change in the history of the cathedral. The construction of the *Succorpo* under the apse and the placement of a new altarpiece on the high altar in the apse blurred the lines of what could be considered a private chapel and opened up new boundaries in claiming the cathedral’s space for personal self-representation. By appropriating the city’s main saint, whose relics he wanted to safeguard in the *Succorpo*, Cardinal Oliviero Carafa perfectly assimilated the glory of the cathedral and the city with the personal glory of his family.

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<sup>1</sup> On the concept of double motherhood –be it the Virgin Mary as corporal mother of Christ and spiritual mother in the ecclesiastic sense of Maria-Ecclesia, or the antithesis of Eve and Mary– see Thérél 1984, pp. 123-136; Seidel 1977, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> The cathedral’s status as *mater et caput* made private family chapels and heraldic representations even more valuable for social prestige, especially in comparison with other churches, such as those of the mendicant orders, with their abundance of private spaces.

<sup>3</sup> On the effects of the Counter Reformation on sixteenth century episcopal patronage under the Carafa see Ascher 2004.

## 2. ANGEVIN BEGINNINGS: EPISCOPAL PATRONAGE BETWEEN *FAMIGLIA EPISCOPALE* AND *CONSANGUINITAS*

After the defeat of the Hohenstaufen in 1266, the Anjou became the new rulers of the Kingdom of Sicily. The court was French, and French dignitaries took over the administration of the kingdom, not always to the liking of the local population. This conquest was followed by a period of political difficulties. The Vespers in 1282 and a war against Peter of Aragon led to the loss of the island of Sicily and to the captivity of the royal heir, Charles (II) of Anjou, who was imprisoned first in Cefalù, Sicily, and then in Catalonia. Since Palermo was then in the hands of the Aragonese king, Naples became the new capital of the kingdom. When Charles was released from captivity in 1288 and came back to Naples, he launched a program of urban renewal. Among the various monumental building campaigns, especially of new mendicant churches, also figured the construction of a new and larger cathedral in modern gothic forms.

It was the Archbishop Filippo Capece Minutolo (1288-1301) who initiated the construction of the new gothic cathedral in 1294, for which he obtained significant royal support<sup>4</sup>. He was not only archbishop of Naples but also strongly connected to the royal family: as a former canon of the cathedral, Filippo Minutolo had already been active as an ambassador for the king's father in Tuscany and Lombardy before serving Charles II as *dilecto consiliario familiari et fedeli nostri*<sup>5</sup>. He, too, was responsible for ordaining the king's older brother Louis, the future saint and bishop of Toulouse. It is therefore not surprising that the Anjou, despite the general inclination of their family members to the mendicant orders, found their resting place in the cathedral. The mortal remains of Charles I (†1285), his nephew and king of Hungary Charles Martel (†1295) and his wife Clemence of Habsburg (†1297) were placed in the apse alongside the wall behind the high altar (fig. 1)<sup>6</sup>. The royal presence, however, was only one part of the building's noble appearance and it was well embedded in its general layout.

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<sup>4</sup> The first archbishop under Angevin rule, the Burgundian Ayglerius had already begun to assess possessions moved or lost under the Hohenstaufen. On the king's financial support and building details see Bock 2002; Bruzelius 2005, pp. 96-110; Lucherini 2009b, pp. 202-210; Gaglione 2011, pp. 197-220; for a detailed analysis of the building process Aceto 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Della Marra 1641, p. 284; De Frede 1975.

<sup>6</sup> Although the remains of Charles I wife Beatrix of Provence (†1267) had already been moved to Provence in 1277, the liturgical memory was kept up in the royal chapel, which was still under construction in 1297. Enderlein 1997, pp. 36-39; Michalsky 2000, pp. 242-247, cat. n.º 4, pp. 253-254 and cat. n.º 8; on the chapel of St. Louis to the left of the transept built by Louis of Tarent Lucherini 2007a; Aceto 2019, pp. 163-164; for the royal monuments Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 136-154; Lucherini 2009b, pp. 241-251; 2018.

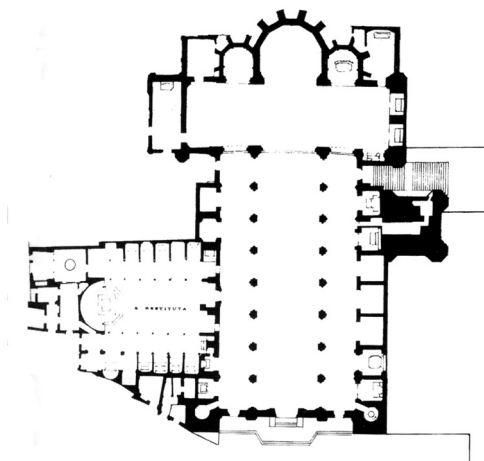


Fig. 1. Naples, cathedral. Plan. 14<sup>th</sup> century. Photo by the author.

The core program of the cathedral emphasized the holiness, tradition and venerability of the episcopal see. This can be seen in the placement of relics and the dedication of altars and chapels: the main altar was situated in the middle of the apse and contained the relics of Agrippinus, Acuzio and Eutiche, the companions of the Early Christian Neapolitan bishop-saint Januarius<sup>7</sup>. The two lateral chapels were dedicated to Saint Aspreno, who had been converted by Saint Peter himself and who was the founder of the first cathedral, and to Saint Atanasio, a ninth-century bishop whose relics had recently been brought to the new cathedral from catacombs just outside the city<sup>8</sup>. All these measures were aimed at augmenting the sanctity of the cathedral and evidencing its age, honor and descendance from a holy lineage of bishops and martyrs.

For his own funeral monument, Filippo Minutolo took a completely different turn by adding one of the city's first private family chapels to the building<sup>9</sup>. Its position at the eastern end of the right transept, not far from the side-entrance to the cathedral –at those times probably the most used– from one of Naples' main streets and close to one of the political meeting places of the city's nobility, the Seggio di Capuana, demonstrates the strategic intentions of this

<sup>7</sup> Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 90-93.

<sup>8</sup> Romano 2002, pp. 10-11; Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 189-198. The chapel of Saint Aspreno was allotted to the Tocco family only in 1370 by archbishop Bertrand de Rodez. Walter 1967.

<sup>9</sup> To this day, the chapel is autonomous and not the property of the cathedral clergy. The chapel does not open up to the transept, but is accessible only through a small door. For the general context see Gardner 2002.

choice (fig. 1)<sup>10</sup>. The Minutolo chapel was sumptuously decorated with a Cosmati pavement, the funeral monument of the archbishop and fresco paintings on the walls, which show not only holy stories but also portray several members of the family<sup>11</sup>. His tomb consisted of a Cosmati-decorated sarcophagus resting on columns and his *gisant*, introducing the latest funeral fashions of the Roman Curia to Naples (fig. 2)<sup>12</sup>. The Minutolo chapel illustrates its patron's deviation from archiepiscopal tradition in favor of an exclusive concentration on family glory and *memoria*. He even obtained his chapel to be placed directly under papal jurisdiction, being thus exempted from episcopal or canonical control<sup>13</sup>. This was, of course, a deliberate and revealing choice. As the founder of the new cathedral, archbishop Minutolo could have claimed a prominent position for his personal burial place in the choir or the transept area. Instead, the choice of a separate chapel allowed him to promote the rank and position of his family.



Fig. 2. Naples, cathedral. Minutolo chapel. Monument of Archbishop Filippo Minutolo (†1301). Photo Luciano Pedicini.

Some years later, the French archbishop Humbert d'Ormont (1308-1320) took a completely different approach. He shifted the decorative program

<sup>10</sup> For the seggi see Lenzo 2014; De Divitiis 2007, pp. 32-34; Visceglia, Revel 1993, pp. 822-825.

<sup>11</sup> The inscription on his monument: "Magnanimus sapiens prudens famaue serenus, / Philippus presul morum dulcedine plenus / Minutulus patrie decus et flos alta propago: hic silet, hic tegitur, iacet hic probitatis imago". On the Minutolo chapel see De la Ville-sur-Yllon 1895; Furelli 2009; Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 212-231 who claims it to be part of the cathedral's original plan; Aceto 2012; Paone 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Garms, Sommerlechner, Telesko 1994.

