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The funerary monuments of the Carafa family: self-commemoration and ecclesiastic influence in early-Renaissance Naples

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THE FUNERARY MONUMENTS OF THE CARAFA FAMILY:
SELF-COMMEMORATION AND ECCLESIASTIC INFLUENCE IN
EARLY-RENAISSANCE NAPLES

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
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in

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by
Carmen Marie Hamel
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To the many educators in my life, who encouraged me to find my purpose in teaching, and who have helped me discover my love of art, and its importance in the world. Without this encouragement, I would have followed a different path, and this thesis would not have been written.

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ABSTRACT

Tombs serve as opportunities for individuals to be remembered in specific ways long after their death. A funerary monument offers valuable insight into the self-representation of individuals within society in any period of time. Naples is well known for its elaborate tomb architecture from the Angevin period (1266-1446). The inclination of the Angevin rulers to recruit foreign artists for their projects, and indeed the funerary monuments themselves, served as models for centuries after Angevin rule. In particular, the Carafa family, a powerful member of Naples' nobility, adopted styles and design elements from the monuments of the Angevins for their own tombs while working during the later period of Aragonese rule (1442-1501).

Through an analysis of the tombs of Malizia, Diomedea, Francesco, and Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, it is clear that all of the tombs are interconnected through a network of patrons and artists, who were linked by a web of common artistic concepts. Northern-born artists who were frequently employed by the royal house designed and built these four Carafa monuments. A system of visual connections of foreign styles and design led contemporary Neapolitan viewers to connect the power of the Carafa family to their relationship with the monarchy. By utilizing funerary monuments to suggest their connection to the kings of southern Italy, the Carafas not only committed themselves to the power and prosperity of the ruling house in the eyes of contemporary viewers, but also in the eyes of those who would view their tombs centuries afterward.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, funerary monuments have offered valuable insights into the aspirations and self-representations of individuals within society. Tombs serve as opportunities for individuals to be remembered in specific ways long after death. Patrons sought to secure their place in the memories of their family and friends, but also in the eyes of the public. Patrons' incentives to document their impact on the world, and even to aggrandize their lives and careers, were a powerful force in the artistic culture of the Renaissance. The artistic patronage by royal houses was a major agent in this process.

The Angevin and Aragonese dynasties defined artistic patronage in Naples during the early Renaissance. While the Angevin monarchy (1266-1446) predates much of the art discussed here, the inclination of the Angevin rulers to recruit foreign artists for their projects, and indeed the monuments themselves, served as models for centuries after Angevin rule. At first, the Angevins employed exclusively French artists for their commissions. Eventually, however, they turned to Italian artists, who created a hybrid of French Gothic and local Italian styles.¹ When the Aragonese dynasty came into power in the middle of the fifteenth century, it continued the Angevins' convention of employing artists primarily from northern Italy. The Aragonese transformed much of the artistic fabric of Naples through their program of cultural renewal.

The nobility in Naples, through their artistic patronage, sought to imitate concepts associated with the royal house in order to connect themselves to the power and political influence of the monarchy. It was specifically this network of visual connections of Italian and foreign styles and designs that allowed Neapolitan viewers to associate the

¹ John Paoletti and Gary Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy* (New York, H.N Abrams, 1997), 61.

power of the local nobility and clergy with the monarchy. In order to facilitate this connection, the nobility employed artists who either worked on royal commissions directly, or followed the same style. Nevertheless, it was not only the choice of style that linked works to the monarchy, but also elements of iconography and overall design. The Carafa family, a powerful force in the noble and ecclesiastical hierarchies of Naples, was especially attuned to making these connections to the royal house through their choice of artists, and the styles and designs these employed.

Two tombs commissioned by Angevin monarchs – the tombs of Queen Mary of Hungary and King Ladislas of Anjou - illustrate the Angevin practice of employing foreign sculptors for their funerary monuments. These tombs also established the general design scheme of later tombs. This practice not only was continued by the Aragonese rulers, who adopted characteristic Angevin design elements in their architectural and sculptural commissions, but highlighted the place of these commissions in the context of an artistic renewal in Naples from 1485-95.