<sup>13</sup> Strazzullo 2000, p. 67; Lombardo di Cumia 2011, p. 232.



of the cathedral back to the tradition of the episcopal see. In response to the Minutolo chapel in the right transept, which was dedicated to Saint Peter, he had a new chapel built at the eastern end of the opposite left transept, dedicating it to Saint Paul<sup>14</sup>. This shrewd decision enabled him to reincorporate Filippo Minutolo's private chapel into the general disposition of the cathedral and, at the same time, to accentuate the theme of apostolic succession<sup>15</sup>. His chapel became a *piccolo Pantheon* of the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries<sup>16</sup>. It contained not only his own funeral monument, but also the one of his predecessor and first French archbishop Ayglerius (1266-1281). In addition, d'Ormont had the mortal remains of Pope Innocence IV (†1254) transferred to a new magnificent tomb. Its position directly in front of the entrance to the chapel at the northern wall of the transept reinforced the ecclesiastical character of this part of the cathedral<sup>17</sup>. None of these three dignitaries had family ties in the kingdom and therefore the construction of private family chapels was not an option. A position within or around the liturgical choir, however, would have been possible, as was the custom in French and other northern European cathedrals<sup>18</sup>.

The typological choice of a separate chapel pushed the concept of apostolic succession closer to the idea of a *famiglia episcopale* that accentuated the physical descendance of the officeholders and their memory. The particular and innovative form of Archbishop Ayglerius' funeral monument further enhanced this idea of episcopal continuity. In 1315, Humbert d'Ormont prepared a new *magnificum sepulchrum dolatis marmoribus ac musivo opere decoratum* for his predecessor Ayglerius, who had first been put to rest in a simple grave. Programmatically oriented, in its general layout, to local Early Christian models from the Neapolitan catacombs, a mosaic portrait of the deceased was positioned

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<sup>14</sup> As for the Minutolo chapel, Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 233, 237 claims this chapel to be part of the first general layout for the cathedral; Aceto 2019, p. 173 convincingly argues for a later date around 1315.

<sup>15</sup> For the concept of Naples as "altera Roma" see Bock 2002, p. 136.

<sup>16</sup> For the chapel and its program see Romano 2001; for Humbert d'Ormont D'Ovidio 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Ladner 1970, p. 123; Lucherini 2010, p. 531; Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 168-180, esp. 175-176 for the historiographic tradition going back to Celano 1692 that the monument for Pope Innocence had been placed in the Cappella degli Illustrissimi.

<sup>18</sup> Caillet 2014; De Barreau-Agudo 2014; for the slab of the Hebdomadarii at the western entrance from the nave and the slab of Marino Caracciolo (†1310) in the center of the stalls see Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 311-312, plan 2, n.º 1. D'Engenio 1623, p. 33 reports the inscription, which connects Marino Caracciolo to the Hebdomandari, who were maybe in charge of the burial rights in this area: "Hic iacet corpus spectabilis Marini Caraczuli dicti Marinoczi qui obiit Anno Domini 1310. Pro cuius anima debet celebrari in Aurora omni die in Altare maioris Missa. Persbyter Antonius Imperator, Presbyter Iacobus Nicia, Antonius de Auria Hebdomadarij habent auri uncias duas, tarenos novem de molendino, ubi dicitur ad Dullon, & de censibus in platea portus prope Mirallatum auri tarenos XXVII. Quae pecunia est annexa prebendis eorum cum onere & honore & in ipsa Missa debent recipi omnia necessaria de Sacristia maioris Ecclesiae de quibus omnibus apparet instrumentum in authentica forma effectum".

above the sarcophagus<sup>19</sup>. The monument is lost today, but a drawing from 1713 still shows the opulent sarcophagus with Ayglerius' portrait above in an *imago clipeata* (fig. 3)<sup>20</sup>. A frescoed *Tree of Jesse* completed the chapel's decorative program and its tenor of holy descentance and episcopal lineage (fig. 4)<sup>21</sup>.

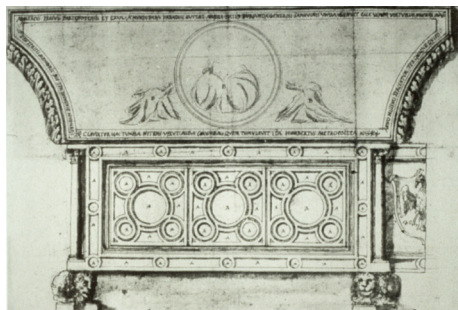


Fig. 3. Naples, cathedral. Chapel of Saint Paul. Monument of Archbishop Ayglerius (†1281), drawing from 1713. Naples, Archivio di Stato. In Romano 2001.



Fig. 4. Lello d'Orvieto. *Tree of Jesse*. Naples, cathedral chapel of Saint Paul. Photo Luciano Pedicini.

<sup>19</sup> Romano 2001, pp. 213-214 for the tradition of putting an image of the deceased above his grave.

<sup>20</sup> Naples, Archivio di Stato, Notai del Settecento, Gennaro Fera di Napoli, scheda 10, protocollo 12, ff. 82v-84. First published by Delfino 1991. Romano 2001, pp. 203-204.

<sup>21</sup> Saloni 2014; Bologna 1969, p. 116, 127 and fig. III. 34 dates the fresco by Lello d'Orvieto around 1314-1320, but surely after 1310-1314.



After the death of Humbert d'Ormont in 1320, the canons carried on what the bishop had begun<sup>22</sup>. Already in 1313, they had commissioned the painter Lello d'Orvieto to do a sumptuous mosaic of the venerable Madonna del Principio in the adjacent Early Christian church of Santa Restituta, which was under their responsibility<sup>23</sup>. This important commission aimed at giving more visibility and weight to the old canon's church beside the new cathedral, underlining its antique origins<sup>24</sup>. For d'Ormont, they commissioned a nearly life size portrait attributed to the same painter, which was installed above his funeral monument and which can probably be counted as one of the first autonomous portraits in European art (fig. 5)<sup>25</sup>. The canons stuck therefore to the general program of episcopal succession as outlined by the bishop but modernized the artistic form of its decoration. In addition to d'Ormont's funeral monument, the canons also took part in the commission of an altarpiece for the chapel, of which some remains have been found a couple of years ago but which's authenticity remains debated. Its complex iconography linked it to the theme of episcopal succession as expressed by the fresco of the *Tree of Jesse* in the chapel (fig. 4) but also stressed the bishop's role in the antique founding myth of the church<sup>26</sup>.

The patterns of episcopal patronage were not only determined by the divergent interests of the bishops themselves, but also responded to the actions of secular patrons, notably those of the royal family, which also claimed a presence in the cathedral. As mentioned above, royal interventions in the cathedral were rather minor during the early years of construction. Under Filippo Minutolo's successor, Giacomo da Viterbo (1302-1307), and certainly at his implication, the Anjou again became involved and contributed to the artistic embellishment of the cathedral by donating a monumental silver and

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<sup>22</sup> Ormont first had been bedded in a humble grave, but the canons "non si pote ritenere dal fare eseguire il suo ritratto". Chioccarello 1643, p. 201; Strazzullo 1959, p. 172. The inscription on his monument read: "Anno Domini MCCCXX III indictionis die XIII Iulii obiit Dominus Humbertus de Monte Aureo natione Burgundus venerabilis Neapol Archiepiscopus qui sedit anno XII mensibus III diebus XXVIII". Romano 2001, p. 205 reconducts the whole initiative to Humbert d'Ormont.

<sup>23</sup> Vitolo 2000, p. 16 for the date; D'Alberto 2008; Lucherini 2009b, pp. 171-202; 2009b; 2010, pp. 529-530 underlines the Roman origins of the mosaic, and attributes portrait and altarpiece to a different artist. For the artistic context see Leone de Castris 2001.

<sup>24</sup> Lucherini 2009a; 2010, p. 537.

<sup>25</sup> Bologna 1969, pp. 116-132; Leone de Castris 1986, p. 267; Romano 2001, p. 197 evokes convincingly the sculpted half-length portrait of Boniface VIII in the Vatican as its model. Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 242 argues for a separate display of the portrait.

<sup>26</sup> Bologna 1988; Romano 2001, n. 74 for the discussion of earlier literature and of the painting's authenticity. Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 236-245 attributes the entire program to d'Ormont. She convincingly shows the difference between the canon's reference to an antique imperial tradition and the bishop's evocation of an antique episcopal foundation of the cathedral as implied by the iconography of Santa Maria della Neve alluding to the papal foundation of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.

enamel head reliquary for Saint Januarius<sup>27</sup>. Four *aurifabri regi* of French origin –Etienne, Godefroy, Milet d’Auxerre, and Guillaume de Verdelay– created this splendid piece of goldsmith work, which still exists and can compete in quality with the finest works made in France under Philippe the Fair<sup>28</sup>. Perhaps intended for the anniversary of the saint’s martyrdom, it highlighted the Angevin veneration of the city’s most important saint, as well as the royal concern for the furnishing of the cathedral whenever the reliquary was exposed.



Fig. 5. Lello d’Orvieto, *Archbishop Humbert d’Ormont* (†1320). Naples, Museo nazionale di Capodimonte. Photo by the author.

The Anjou’s visual presence in the cathedral became permanent and more dominant when the three monumental royal tombs in the apse were re-done and modernized. In 1333, King Robert asked his wife Sancia of Majorca to provide three new, fitting monuments to the members of the Angevin family buried in the cathedral<sup>29</sup>. These high rising wall monuments could be seen from far away. They probably followed the standard form, with balda-

<sup>27</sup> Lucherini 2007b.

<sup>28</sup> The reliquary is extremely well-documented in the royal archives. See most recently Leone de Castris 2014, pp. 23, 74–85, cat. n.º 1. The most direct precursors seem to be the reliquary busts of Louis IX for the Sainte-Chapelle (1299–1306) and for Saint-Denis (1281). Gaborit Chopin 1998, pp. 179–183, 206–207; Bock 2002, p. 136.

<sup>29</sup> “Insuper, quia digne noviter ordinatum, quod in archiepiscopatu Neapolitano, ubi ossa divae memoriae domini Carolis I illustris Hierusalem et Siciliae regis avi et corporis domini Caroli incliti regis fratris et reginae Ungariae sororis nostrorum sepulta conduntur, fiant sepulcra honorabilia et condecencia regiae dignitati, in quibus utriusque praedictorum regum ossa hono-

chin, virtue caryatides and angels around the funeral chamber above the sarcophagus, which had been established by the royal family and their principal sculptor, Tino di Camaino, in the previous decade. Similar Angevin tombs had been built in or around the apses of all major Neapolitan churches, such as San Lorenzo Maggiore, San Domenico Maggiore and Santa Chiara (Corpus Christi) –the cathedral was the last to follow in this ubiquitous demonstration of Angevin presence–. The dominating royal monuments in the apse of the cathedral overtly competed with episcopal claims, while at the same time honoring the church with royal presence<sup>30</sup>. Unlike the churches of the mendicant orders, where Angevin monuments remained untouched until the nineteenth century (San Domenico Maggiore) or even our times (Santa Chiara, San Lorenzo Maggiore), their duration in the cathedral was limited. Already in 1596, when the apse and presbytery were redecorated by Domenico Fontana, the Angevin medieval monuments were disassembled, their pieces stored away, and then definitively replaced with a new monument on the inner façade<sup>31</sup>. This action liberated the apse and, at the same time, maintained the honor of the royal presence in a less controversial location.

### 3. DEMONSTRATING EPISCOPAL SUPREMACY

In the following years, archiepiscopal interventions were rather limited to works of maintenance –the construction of the new cathedral had been finished, the transept and presbytery had been decorated and, most important for the clergy, the liturgical order had been adapted to the new situation–<sup>32</sup>. Now, the nobility entered the scene, filling the church with tombs and gravestones and embellishing their family chapels. It was only in the second half of the fourteenth century that an archbishop intervened again, leaving a visual mark in the cathedral. Archbishop Bernard de Rodez (1368-1378) completely renovated the liturgical furnishing. He replaced the old wooden choirstalls *in medio ecclesiae* and installed

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rifice tumultuentur, iuxta tuae dispositionis arbitrium”. Minieri Riccio 1883, pp. 6-7; Michalsky 2000, p. 255; Lucherini 2014.

<sup>30</sup> See also the ambivalent treatment of Andrew of Hungary’s body. After his murder in 1345, a certain Orso Minutolo, moved by piety, had recuperated his corpse for the cathedral and provided for his burial there. Lucherini 2015.

<sup>31</sup> Strazzullo 1959, p. 233; De Cavi 2009, pp. 108-132; Loffredo 2010.

<sup>32</sup> Lucherini 2010; Gaglione 2008; 2011, pp. 220-227 for the heavy costs and the archbishop’s difficulty to find money. After Humbert d’Ormont had emanated the *De divinis officiis* in 1317, Archbishop Giovanni III Orsini intervened again on liturgical questions in 1334 and 1337 with his *Constitutiones*, which regulated also the episcopal presence on feasts. Lombardo di Cumia 2011, p. 28.

a new marble celebration chair for himself<sup>33</sup>. This monumental chair, with its high rising sculpted baldachin, which now stands on the left side of the eastern nave, is a unique liturgical item, with no direct comparison in Italy (fig. 6). The coat of arms of Archbishop Bernard de Rodez on its base and on the tympanum coincides with a now lost inscription, originally held by an angel on its roof, giving its completion date as 1376<sup>34</sup>. This was the last period of undisputed archiepiscopal power before the Great Schism erupted after the death of Pope Gregory XI in 1378, who's arms appear on the back. Archbishop Bernard de Rodez had good relations both with the pope in Avignon and Queen Joanna of Anjou<sup>35</sup>. It was he who received the royal couple's oath of loyalty to the papacy in 1372 in his cathedral, and it was he again who was responsible for sending ships from Naples to take Pope Gregory XI (1370-1378) from France back home to Italy, putting an end to the Avignonese Exile of the papacy. He probably also had a major role in the political negotiations that ended various conflicts between Naples, Sicily, Navarra, and Aragon.



Fig. 6. Naples, cathedral. Bishop's chair. 1376. Photo Luciano Pedicini.

<sup>33</sup> For the position of the stalls in the first two eastern bays of the nave and the celebration chair attached to the northeast corner of the stalls, that is already in the transept, see Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 27-38, 44-53, 311-312, pianta 2. For some stylistic comparisons and the idea of a "revival romanico" Vitolo 2008, pp. 87, 106.

<sup>34</sup> The inscription seems to have been visible until the middle of the eighteenth century. It read: "A. D. NI M CCC LXXVI DIE XXI MENSIS APRIL. XIII INDICT. HOC OPUS FUIT COMPLETUM AMEN". Strazzullo 1959, p. 246. On the archbishop see Walter 1967. Bertrand de Rodez had probably also paid for the now lost wooden choir stalls, which also bore his coat of arms. Chioccarello 1643, pp. 241-242.

<sup>35</sup> Casteen 2015.

Starting in late Antiquity, the episcopal throne had become more and more a sign of authority<sup>36</sup>. Numerous examples, especially in Southern Italy, show how widely this piece of liturgical and ceremonial furniture was used through the thirteenth century, especially in reference to papal authority<sup>37</sup>. More modern examples from the fourteenth century, however, survive almost exclusively north of the Alps, especially in France and England<sup>38</sup>. The installation of a marble chair in Naples cathedral with a towering, sculpted baldachin therefore accentuates monarchical episcopal power and must be seen in the context of the discussion on the kingdom's sovereignty as a papal fief. Not only did the queen's reign depend heavily of the support of the Avignonese popes, but Bertrand de Rodez was the fourth consecutive French archbishop on the Neapolitan cathedral and had close bonds with Urban V and Gregory XI. His chair is therefore a political statement of the supremacy of the Holy Roman Church and a highlight in episcopal patronage<sup>39</sup>.

The outbreak of the Great Schism put an end to Bernard de Rodez's career as archbishop of Naples. Although the Angevin Queen Joanna I continued to adhere to the Avignonese obedience to Clement VII, the population of Naples supported the Roman Pope Urban VI, Bartolomeo Prignano, who was of Neapolitan origin. Bernard de Rodez had to flee the city in 1378. In his place, the pope installed Ludovico Bozzuto, who belonged to one of the city's most important families, as archbishop. The political struggles of the following years prevented any manifestation of episcopal power within the city, and no archbishop made changes to the cathedral for the rest of the century.

#### 4. CLAIMING URBAN PRESENCE

According to the chronicle of Matteo Villani, an earthquake severely damaged the façade of the Angevin cathedral in 1349<sup>40</sup>. Fifty years later,

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<sup>36</sup> For the origins of this development see Kritzinger 2016.

<sup>37</sup> The most important feature of the Neapolitan celebration chair is the fact, that it consists, contrary to all other southern Italian episcopal chairs, only of a socle and the architectonic baldachin, under which the real chair was placed. The closest comparison is given by the royal seat in the cathedral of Monreale. Grabar 1954, p. 49, fig. 28. More traditional and therefore very different from the cathedral chair is the bishop's seat in San Giorgio Maggiore, probably commissioned by Archbishop Humbert d'Ormont (1308-1320), which has not received any attention in research. Romano 2001, pp. 199-200, fig. 8. In general see also Gandolfo 1980; Kritzinger 2016 for the Early Christian origins. For the Spanish tradition see Grabar 1956. For the relation to the papal throne Nees 1993. At the example of the episcopal throne in Canterbury, Reeve 2003 insists more on imperial models.

<sup>38</sup> Tracy 2015; Schlicht 2005.