The Carafa family was very powerful and influential in Naples, and this was due in no small part to their close relationship with the Aragonese kings. This association was visually cemented in the Carafas' artistic patronage and is best revealed in three tomb monuments commissioned by the Carafa nobility. The tomb of Malizia Carafa, a diplomat in the service of Alfonso of Aragon, is a characteristic Neapolitan monument from the period, and serves as a template for an examination of the appropriation of royal style and design choices for other tombs of the Carafa family. Two other wall tombs, those of Malizia's sons, Diomedes and Francesco Carafa, are almost identical in

appearance and style, and illustrate the continued use of royal iconography, styles and designs for tombs of the high nobility.

The tombs of Malizia, Diomedea, and Francesco Carafa are representative of the nobility's use of royal visual markers. The visual markers are also significant because of their appearance in an ecclesiastical context. Cardinal Carafa was a high-ranking member of the church, with considerable political power in Naples. The largest, and possibly the best known of his commissions, was the chapel in the lower level of the cathedral of Naples that was planned to serve as his tomb. The chapel serves as both a reliquary for the relics of Saint Januarius, and as a family chapel for the Carafas. Due to the function of the space as a reliquary, the chapel is also known as the Succorpo. The importance of the Cardinal within the clergy of Naples is evident in marble ceiling reliefs of the major patron saints and bishops of Naples. A central, kneeling sculpture of the Cardinal further implies his significance, as this freestanding sculpture was a type seen primarily in papal and royal tomb types. Through an analysis of the tombs of Malizia, Diomedea, Francesco, and Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, it is clear that all four Carafa tombs are interconnected through artists, as well as through appropriated royal iconography and style.

CHAPTER ONE: NAPLES AND THE CARAFA FAMILY

Naples and its Place in Art History

Like many cities in Italy, Naples has a long and colorful past. It differs from the cultural centers of Rome, Florence, and Venice in that it has an artistic heritage that follows no dominant style. Much of the history of Naples forms around Greek, French, and Spanish influence. The city's location on the sea as well as the geographic situation of southern Italy as a whole meant that Naples was consistently wealthy due to trade.² This strategic importance, however, meant that control over southern Italy and the city of Naples was highly desirable. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, three main dynasties ruled Naples: the Angevins from 1266-1446, the Aragonese in 1442-1501, and the Spanish Hapsburgs from 1504-1713. In each of these periods, local Neapolitan artists and those traveling in the area created an eccentric artistic style. Michalsky applies the post-colonial term of "hybridity" to the art of Naples, as its definition is an appreciation of "the amalgamation of heterogeneous elements drawn from a variety of cultures."³

Giorgio Vasari's treatise on Renaissance artists has substantially formed the basis for understanding the Italian Renaissance even up to today. His *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori* was published in the sixteenth century and outlines several artists and their influences, patrons, and legacies. Scholarly research in any field usually finds its main concepts in preceding discoveries.⁴ As Vasari's work was generally based in Tuscany, his discussion of Neapolitan artists is extremely sparse. This can be seen

² Cordelia Warr and Janis Elliott, *Art and Architecture in Naples, 1266-1713: New Approaches* (MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 1.

³ Tanja Michalsky, "The Local Eye: Formal and Social Distinctions in Late Quattrocento Neapolitan Tombs" in *Art and Architecture in Naples, 1266-1713: New Approaches*, ed. Cordelia Warr and Janis Elliot (MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 78.

⁴ Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 25.

when comparing the length of the entry of Naples to that of a singular artist:

Michelangelo Buonarroti. Vasari's work is invaluable as a record of history.

Nevertheless, art historians have come to appreciate the importance of artists that do not fit into Vasari's selections, as well as cities that are atypical to the definition of 'cultural center.'

Angevin Precursors to Renaissance Funerary Monuments

The Angevin monarchy preceded much of the art that will be discussed in this thesis, but the monarchy's artistic monuments, as well as its inclination to import foreign artists for their projects, was used as a model for centuries after Angevin rule. Indeed, the Angevin and Aragonese courts commissioned much of the art that survives in Naples today.