<sup>39</sup> In his function of apostolic nuntius, Bertrand de Rodez, had received in 1374 even the right to cite the queen before his ecclesiastical court. Walter 1967.

<sup>40</sup> Villani, *Cronaca*, vol. I, cap. XLV, p. 54: "In questo anno, a dì 10 settembre, si cominciarono in Italia tremoti disusati e meravigliosi (...) Nella città di Napoli fece cadere il

Archbishop Enrico Minutolo launched a great restoration campaign and commissioned a magnificent new portal for the cathedral (figs. 7-8). The ruined remains of the ancient portal –two lions carrying porphyry columns as well as a monumental statue of the Virgin with Christ Child in the tympanum– were integrated into this new project<sup>41</sup>. As recorded in a long inscription, the high rising portal and its lavish sculptural decoration were finished in 1407<sup>42</sup>.



Fig. 7. Antonio Baboccio, Main portal. Naples, cathedral. 1407.  
Photo Luciano Pedicini.

campanile, e la faccia della chiesa del vescovado e di santo Giovanni Maggiore, e in assai altre parti della città fece grande rovine, con poco danno degli uomini”. See also Gaglione 2011, pp. 221-227.

<sup>41</sup> On the Trecento remains of the portal see Aceto 2002, pp. 148-155. On the new portal from the fifteenth century, Bock 2001, pp. 21-84.

<sup>42</sup> The inscription reads: “NULLIU(s) I(n) LO(n)GU(m) (et) SIN(e) SCEMAT(e) TE(m) PU(s) HONORIS / PO(r)TA FUI RUTILA(n)S SUM IANUA PLENA DECORIS / ME MEUS (et) SACRE QUO(n)DAM MUNUTULU(s) AULE / EXCOLUIT P(r)OP(r)i(i)S HENRICUS SUMPTIBUS HUIUS / PRESUL APOSTOLICE NU(n)C CO(n)STA(n)S CA(r)DO COLUMNE / CUI P(re)COR I(n)COLUMEM VITA(m) POST FATA PERHE(n)NEM / HOC OPUS EXACTUM MILLE CURRENTIB(us) ANNIS / QUO QUATER (et) CE[n]TU(m) SEPTE(m) VERBU(m) CARO FACTU(m)”.

For a long time I have been only a small door without any sign of dignity, now I am a portal full of ornaments and shining in splendour. Henricus Minutulus, who had once been the bishop of this holy church and now a trustworthy hinge of the apostolic pillar, decorated me at his own expense. For him I pray for a safe and sound eternal life after his death. This work has been executed when 1407 years have passed by since the word has become flesh.





Fig. 8. Antonio Baboccio, Main portal. Tympanon. Naples, cathedral. 1407.  
Photo by the author.

The cathedral's new portal is a telling example of episcopal patronage for two reasons: artistic and programmatic. Built after a period of interior struggles and civil war at the end of the fourteenth century, the church portal is part of a series of artworks demonstrating the new cultural and political vigor of the kingdom under the young King Ladislaus of Anjou-Durazzo<sup>43</sup>. After having regained control of the city in 1399, he quickly set up a policy of consolidation and territorial expansion, which was to push the borders of the kingdom way up into Tuscany. These years marked a considerable cultural flourishing of the city, with notable humanist erudition and the construction of a series of palaces and marble funeral monuments. Although the portal itself carries no signature, its sculptor and artist, Antonio Baboccio, is known because he claimed authorship some years later in an inscription on another of his works, the funeral monument of the royal secretary Antonius de Penna in Santa Chiara<sup>44</sup>. When starting on the cathedral's portal, he had just arrived in the city and was not part of its artistic environment. Only after that did he become the most influential artist of the early fifteenth century in Naples. Although already in his fifties, he directed the largest and most important workshop of the city in the first two decades of the century. As he seems to have employed a number of other sculptors, his works show a certain discrepancy in style and

<sup>43</sup> See the comprehensive survey by Léonard 1967, pp. 599-628.

<sup>44</sup> "[ABBAS] ANTONIUS [BABOSUS D]E PIPERNO / ME FECIT / [ET PO]RTAM MAIOREM K(a)TEDRAL[EM] ECCLE(siae) NEAPOL[IS] // [H]O[NUPH]RIUS DE PENNA REGIS LA[DISLAI SECR]ETARIUS FIERI FECIT". Bock 2001, cat. n.º 2.

quality of the sculpted details<sup>45</sup>. All of his works are, however, most ingenious in their design and demonstrate an exceptional iconographical inventiveness. Trained as a goldsmith, but working in other areas as well, Baboccio profoundly innovated the artistic scene in Naples and became the city's leading artist in the International Gothic style.

The merit of calling Baboccio to Naples belongs to Cardinal Enrico Minutolo. Episcopal patronage reveals itself once again to be decisive for the artistic development of the city, as the young King Ladislaus seems to have been too absorbed in political affairs to develop a personal interest in art. Unlike the earlier Angevins, who showed personal interest in art and were directly implicated in artistic commissions—Robert the Wise (1309-1343) had called Giotto and Petrarch to Naples, and his wife Sancia was responsible for several commissions of sculpted monuments—the artistic career of Baboccio was not the result of royal patronage. Instead, in bringing Baboccio to Naples and having him work on the cathedral, Enrico Minutolo provided an artistic model of high relevance. The cathedral thus served as a prototype for two other church portals in only a few years' time<sup>46</sup>. The cardinal thereby initiated a general artistic renewal in Naples and prompted many other members of the royal court to engage in artistic directives, most of them given to the same artist. The question of how Enrico Minutolo singled out Baboccio and how he established contact with the artist, who had probably been active in the north of the peninsula, maybe in Milan, cannot be answered due to the lack of documentation—the cathedral's portal is in fact the first work of his we possess—. It seems however likely that Minutolo relied on a large network of ecclesiastical relationships.

The complex iconography of the portal emphasizes different points, which touch upon ecclesiastical topics as well as the personal characteristics of its patron. The upper niches of the lateral pinnacles are all dedicated to local saints and heavenly protectors of the city (fig. 7)<sup>47</sup>. The lower niches present saints in direct connection with the patron and their selection seems to relate to personal issues in his life: Saint Anastasia is linked to Cardinal Minutolo's titular church in Rome; Saint Pellegrino is, as mentioned in the inscription underneath, the patron saint of the city of Trani, where Minutolo had been archbishop for seven years; and Saint Peter Martyr reflects the cardinal's personal religious inclinations, as he always carried his relics with him when travelling<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> At least one is known by name, since the artist's signature on the funeral monument of the Queen Mother Margherita of Anjou-Durazzo in Salerno mentions "ALESSIO DE VICO SUO LABORANTE". *Ibidem*, pp. 428-432, cat. n.º 3.

<sup>46</sup> In 1415, the portal of the private chapel of the Pappacoda family and, at the beginning of the 1420s, the portal of the Messina Cathedral. *Ibidem*, pp. 21-118.

<sup>47</sup> The saints Eufebio, Agrippino, Thomas Aquinas, Agnello, Restituta.

<sup>48</sup> Strazzullo 1959, p. 60, n. 12.

The program becomes more personal, and more political, in the central parts of the portal (fig. 8). In the lunette, the cardinal is shown kneeling beside the Virgin, with Saint Januarius behind him and Saint Peter on the other side. The first reading follows, of course, the patron's personal hope for salvation. The intercession of the local Saint Januarius, whose blood had liquefied for the first time only a few years earlier, expresses the expectation of resurrection and eternal felicity, as indicated by the Pelican on the lintel below as well as by the figure of the archangel and psychopomp Saint Michael at the top of the gable<sup>49</sup>. A second layer of ecclesiastical reading sheds light on other aspects of the sculptural program. The Apostles framing the tympanum are placed above inscriptions giving the Credo. Together with the four evangelists on the lintel, they stand for the definition of the Church as given by Saint Thomas Aquinas<sup>50</sup>. The Virgin mother in the tympanum and her coronation in the gable therefore show the triumph of the Church, united in faith against all (Avignonese) heresy<sup>51</sup>. Saint Peter and Saint Januarius represent the Roman and the Neapolitan church, with the kneeling Enrico Minutolo as their agent.

On a third level, the portal exposes its patron's political aspirations. Again, the narrative starts on the lintel, where two shields show the royal coat of arms together with the Minutolo family's. In publicly associating himself with the Angevin dynasty, the ex-archbishop and now Cardinal overtly expresses his devotion and fidelity to the Angevin cause<sup>52</sup>. This kind of public allegiance between personal and royal coats of arms would become rather popular in Naples among members of the Angevin party in the following years. Cardinal Minutolo, however, was the first to apply it, and he did so not on his private palace, as the royal secretary Antonius Penna would do some years later, but on the façade of the most important church in the city.