The Angevins began their rule in the thirteenth century when Pope Clement IV presented the southern kingdom to the brother of the French king, Louis IX. Charles of Anjou was the first Angevin king of Naples, and he began the major artistic patronage carried on by his successors. As foreign conquerors, the Angevins used art to validate their claim to the throne.⁵ The rulers of Naples were highly influential through their patronage, and the nobility of Naples knew how to read and relate to the visual language of their leaders.⁶ Through the nobility's own patronage, their understanding of royal artistic systems and style determined the strength of their social status in relation to the ruling house.⁷ Tombs were a way for individuals to represent themselves or others in the manner they wanted to be seen, even after death. In her essay on Neapolitan tomb

⁵ John Paoletti and Gary Radke, *Art, Power and Patronage in Renaissance Italy* (NJ:Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005), 124; Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 64.

⁶ Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 67.

⁷ Ibid.

architecture in the fifteenth century, Michalsky lists three things that viewers should be aware of when studying tombs from this period: the expectations of the patron, the “models and forms” presented by the artist, and “the vast network of relationships governing the local culture of remembrance.”⁸

The Angevins were largely responsible for the influx of French Gothic into the city during their artistic transformation of Naples. Charles I filled political and artistic positions almost exclusively with Frenchmen.⁹ The king expected commissions in the French style from the Angevin court as well. This importation of style, although eventually influential, began with some difficulty. Charles I attempted to force soaring Gothic structures out of the soft local stone and consequently met with some problems. In the case of San Lorenzo Maggiore, the time spent during the builders’ struggle to construct buttressing out of tufa meant that other parts of the church lacked a refined Gothic style. Despite the Angevin “strategy of artistic imperialism,” the French Gothic style was increasingly used as only one aspect of the overall artistic concept in Naples, and only elements of the “elegant and refined spirit” remained.¹⁰ It is this Gothic elegance and refinement that was used for the creation of the Angevin tombs.

Two examples of Angevin funerary monuments from the fourteenth century are the tomb of Robert of Anjou and the tomb he commissioned for his mother, Mary of Hungary. Robert of Anjou was the grandson of Charles I, and for his mother’s tomb, Robert continued his grandfather’s preference of employing foreign sculptors.

⁸ Michalsky, “The Local Eye,” 70.

⁹ Paoletti and Radke, *Art, Power and Patronage*, 131; Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 61. “When he founded several new monasteries he even insisted that the monks come from France,” 61.

¹⁰ Paoletti and Radke, *Art, Power and Patronage*, 128.

This choice meant that imported artists dominated artistic circles in Naples.¹¹ In 1326, Robert commissioned his mother's tomb for Santa Maria Donna Regina (Figure 1). This monument represents the typical use of foreign designs and artists in a local Neapolitan commission, as well as a basic design structure used later by the Carafa family. The sculptor Tino di Camaino worked with a local sculptor, Gagliardo Primario, to adapt his northern style to the local southern one.¹² The tomb is framed by a Gothic pointed-arch baldachin, placed over the upper level of sculptural relief. The design includes elements particular to Tuscan wall tombs, especially seen in the placement of the structure under a baldachin. Such a construction was originally found in the *avello* tomb type, which usually comprised a series of niches on the exterior walls of a building.¹³

The tomb of Mary of Hungary features three main levels: caryatids that support a register of figures in niches on the sarcophagus front, and an effigy seen behind pulled back curtains. The caryatids supporting the structure represent four Virtues, a device that was usually seen on monuments erected to honor saints.¹⁴ Caryatids of the same sort are found in each of the examples discussed in this thesis, although their location on the monuments themselves varies. The seven niches on the sarcophagus are genealogical in nature, as they show the carved figures of the Queen's seven sons.¹⁵ A monument for a queen would usually emphasize her official duties, the most important of which was the production of heirs.

¹¹ Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 62.

¹² Paoletti and Radke, *Art, Power and Patronage*, 128; Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 63.

¹³ Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 63; Helen Ronan, "The Tuscan Wall Tomb 1250-1400" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1982), 32.

¹⁴ Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 63.

¹⁵ Ibid.



Figure 1 Tino di Camaino and Gagliardo Primario, tomb of Mary of Hungary, 1326, Santa Maria Donna Regina, Naples.

It is, of course, important to keep in mind that this was a tomb specifically made for a female member of the royal house. Usually, a monument designed for a woman would have a different appearance, since royal men and women had separate roles in late-Medieval and early-Renaissance society.¹⁶ While the architectural features of the monument are discussed in the later chapters of this thesis, the tomb of Mary of Hungary is key in understanding monuments that were built by artists from outside of Naples.

The tomb of Ladislas of Anjou (Figure 2) is another example the Carafa family would have been familiar with when commissioning their tombs. The tomb of Ladislas dates from the 1420s, and is located in San Giovanni a Carbonara. It was commissioned nearly a century after the tomb of Mary of Hungary. In comparison to the usual vertical wall tomb, Ladislas' monument occupies a large apsidal niche in the building. The tomb was commissioned by Joanna II, Ladislas' sister.¹⁷ The tomb is characteristic of the International Gothic style in Italy.¹⁸ It shows a mixture of Gothic and Classical elements employed using a mix of traditional and foreign artistic concepts, and thus fits in well with the complex art history of Naples. Paoletti and Radke argue that the artists could have either purposefully or subconsciously relied on established design elements for the design of the tomb.¹⁹ Over the course of their rule, the typical style of the Angevins became one that embraced the traditions of both their family's heritage, and the broader artistic heritage of Naples itself.

¹⁶ Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 63.

¹⁷ Ibid., 64.

¹⁸ Marco Folin, *Courts and Courtly Arts in Renaissance Italy: Art, Culture and Politics 1395-1530* (Suffolk: Antique Collectors Club, 2011), 382.

¹⁹ Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 16.



Figure 2 Tomb of Ladislas of Anjou, 1420s, San Giovanni a Carbonara, Naples.

Ladislas was the last king of the Anjou-Durazzo house. His tomb features representations from Neapolitan political history while linking Angevin rule with the heavenly realms.²⁰ Departing from the usual vertical tomb design, an unfolded wing can be found on each side. A large, round arch is placed over a group of enthroned figures (Figure 3). The equestrian statue of ‘*Divus Ladislaus*’ on the highest point of the monument is a nod to the deified emperors of Rome.²¹ As will be discussed in detail later, the Carafa wall tombs display a prominent sarcophagus and effigy as the central focus of their design. The tomb of Ladislas emphasizes the glorification of the king and the elements around him instead of the recumbent figure and his virtues.



Figure 3 Detail of tomb of Ladislas of Anjou, 1420s, San Giovanni a Carbonara, Naples.

²⁰ Folin, *Courts and Courtly Arts*, 382.

²¹ Michalsky, “The Local Eye,” 65.

Aragonese Artistic Renewal and Politics

The Aragon family began its rule of Naples in the middle of the fifteenth century. Compared to that of the Angevins, its rule of Naples was a short and unstable one. Several arguments of succession plagued Aragonese rule, along with uprisings and invasions.²² After Angevin rule ended, the Aragonese rulers embraced a new type of artistic propaganda, and artists from all over Italy were hired for the projects.²³ Diverse artists employed diverse styles, contributing further to the eclectic style of Renaissance Naples. During the artistic renewal of 1485-1495 under Alfonso II, more architectural projects were commissioned than painting and sculpture.²⁴

The Aragonese had a greater impact on the cultural and artistic fabric of the city than did the Angevins. Mele and Senatore attribute this to the fact that the late Angevin rulers spent much of their time outside of Naples and were therefore not as reliant on artistic traditions as they already existed in the city.²⁵ The Aragonese focused not only on creating new buildings and monuments, but also on renewing older structures. Key artistic commissions in Naples and throughout southern Italy emphasized the reliance of the Aragonese rulers on art, which they used to promote their self-representation as the rightful rulers of Italy.²⁶ The show of concern for the existing monuments of the city would have legitimized their rule in a physical and tangible way.