In seizing the portal for his personal political advertisement and for promoting his family, he visually took possession of the building. The exceptional fact that the Minutolo family was among the first of the Neapolitan nobility to obtain episcopal honors for a second time in history gave Cardinal Enrico the opportunity to effectively assert his family's visual presence in the

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<sup>49</sup> The inscription beneath explicitly mentions his hope: "CUI P(re)COR I(n)COLUMEM VITA(m) POST FATA PERHE(n)NEM". For the signification of the titulus of the Virgin Mary as "Mater omnium" see Bock 2001, pp. 31-52; 2005; 2017, pp. 127-134.

<sup>50</sup> D'Aquino, *Somma*, p. 71, II-II, q. 1, a. 9: "Ad tertium dicendum quod confessio fidei traditur in symbolo quasi ex persona totius Ecclesiae, quae per fidem unitur. Fides autem Ecclesiae est fides formata: talis enim fides invenitur in omnibus illis qui sunt numero et merito de Ecclesia. Et ideo confessio fidei in symbolo traditur secundum quod convenit fidei formatae: ut etiam si qui fideles formatam non habent, ad hanc formam pertingere student".

<sup>51</sup> On the political connotations of the Coronation of the Virgin under Roman obedience Flor 1990, pp. 74-81; Baron 1979; Verdier 1980.

<sup>52</sup> Bock 2003.

cathedral and the city<sup>53</sup>. Together with his family's private chapel, built by his predecessor Filippo Minutolo at the beginning of the previous century, for which Enrico had obtained the unalienable rights of possession from the pope in 1405<sup>54</sup>, the Minutolo family became one of the most prominent occupants of the Naples cathedral, visible in the west as in the east of the building. Claiming the cathedral in this way did not go without competition. Some years later and in a similar way, the Caracciolo family seized the opportunity to do the cathedral's pavement and record their act in an inscription at the western entrance<sup>55</sup>. The memory of this action is held up by a second inscription recording the deed from the beginning of the seventeenth century<sup>56</sup>.

While being one of the most important examples of episcopal patronage in Naples, the portal also provides an interesting case illustrating the difficulties linked to the concept of "episcopal" patronage itself. As a matter of fact, Enrico Minutolo resigned from his office as archbishop in 1400 in order to take on the much more influential position as cardinal in Rome<sup>57</sup>. As he left Naples right at the beginning of the façade's construction, the portal was completed under his successors. Although Minutolo was no longer in office, he continued to act on behalf of the Neapolitan see. The restoration of the archiepiscopal palace in these years is also attributed to him, whereas none of his successors under Angevin rule –Giordano Orsini (1400-1405), Giovanni VII (1407-1411) and Niccolò di Diano (1411-1435)– intervened much on the cathedral's fabric<sup>58</sup>. On the contrary, Giordano Orsini, like Enrico Minutolo before him, left Naples and the episcopal chair for a position as cardinal in Rome. Becoming archbishop of Naples could be only a step, albeit an important one, in an ecclesiastical career. What to do then with the patronage of ex-archbishops, and why did they continue to take interest in the affairs of a cathedral that was no longer their own?

The great attraction the Naples cathedral held for the highest Roman clergy can be understood by looking at the origins of the officeholders.

<sup>53</sup> The only other family to do so were the Orsini, with Bertoldo (1323-1325) and Giovanni (1327-1358) as archbishops.

<sup>54</sup> In 1410, Enrico Minutolo provided to sustain four priests for celebrating two messes a day in the chapel. Vitale 2010.

<sup>55</sup> D'Engenio 1623, p. 5: "Magnificus miles Dominus Ciarletta Caracciolo fecit hoc pavementum ad honorem Die, & B. Ianuarii, Anno Domini 1433".

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*: "Essendo poscia guasto il pavimento, ò suolo per ingiuria del tempo, fù da successor di Carletta dopò cento settant'anni ristorato, e quivi nel mezzo della Chiesa in una gran pietra si legge. Ciarletta Caracciolus 1443 stravìt, Gentiles eius Posterì restituerunt, Alphonso Cardinale Gesualdo Sacri Collegii Decano Archiepiscopo Neapolitano 1603".

<sup>57</sup> Esch 1969; Vitale 2010. As only very few cardinals existed at that time –around ten– the importance of each member of the college of cardinals was very high.

<sup>58</sup> The fact that neither Giordano Orsini nor his successor Giovanni were buried in the cathedral further underlines their lack of identification with the Neapolitan episcopate.

Since the two popes at the end of the fourteenth century were from noble Neapolitan families –Urban VI Prignano (1378-1389), Boniface IX Tomacelli (1389-1404)–, the whole curia became heavily Neapolitanized<sup>59</sup>. Only very few of them decided to make Rome their place of burial, but Naples remained central for the two most important cardinals, Minutolo and Carbone. Neither of them opted for a burial in their Roman titular churches. Instead, both chose Naples cathedral. Enrico Minutolo had himself made a sumptuous funeral monument behind the altar of the Minutolo family chapel –adopting a tradition used by popes (Boniface VIII) and the Angevin dynasty (fig. 9)<sup>60</sup>–. In the same years, Francesco Carbone (†1405), also of Neapolitan origin but never archbishop of the city, also obtained a family chapel with a high rising marble monument in the cathedral (fig. 10). In less than ten years, the Naples cathedral was adorned with two high rising funeral monuments made for cardinals of the Roman Curia (figs. 9-10) and a new church portal (fig. 7). Neapolitan episcopal patronage had become the business of cardinals, and artistic interventions in Naples cathedral were now organized with a Roman perspective.



Fig. 9. Naples, cathedral. Minutolo chapel with monument of Archbishop Enrico Minutolo (†1412). Photo Luciano Pedicini.

<sup>59</sup> For the presence of different members of the Minutolo family in Rome see Esch 1972; Vitale 2010.

<sup>60</sup> Several members of the Minutolo family had permitted Enrico in 1402 to alter the chapel's architecture and to make his funeral monument. Frascchetti 1902.





Fig. 10. Naples, cathedral. Monument of Cardinal Francesco Carbone (†1415).  
Photo Luciano Pedicini.

##### 5. DISSOLUTION IN UNITY: THE CARAFA, THE ARAGON AND THE *SUCCORPO*

The development towards a growing privatization of the ecclesiastical space found its apogee in the construction of the *Succorpo* by the former Archbishop Cardinal Oliviero Carafa (1458-1484) at the turn to the sixteenth century. His project intended to visually and liturgically unite the spheres of the high altar and the crypt, which he had transformed into his private family chapel. The attempt to seize the relics of Saint Januarius, the city's most important patron, for a theatrical *mise-en-scene* of eternal devotion in a space conceived as a new giant reliquary of the cathedral would have dissolved the antagonism between the private and the ecclesiastical sphere, fusing them into a new compact unity. Although the Cardinal failed—the relics of Saint Januarius stayed in the sacristy in the old tower at the west end of the cathedral where they had been kept before<sup>61</sup>—, his project must be seen as an important step towards a new quality of episcopal patronship.

After the death of Queen Joanna II of Anjou Durazzo in 1435 and a war with René d'Anjou over the succession to the throne of the kingdom, Alfonso of Aragon finally succeeded in his efforts and triumphally entered the city of Naples in 1438. During his reign, a new cultural flourishing developed, with a strong humanistic current<sup>62</sup>. The nobility invested heavily in new churches and chapels, and

<sup>61</sup> Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 19-26.

<sup>62</sup> On the strong humanistic precursors in Naples see Bock 2001; Ryder 1976.



the king had a triumphal arch constructed at his residence at Castel Nuovo. The cathedral, however, seems to have remained nearly untouched. Only a few funeral monuments are recorded in the whole period of Aragonese reign. Most of them were placed in various family chapels and only a few, if any, seem to have been carved in the round. Many were probably only a slab or an inscription, and a good deal of them have been lost<sup>63</sup>. The most important event of the period was an earthquake in 1456, which badly damaged the cathedral<sup>64</sup>. The subsequent restoration was not undertaken by the archbishops in office –Rinaldo Piscicelli (1451-1457), Giacomo Tebaldi (1457-1458), and Oliviero Carafa– but by different noble families, seizing the opportunity to install their heraldic devices in the nave<sup>65</sup>. The cathedral followed the general development and became more and more like the other great churches of the mendicant orders –a social mirror of nobility–.

In any case, work seems to have progressed slowly, as the dome of the apse was restored only in 1484, by Archbishop Alessandro Carafa<sup>66</sup>. This project was the first in a series of actions taken by the Carafa clan to strategically insert themselves into the cathedral's fabric and occupy a central position there<sup>67</sup>. What's more, Alessandro Carafa was not the first archbishop from the family. His uncle, Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, had been archbishop before him for twenty-six years, before ceding him the office<sup>68</sup>. Like Enrico Minutolo before him, Oliviero continued to act from Rome as a patron on behalf of the cathedral<sup>69</sup>. The opportunity to intervene on the fabric of the Naples cathedral arose only after his episcopate (1458-1484), when in 1497 the Cardinal was able to get hold of the bodily remains of Saint Januarius, the city's main patron.

The initial idea for this move did not come from Cardinal Oliviero himself. It was King Ferdinando I (1458-1494) who launched the initiative,

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<sup>63</sup> According to D'Engenio 1623, these were in the chapel of the SS. Sacramento the monument to Rubinus Galeota (†1445), *Regni Siciliae Marescialli*; in the Cappella Loffredo the double monument to Henricus Spata de Loffrido (†1421) and his son, the cardinal deacon Ciccio de Loffrido (†1468); in the Cappella Capece Marinus Capece (†1454) and the wife of Iacobus Minutulus, Ceccarella Siginusa (†1450); in the cappella Scondita Victoria Capece (†1457).

<sup>64</sup> Figliuolo 1989.

<sup>65</sup> D'Engenio 1623, p. 5: "Il tempio stesso rovinò poscia nel mese di Dicembre, del 1456, nel qual tempo furono due grandissimi terremoti nel Regno di Napoli, come riferisce S. Antonino, & altri Autori, fu poi rifatto da molte illustre, e nobilissime famiglie, fra le quali è quella del Balzo, la Caracciola, l'Orsina, la Pignatella, la Zurla, la Dura, & altre togliendo a ognuna da per se à ristorar una partem delle quale hoggi di si veggono l'insigne sù gli archi, e pilastri".

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*: "La Copula fù rifatta da Alessandro Carafa Arcivescovo fratello del Cardinale Olivieri, come si legge nel detto luogo, Mentem sanctam spontaneam honorem Deo, & patriae liberationem Alexander Carafa Archiepiscopus Neapolitanus fecit 1483". Alessandro was appointed archbishop only on September 20, 1484, the inscription probably refers to the start.

<sup>67</sup> See in detail the dense reconstruction by De Divitiis 2007.

<sup>68</sup> Petrucci 1976.

<sup>69</sup> For Carafa's Roman patronage see Norman 2010; Parlato 1989, 1990, 2002, 2017.

trying to consolidate his political position with the help of the city's patron saint<sup>70</sup>. On January 26, 1490, he had written a letter to Cardinal Oliviero Carafa in Rome, asking him to obtain permission from Pope Innocent VIII to reunite the body of Saint Januarius, safeguarded in the monastery of Montevergine, situated some 70 kilometers outside Naples, with his head, kept in Naples' cathedral for the benefit of the church, the pilgrims and the faithful<sup>71</sup>. Oliviero and Ferdinando had known each other since childhood, and when Ferdinando acceded to the throne in 1458, Oliviero was appointed archbishop of Naples. After nominating Oliviero vice-prothonotary of the kingdom some years later in 1465, Ferdinando pressed the pope to elevate him to the cardinalate, which he did two years later, in 1467. As an intermediary in the international political affairs between the kingdom and the papacy, Oliviero was equally important to the Aragonese kings and to the popes, as both considered him their ambassador. It is therefore not surprising that the king went directly to Oliviero with his plan.

As the political situation became ever more complicated, Oliviero would not intervene directly. However, seven years later, in 1497, Innocent VIII's successor, Alexander VI, permitted the translation of the relics from Montevergine to Naples. With the help of his brother, Archbishop Alessandro, and 200 soldiers, Oliviero laid siege on the monastery and had the relics of Saint Januarius seized and triumphantly brought to Naples<sup>72</sup>. There, Oliviero planned a new crypt for the cathedral, where he intended to have the relics deposited and himself be buried<sup>73</sup>.

Since Oliviero Carafa completely understood the value the relics of Saint Januarius had for Naples and the cathedral, he set out to make the best use of them he could for himself, linking the general veneration of Saint Januarius with his personal *memoria* and with the *fama* of his family. This project gave him the chance to intervene in the most central point of the cathedral, that is, the apse and the area around the high altar<sup>74</sup>. The setup was still the same as it was in Angevin times, with the stalls of the choir and the bishop's throne in the nave,

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<sup>70</sup> The relics of Saint Januarius had been discovered only shortly before, in 1480, when the king's brother, Cardinal Giovanni d'Aragona, commendatory abbot of the monastery of Montevergine, undertook a restoration campaign for the high altar. Cardinal Oliviero Carafa succeeded him in the office of commendatory abbot. Mongelli 1958, vol. V, p. 158, n.º 4412; Norman 1986, p. 334. For the political circumstances see Strazzullo 1966b.

<sup>71</sup> The document in Caracciolo 1645, p. 251; Norman 1986, p. 335; Riesenberger 2011, p. 43; Dreßen 2004, p. 177.

<sup>72</sup> Vitale 1989.

<sup>73</sup> The intention is clearly stated in the Cardinals testament: "Corpus autem relinquo et mando tradi ecclesiastice sepulture et presens deponi intra cappellam meam beate Marie et beati Thome Aquinatis super Minervam (...) ac deinde transferendum Neapolim ac sepeliendum in catedrali ecclesia in alia cappella mea ubi corpus et sanguis beati Ianuarii requiescit tumulo mihi moderate et sine pompa facto". Strazzullo 1965a, pp. 148-152; Norman 1986, p. 337.

<sup>74</sup> The old high altar had been replaced by a new one in marble probably by Archbishop Giordano Orsini (1401-1406) who had his arms prominently displayed. Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 77-78.

all separated from the rest of the church by a rood screen. Especially in the apse, the space available was limited by the three royal Angevin wall monuments to the east, behind the high altar<sup>75</sup>. In addition, there were at least two episcopal tombs: Archbishop Bertrand de Meysonnier (†1362) had found his resting place to the side of the high altar, probably under a slab<sup>76</sup>. In front of the high altar was the tomb of Oliviero's predecessor, Cardinal Rinaldo Piscicelli (†1457), who had been a member of the royal household. His family would have ferociously opposed any attempt to move the monument. On the contrary, Piscicelli received a new figurative marble slab right after the end of the work at the *Succorpo* in 1507, which could still be seen in its original location at the beginning of the seventeenth century<sup>77</sup>. Finally, an architrave on high marble columns served as a kind of *fastigium* and marked the passage between the transept and apse<sup>78</sup>.

Oliviero Carafa's ingenious response to this situation was twofold: first, he installed an enormous altar painting on the high altar<sup>79</sup>, which could be seen from far away, and second, he constructed the *Succorpo*, a subterranean chapel the size of a small church, beneath the apse (fig. 11)<sup>80</sup>. Work on the *Succorpo* started right in 1497, when the relics were recovered, and ended in 1506. The space under the apse was completely excavated, the outer walls of the cathedral were reinforced, and the level of the presbytery elevated in order to create beneath a spacious three-aisled crypt made entirely of marble (fig. 13)<sup>81</sup>. Ten Ionic columns carry the coffered marble ceiling. The side walls have large and richly-decorated round niches divided by ornamented pilasters. Each niche contains a marble altar and is vaulted by a calotte in the form of a shell. To the east, the side altars are placed under lateral windows. The crypt's main altar stands in the middle of a small rectangular presbytery illuminated by a cupola, as its location is already outside the cathedral's walls. A marble

<sup>75</sup> Contrary to Lucherini 2007a, 2015; Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 149-153 also locates the tomb of Andrea of Hungary in the apse.

<sup>76</sup> His tomb, originally located in the chapel of Saint Aspreno, was transferred to the presbytery after 1370, when the Tocco family received the patronage rights. Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 161-163.

<sup>77</sup> D'Engenio 1623, p. 24; Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 163-164.

<sup>78</sup> See the drawing of Carlo Fontana concerning the remodelling of the apse in the seventeenth century. De Divitiis 2007, p. 175, gives the height of the columns as 3,75 m, and the length of the architrave of 12,75 m. Braham, Hager 1977, pp. 65-66, cat. 101. This arrangement would fit the observation of Galante 1874, p. 11, that archbishop d'Ormont had the presbytery made "ad instar basilicarum patriarchalium Urbis". For the concept of *imitatio urbis* see Romano 2001, p. 2006. Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 100-106, 311, 315, figs. 2, 4 places this structure in the middle of the transept at the foot of the stairs leading to the apse. In analogy to the Roman prototypes, for static reasons and because of the aforementioned drawing of Carlo Fontana, a placement at the top of the stairs seems to be more likely.