²² Folin, *Courts and Courtly Arts*, 378. The war of succession was in 1435-42, another in 1459-65, then a baronial uprising in 1485-86 and an invasion by the French in 1495.

²³ Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 66.

²⁴ George Hersey, *Alfonso II and the Artistic Renewal of Naples, 1485-95* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 16.

²⁵ Folin, *Courts and Courtly Arts*, 382.

²⁶ Ibid.

Renaissance society was rigidly structured in a hierarchical manner. The patron was the most important figure in a commission, while the artist was considered a laborer that brought the patron's ideas to life.²⁷

The Aragonese Arch at the Castel Nuovo is a key example of Aragonese architecture used to glorify the triumphs of the monarchy.²⁸ It features carved reliefs that depict the triumphs of Alfonso of Aragon, the founder of the Aragonese dynasty in southern Italy. Most notably, a frieze on the lower arch illustrates the conqueror, Alfonso I, entering Naples dressed in the costume of an emperor of antiquity. The artistic patronage of the Aragonese royals was focused on the celebration of military conquest. Members of the Aragonese administration such as Diomedes and Francesco Carafa were also linked militarily to the monarchy. The upper level of the arch features four Virtues in shell niches (Figure 4). The presence of Virtues in a royal commission is comparable to the use of caryatid statues of the Virtues found on the Angevin wall tombs.



Figure 4 Pietro da Milano, Domenico Gagini and Francesco Laurana and assistants, (detail of) triumphal arch, 1440s-1470s, Castel Nuovo, Naples.

²⁷ Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 16.

²⁸ Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 66-7.

As did the Angevins, the Aragonese kings imported many artists, especially from Florence, Rome, and Milan. Artists such as Jacopo della Pila and Domenico Gagini, two northern-born sculptors who were frequently employed by the nobility in the fifteenth century, were brought to Naples in order to work on the monumental double arch at the Castel Nuovo. Both artists worked on additional monuments for the Carafa family. Sculptors from Lombardy and Tuscany often traveled to Naples. Other royal commissions brought foreign artists to Naples, and the nobility incorporated these new artistic styles into their own projects.²⁹

Large commissions such as tomb structures generally included an extensive amount of carving, and were much too large for one person to tackle alone. Such projects necessitated the formation of an artist's workshop, a group of skilled workers led by a master artist. With many people working on a project, it was necessary to stay very organized and maintain a view of a singular artistic concept. The master of the workshop was in charge of overseeing this artistic concept, and dealing with patrons.³⁰

The Carafa Family

The Carafas were a noble family heavily involved in the political and ecclesiastical life of Naples. Members of the family were high-ranking political advisors to kings, and they held most major offices of the clergy in Naples in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Carafas claimed to have an aristocratic lineage in Naples that dated back to the twelfth century. The family divided into two major branches by the

²⁹ Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 77.

³⁰ Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 23.

fifteenth century.³¹ The members of the Carafa family mentioned within this paper were a part of the Carafa della Stadera branch. This thesis discusses specifically the lives of Diomede, Francesco, and Cardinal Oliviero Carafa. Also of importance was Malizia Carafa, the father of Diomede and Francesco, and the grandfather of Oliviero. These members of the Carafa family were all heavily involved in the politics of the Aragonese monarchy.³² While members of the Carafa family often held ecclesiastical offices such as the Archbishop of Naples, seats also belonged to other noble families, including the Brancacci and Pignatelli families. Wealthy and influential families similar in nature to these groups practiced nepotism, frequently rewarding members with prestigious positions in the clergy.

The Carafa family was atypical to the majority of the noble families in Naples. Aragonese rule was plagued by baronial uprisings often backed by Angevin familial lines looking to take the throne. Not all families within Naples supported the Aragonese, and often tried to find ways to upset the balance of power within the city. The close relationship between the Aragonese kings and the Carafa family intrinsically linked the two entities together. Despite their involvement with the Aragonese, the tombs of Diomede, Francesco, and Cardinal Oliviero Carafa recall more closely Angevin tombs. The following chapters will evaluate the Carafa monuments and their relationship to each other, their contemporaries, and to their Angevin predecessors.

³¹ Diana Norman, "Patronage of Oliviero Carafa 1430-1511" (PhD diss., Open University, 1989), 23.

³² A biography on the Carafa family in Naples is Scandone, *I Carafa di Napoli*, found in Litta's *Famiglie celebri italiane*, second series, I, tav. XIX, Turin, 1913.

CHAPTER TWO: THE TOMBS OF THE NOBLE

The Tomb of Antonio (Malizia) Carafa, Naples

The tomb of Antonio (Maliza) Carafa (Figure 5) in San Domenico Maggiore is from the workshop of Jacopo della Pila and dates to sometime in the 1440s or 1480s. Malizia Carafa was the father of Diomedes and Francesco, and the grandfather of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa. Malizia served as a diplomat in the service of Alfonso of Aragon. His involvement in the peaceful transition of power from the Angevins to the Aragonese in the middle of the fifteenth century secured him a place in the history of Naples.³³

Carafa's tomb is a traditional type of Neapolitan funerary monument.³⁴ Interestingly, although his career and life revolved around the Aragonese rulers, his tomb is much closer in style to the older Angevin tombs. Malizia's tomb is more classicizing and Tuscan in nature than the preceding Angevin tombs, and is a synthesis of the eclectic style found in Naples. Carved figures hold back curtains on either side of the sculpted effigy. Along with the use of four caryatid Virtues, the carved curtains were an attribute that became popular in Tuscany in the fourteenth century. The figures in Tuscany were primarily understood as angels.³⁵ Ronan argues that Tino di Camaino and his students brought the use of caryatids on the lower level of tombs to Naples from Tuscany.³⁶ As previously mentioned, Tino di Camaino is the artist credited with the creation of the tomb of Mary of Hungary. In contrast to the caryatids of the tomb of Mary of Hungary, the ones found on Malizia's tomb do not take the form of angels.

³³ Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 75.

³⁴ Hersey, *Alfonso II*, 113.

³⁵ Ronan, "Tuscan Wall Tomb," 36.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 39. Examples used are the tombs of Catherine of Austria in San Lorenzo, and Mary of Valois in San Chiara, 49, fn. 18.



Figure 5 Workshop of Jacopo della Pila, tomb of Antonio (Malizia) Carafa, 1440s/1480s, San Domenico Maggiore, Naples.

Malizia Carafa's tomb holds to the same basic design of earlier Angevin tombs, as exemplified by that of King Ladislas. The tomb of Ladislas was well known, and members of the Neapolitan nobility imitated its features in their own commissions. The tomb of Ladislas, however, featured multiple layers of references to civic virtue and kingliness, while the patron and artists of Carafa's tomb preferred a more restrained approach. The overall framing of Carafa's sarcophagus, the curtains on either side of the effigy, and the carved angels that hold back the cloth remind the viewer of similar features on the tomb of the Angevin king.³⁷ Carafa's tomb was a visible and accessible example of a monument for a nobleman that suggested royalty through imitation.

The arrangement of Carafa's wall tomb is straightforward and well defined. There are three main levels: the lower level shows three caryatid Virtues supporting a sarcophagus with a carved relief and the effigy of the deceased, and a coat of arms above. One difference between Carafa's tomb and the tombs of the Angevin royalty is in the details of the framing architecture that surrounds the entire structure. There is no baldachin with pointed arches and tracery characteristic of the French Angevin style. In place of the baldachin, there is a rounded arch, with columns on both sides and a large, projecting cornice above. Its stylistic qualities suggest that this triumphal arch dates to a later period than some of the other components, including the sarcophagus front and the Virtues.³⁸

Each Virtue holds an object that serves as its attribute. On the tomb of Ladislas, the Virtues are placed at the very bottom of the structure, where there is an entire level between them and the sarcophagus. Carafa's caryatids instead bear the sarcophagus on

³⁷ Hersey, *Alfonso II*, 14.