<sup>79</sup> The measurements are 500 x 330 cm.

<sup>80</sup> For an overview most recently Michalsky 2017, pp. 272-275.

<sup>81</sup> Installing the *Succorpo* had raised the level of the apse from around 1,60 m above transept level to 2,40 m. Di Stefano 1972, pp. 276-278; Lombardo di Cumia 2011, p. 87.

episcopal chair with the Carafa coat of arms on the high backrest occupies the apse behind the altar. On the opposite western end of the *Succorpo*, the cardinal is represented with a freestanding life-size marble sculpture, showing him kneeling in prayer in front of a prie-Dieu<sup>82</sup>. A double straight staircase provided access from the transept, leading the visitor past two long inscriptions attesting to Oliviero Carafa's patronage of the chapel<sup>83</sup>.

The artistic authorship of the chapel has been the object of debate. The latest research has attributed the general design most likely to Bramante and its execution to the workshop of Tommaso Malvito, then the most renowned sculptor in Naples<sup>84</sup>. Carafa knew both artists well. Bramante had been in contact with him in Rome when he worked for him on the cloister of Santa Maria della Pace<sup>85</sup>, whereas Malvito had sculpted the marble funeral monument for Oliviero's father in San Domenico Maggiore in Naples a year before<sup>86</sup>. Independently of the attribution

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<sup>82</sup> A number of authors propose that the kneeling Cardinal originally might have been placed in the small space between the altar and the bishop's throne. See most recently Norman 1986, pp. 344-345; De Divitiis 2007, p. 172; Michalsky 2017, p. 274. Fra Bernardino, however, described him in the present position between the two entrance doors. Riesenberger 2011, p. 82 also pointed out, that the sculpture is lower than the altar. Most importantly, the Cardinal's image is carved to be seen from all sides –one only needs to look at the folds of his garments on the floor and on the refinement of his portrait, which would have been impossible to see in the narrow position in the chapel's presbytery–. Del Pesco 2001, p. 177; Di Stefano 1972, p. 5. For the restauration of the plinth see Strazullo 1966, p. 70. Research has not identified any direct model. Norman 1986, pp. 344-346 linked it to Spanish monuments, De Divitiis 2007, p. 175 instead pointed out examples of freestanding figures in prayer found in works of baronial patronage in the kingdom and a lost statue of Alfonso II in the oratory of the royal Villa La Duchesca. The monument of Cardinal Carafa holds a key position in the development of French royal funeral sculpture, as the figure of the cardinal is directly connected to the sculptural production of Guido Mazzoni in France. Mazzoni, who had been active for a short time in Naples before following the French king, had been commissioned with the tomb of Charles VIII (1483-1498) in Saint Denis. This was to become the standard in later royal monuments in France. On Mazzoni still indispensable Verdon 1978, pp. 124-127; Blunk 2011, pp. 41-45; Del Pesco 2001, pp. 179-181; Lammers 1976, pp. 29-36; Riesenberger 2011, pp. 86-87.

<sup>83</sup> The reconstruction of the stairs relies on the verse description of Bernardino Siculo in a manuscript at the Biblioteca nazionale di Napoli, fondo Brancaccio, VA 12, published by Strazullo 1966. Today's curvilinear stairs were installed by Paolo Posi in 1739. For the restauration Pagano 2001.

<sup>84</sup> The contemporary poem by Bernardino Siculo gives the chapel to Malvito. This attribution is repeated in the letter by Pietro Summonte from 1524. Nicolini 1925, p. 167. For the architecture see Pane 1977, pp. 103-115 (Bramante); Di Stefano 1972, pp. 275-278 (Malvito); Norman 1986, pp. 323-324 (Francesco di Giorgio); Nichols 1988, pp. 94-99 (Giuliano da Sangallo); Ascher 2000, pp. 126-128 (Malvito); Dreßen 2004, pp. 190-196 (Bramante). For the sculpture see, among others, Morisani 1941, p. 15 (Giovanni Tommaso Malvito); Abbate 1992, pp. 49-66 (Rome); Ascher 2000, pp. 126-27; Del Pesco 2001 (Gil de Siloe). Caglioti 2004, p. 353, attributed Oliviero's kneeling image to the sculptor Cesare Quaranta, giving a date of 1510-1511. Riesenberger 2011, pp. 87-89 (Giovanni Tommaso Malvito) with older bibliography.

<sup>85</sup> On Bramante and Carafa see Pane 1977, pp. 103-116; Dreßen 2004, pp. 190-196. Del Pesco 2001, pp. 146-160 proposes Giuliano da Sangallo instead.

<sup>86</sup> On Francesco Carafa's funeral monument see Abbate 1992, pp. 42-45; Ascher 2000, pp. 115, 117. Oliviero's patronage of the funeral monument is given by its inscription: "FRANCISCO CARRAPHA EQUITI NEAP(olitano) INSIGNI CHRISTIANAE / RELIGIONIS

of the work, the *Succorpo* represents both, the most modern and antiquarian tendencies in the art and architecture of its time, both in Rome and Naples.



Fig. 11. Antonio Malvito, *Succorpo* di San Gennaro and Cardinal Oliviero Carafa. Naples, cathedral. Circa 1497-1510. Photo Scala Archives.



Fig. 12. Rome, Santa Maria in Cosmedin. Crypt, side wall. Photo Miguel Hermoso Cuesta.

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OBSERVANTISS(imo) QUI SUMMA OMNIUM MORTALIUM BENIVOLENTIA / AC VENERATIONE AETATIS ANNUM AGENS LXXXIII OBIIT SENII / NUNQUAM QUESTUS OLIVIERUS CARD(inalis) NEAP(olitanus) PARENTI OPTIMO POS(uit)".



The categorization of Carafa's crypt already caused problems for historic writers such as Cesare d'Engenio at the beginning of the seventeenth century. He could not decide whether it should continue to carry its popular denomination *Succorpo* or would be better called a *confessio*<sup>87</sup>. Later research analyzed the architectonic details and their antique origins, but no general model could be found. Relying on its characterization as a *confessio*, the *Succorpo* has been associated to Saint Peter and Saint Paul Outside the Walls in Rome<sup>88</sup>. However, no formal analogies have been found, and the question of the architectonic model remains open.

Much closer is the relationship linking Carafa's crypt with the crypt of Santa Maria in Cosmedin in Rome<sup>89</sup>. Like the *Succorpo*, the Roman crypt is divided into three naves by columns and features an additional rectangular altar space (figs. 12 and 14). Two flights of stairs parting in front of the presbytery provide access (fig. 15). The unusual choice of Ionic columns in the *Succorpo* may find its explanation in the Ionic columns of the ancient hall incorporated into the northern wall of the Roman church<sup>90</sup>. Most importantly, the crypt of Santa Maria in Cosmedin provides an architectural and typological model for a three ailed building with lateral niches<sup>91</sup> (figs. 11-12). Both buildings had in common that they were conceived to enact a parade of sanctity. In Santa Maria in Cosmedin, the niches were destined to contain reliquaries, as is attested for the *Succorpo* as well<sup>92</sup>. The choice of the crypt model of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, which we now know to be Carolingian but was certainly held to be of antique origin at the time of Oliviero Carafa,

<sup>87</sup> D'Engenio 1623, p. 5: "Nell'istesso Tempio sotto l'Altar maggiore il Card Oliviero Carafa & archivescovo nel 1506 edificò una piccola Chiesa da noi detto Succorpo (che da Ecclesiastici più tosto confessione chiamar di doverebbe) & arricchita di vari, e pregiatissimi marmi interciati, ch'el fasciano tutto con integrali, di fregi, e figure della medesima materia, con..."

<sup>88</sup> De Divitiis 2007, p. 172; Dreßen 2004, pp. 178-179, 186.

<sup>89</sup> For the crypt see Krautheimer, Frankl, Corbett 1959, pp. 298-300; Bauer 1997-1998; Schmitz 2020, pp. 150-155. The crypt was closed during the sixteenth century and rediscovered in 1715 by canon Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni, who published his results in two books. Crescimbeni 1715, 1719.

<sup>90</sup> Schmitz 2020, p. 144, fig. 121. For other examples De Divitiis 2007, p. 176.

<sup>91</sup> The design of lateral walls with niches had a certain success in Naples and was realized also in the church of Santa Maria delle Stelle by Donadio Mormando in the 1520s, which has been reconducted by Ascher 2002, pp. 298-299 to designs by Francesco di Giorgio Martini in the Codex Saluzianus, f. 11. He visited Naples on three occasions between 1491 and 1495. Pane 1977, pp. 199-235; Tafuri 1993, p. 55. Contrary to the *Succorpo* and the crypt of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, the church of Santa Maria delle Stelle and the drawing by Francesco di Giorgio are single halls without a separate presbytery. The same applies for the Sala del Concilio at the Lateran palace, which was still in use. See Luchterhandt 1999, 2015.