³⁸ Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 75.

their heads in a similar manner to those of the tomb of Mary of Hungary. Hersey states that this is a dynamic presentation, and that the effigy looks as though it is being carried through the arch, instead of only lying within it.³⁹ While more elaborate in nature, Hersey uses the tomb of Cardinal Rinaldo Brancacci as an example of a possible influence of Carafa's tomb (Figure 6).⁴⁰



Figure 6 Donatello and Michelozzo di Bartolomeo, tomb of Cardinal Rinaldo Brancacci, 1425-33, Sant' Angelo a Nilo, Naples.

³⁹ Hersey, *Alfonso II*, 14.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

A Latin inscription dates the death of Malizia to 10 October 1438. The main inscription reads: “Thanks to me, Alfonso arrived on our coasts in order to bring peace to the Italians. Only the piety of his descendants is responsible for this tomb, and it is offered as a gift to Malizia.”⁴¹ This inscription likely refers to Carafa’s aforementioned involvement in the transfer of power from Joanna II to Alfonso of Aragon in 1420.

Art historians regularly debate whether the patron or the artist had the most control over a commission. The relationship between artist and patron often overshadows the important links between the monuments themselves, local or otherwise. Michalsky raises the question of whether imported styles were a discernable and important aspect of the visual culture of the nobility.⁴² I would argue that it was specifically the network of foreign styles that formed visual connections causing contemporary viewers to understand the power of the local nobility and their relationship with the monarchy. While interested in individual commemoration, these visual connections were shared between the monuments of family members and reinforced the authority of their family as a whole.

The patronage of the tomb of Malizia Carafa brings us to a discussion of his son, Diomedes Carafa (1406-1487). The relationship between artist and patron becomes relevant here. The commission of a funerary monument by a family member raises the issue of intent. The overall style of the monument seems more fitting for a fourteenth-century sarcophagus rather than one from the contemporary fifteenth century.

⁴¹ “Auspice me latias Alfonsus venit in oras //rex pius ut pace redderet au sonie// natorum hoc pietas struxit mihi sola sepulcrum Carrafe// dedit hec munera Malicie” The English translation of this inscription found in this thesis was taken from Michalsky in Warr and Elliott, *Art and Architecture in Naples*, page 75.

⁴² Ibid.

The chamber fits in well with the artistic choices of the nobility during the preceding century. It is possible that this was an intentional choice by Diomedes to remind the viewer of his family's long and prosperous history in Naples. This strategy was not limited only to this tomb, as the reuse of late-medieval sarcophagus fronts on contemporary monuments has been documented throughout Naples. Utilizing medieval sarcophagus fronts in the rest of Italy however was less common, as sarcophagus fronts from antiquity were more widely used in places like Tuscany.⁴³

In her dissertation on Tuscan wall tombs, Helen Ronan explains that this Tuscan practice of using classical sarcophagi was standard. A patron seeking an ornate design would reuse a Roman or early Christian sarcophagus front instead of commissioning a new one.⁴⁴ Ronan goes on to explain that, once interest in sculpture and funerary commissions began to rise in Tuscany, the act of reuse diminished over time.⁴⁵

There is also the overall classical, static organization of Malizia's wall tomb. Diomedes was an avid collector of antiquities and prided himself on his understanding of the Classical world. It would make sense for him to have commissioned a tomb that represented his ideals, especially from an artist such as Jacopo della Pila, who shared his vision.⁴⁶ Taking this into consideration, the inclusion of a medieval sarcophagus front instead of one from antiquity was an interesting choice, and one that was not repeated on the tomb of Diomedes Carafa.

⁴³ Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 75.

⁴⁴ Ronan, "Tuscan Wall Tomb," 27.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 27-28.

⁴⁶ Francesco Abbate, *La Scultura Napoletana del Cinquecento* (Rome: Donzelli, 1992), 22.