<sup>92</sup> In Santa Maria del Cosmedin, Crescimbeni inserted intermediate racks in 1715, dividing the sixteen niches in half. Bauer 1997-1998, pp. 144, 168-170 however shows that this division was already intended in Carolingian times. The niches of the *Succorpo* contained wooden statues of the city's holy protectors, all painted like marble, as described by Carlo de Lellis in the second half of the seventeenth century. The observation is confirmed by Sarnelli and by a description of 1741. De Lellis, *Aggiunta*, pp. 49-50; De Divitiis 2007, p. 172; Strazzullo 1965b, p. 19; 1966, pp. 66-67.



demonstrates a conscious search for Early Christian models for the *Succorpo*<sup>93</sup>. The architectural layout correlates to the iconographical program of the ceiling, showing half busts of Early Christian Neapolitan archbishop saints<sup>94</sup>.

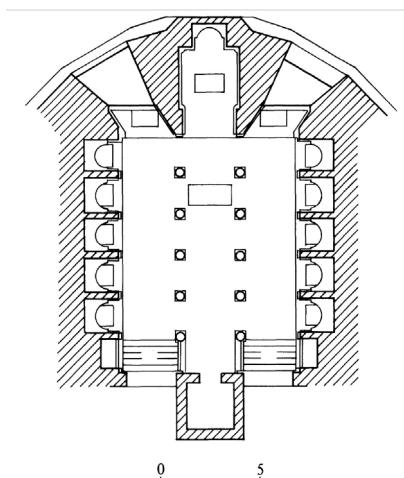


Fig. 13. Naples, cathedral. Succorpo di San Gennaro, plan. In Norman 1986.

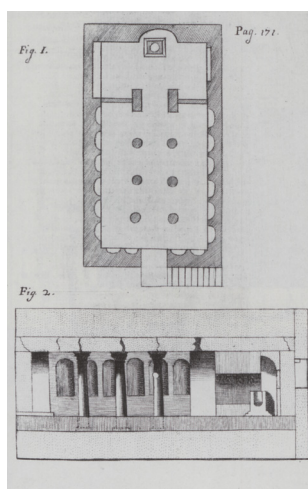


Fig. 14. Rome, Santa Maria in Cosmedin. Crypt, plan. Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni, 1715. In Bauer 1997-1998.

<sup>93</sup> De Divitiis 2007, p. 176. For the antiquarian culture see also Hersey 1969.

<sup>94</sup> De Divitiis 2007, p. 176.

The *Succorpo* is directly connected to Perugino's painting in the apse above. The huge painting for the cathedral's high altar was the final element in Oliviero Carafa's campaign. Commissioned between 1503 and 1509, the painting represents the *Assumption of the Virgin* in a vast landscape with tenderly painted trees, all embedded in a soft Umbrian evening light (fig. 16). Because Perugino, later in life, suffered the sudden contempt of his contemporaries, who turned away from him after years of celebration, research has not paid much attention to this work<sup>95</sup>. A large group of bystanders witness the event. In addition to the twelve Apostles and two female saints, Saint Januarius is recommending Cardinal Oliviero Carafa on the left of the picture. The painting shows the Assumption of the Virgin above –she is elevated in a mandorla filled with light and adorned with winged Putto heads–. Around her, eight angels form an orchestra to accompany the glorious moment. Two more angels above hold the crown she will soon receive from her son. As the composition is a replica of Perugino's lost altarpiece made for Sixtus IV in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican palace, the painting was clearly intended to bring papal exclusivity to the Naples cathedral.

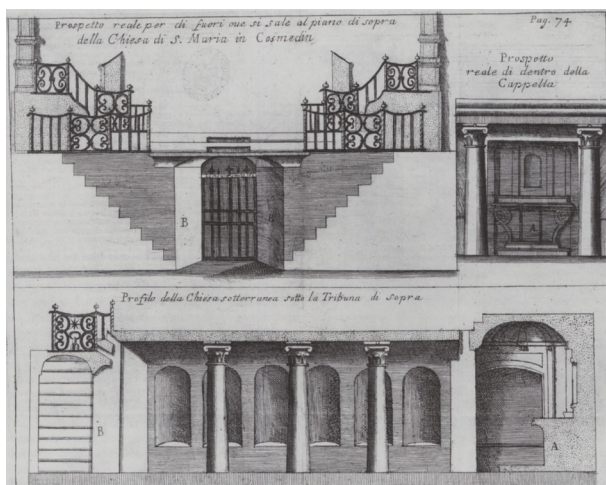


Fig. 15. Rome, Santa Maria in Cosmedin. Section of the crypt. Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni, 1715. In Bauer 1997-1998.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 178; Lombardo di Cumia 2011, pp. 95-96 discusses the responsibility of archbishop Vincenzo Carafa (1505-1541) in the commission, acting in behalf of Cardinal Oliviero.

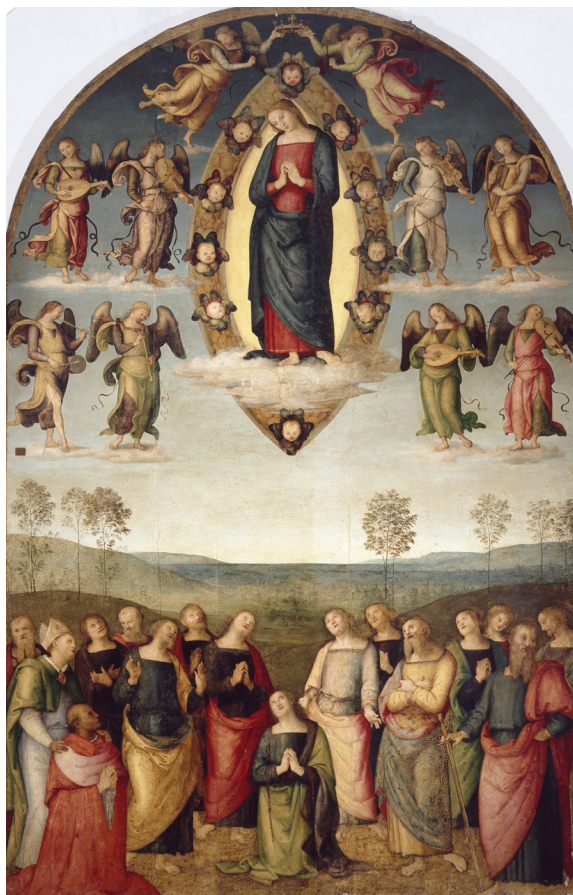


Fig. 16. Pietro Perugino, *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1503-1508. Naples, cathedral.  
Photo Luciano Pedicini.

Separating the analysis of the *Succorpo* from the high altar above is highly problematic. The uncertainties in historic literature about how to refer to the *Succorpo* are meaningful in this regard. Why did d'Engenio not call the crypt a "chapel"? He was perfectly informed about its ecclesiastical status as "capella" and used this designation consistently for other sites in his book, even when referring to small burial places attached to altars. What's more, he was perfectly aware of the crypt being the cardinal's place of burial and he cited the inscription where the Carafa's *ius patronatus* was mentioned for the *sacellum Gentilitium* in full<sup>96</sup>.

<sup>96</sup> D'Engenio 1623, p. 6: "& anche la sepoltura per se, e suoi successori".

The reason for d'Engenio's hesitation is Carafa's triumph. When Oliviero Carafa brought the relics of Saint Januarius to the cathedral with the intention to have them deposited in the new crypt, he aimed at an act of perfect osmosis, implementing his private chapel into the cathedral's sacred heart. His private chapel should have become one with the cathedral, communicating liturgically through the cult of the city's main saint, whose relics should have been put in the crypt but were to be venerated by the clergy and public at the main altar above. The sculpted cardinal in prayer is an image of personal devotion in a semi-private setting, placed in the subterranean chapel of the *Succorpo*. It finds its fulfillment in the painting on the high altar above, showing the official *commendation animae* of the Cardinal by Saint Januarius, whom he eternally venerates below. With Perugino's painting in the elevated apse and with the *Succorpo* underneath, Cardinal Oliviero Carafa overcame the limits of space. He made his private chapel into a place to safeguard the city's holy protector and transformed it into a pantheon of Neapolitan saints. Visually and liturgically, he enlarged the private space of his chapel, thus making the holy essence of cathedral his own. Only when the Cappella di San Gennaro was built, and when Perugino's painting was removed from the high altar, did this concept cease to exist.

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