The Tomb of Diomedes Carafa, Naples

Diomedes Carafa was a well-known and respected diplomat in the service of the Spanish Aragon rulers of southern Italy. There is little known of his early life and of the early years of his service to the Aragonese kings of Naples. The initial years of the Aragonese kingdom were turbulent, and Diomedes's involvement is poorly documented. Many of the documents pertaining to the Carafa family history in Naples were destroyed in a fire at the Neapolitan archives, but over the decades, pieces have been brought together.⁴⁷ Carafa's career centered on military and administrative politics. When Ferrante was elevated to the position of king in 1458, Diomedes's influence in the political court grew.⁴⁸ While serving under King Ferrante I, Carafa was described as the second ruler of Naples.⁴⁹ In 1465, he earned the title of the Count of Maddaloni and was often known by this name in subsequent documents.⁵⁰

Carafa was an active patron of the arts. He had a particular interest in a classicizing style in architecture and in art. The courtyard of his palace had an extensive collection of sculptures from Classical antiquity, and his palace itself can be visually linked to classical architecture. His palace in the heart of Naples is a key example of Renaissance architecture in the area; its rusticated masonry and structural qualities continue to draw the attention of art historians. The architecture of the Palazzo Carafa represents not only the eclectic style of architecture in fifteenth-century Naples, but also a

⁴⁷ John Moores, "New Light on Diomedes Carafa and His Perfect Loyalty to Ferrante of Aragon," *Italian Studies* 26, no. 1 (1971): 4.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Zaccaria Barbaro, *Dispacci. 1 novembre 1471-7 settembre 1473*, ed. Gigi Corazzol, (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1994), 225.

⁵⁰ Tommaso Persico, *Diomedes Carafa: Uomo Di Stato e Scrittore Del Secolo XV* (Naples: L. Pierro, 1899), 86-87.

particular personal style of Carafa himself, which can be seen in other projects such as the tomb of his father. The structure has attributes taken from antiquity as well as the middle ages, and a mixture of Catalan and Florentine qualities.⁵¹ The rusticated exterior of the palace, and the portals of the palace are classicizing, while the interior features Gothic piers, which Hersey calls Catalan Gothic.”⁵²

The tomb of Diomedes Carafa is inscribed with the year 1470; however, Diomedes Carafa's death occurred in the year 1487. Carafa's tomb provides an example of a funerary monument of a civil servant and nobleman (Figure 7). The tomb is located in the church of San Domenico Maggiore and holds a prominent location next to the high altar. There is little documentation of any artists or patrons involved in the creation of the monument.

The most prominent features of the tomb are the thick framing arch, the relief scene in the lunette, and the four carved sculptures of the Virtues. Within the arch is the sarcophagus of Diomedes Carafa, and, below that, a shallow bench. Aside from these defining features, the remainder of the decoration is very limited. Winged cherub faces line the top of the arch, and the sarcophagus itself has very little ornamentation. The level where the lower bench is located features the Carafa coat of arms placed in front of a relief-cut brocade pattern.

⁵¹ Bianca de Divitiis, “Building in Local All’ Antica Style: The Palace of Diomedes Carafa in Naples” in *Art and Architecture in Naples, 1266-1713: New Approaches*, ed. Cordelia Warr and Janis Elliot (MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 86.

⁵² Hersey, *Alfonso II*, 12. In particular, Hersey lists the vestibule and arches in the inner part of the courtyard as Catalan Gothic, which is an alternative Gothic style primarily found in Catalonia that lacks the height and elaborate detail found in the International Style.



Figure 7 Jacopo della Pila, Tommaso Malvito da Como and Domenico Gagini, tomb of Diomedes Carafa, 1480s, San Domenico Maggiore, Naples.

The artists to whom the tomb of Diomedea Carafa is attributed include Jacopo della Pila, Tommaso Malvito, and Domenico Gagini.⁵³ Tommaso and Giantommaso Malvito are mentioned in connection to several monuments throughout Naples in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Tommaso Malvito worked primarily on funerary chapels and monuments, beginning in 1484.⁵⁴ About twenty of these projects focused on tomb structures and funerary chapels, but the artist is documented in over thirty other projects.⁵⁵

Domenico Gagini was another artist from northern Italy. He was in Naples to work on the Aragonese arch at the Castel Nuovo. He is considered to be responsible for the Annunciation relief on the lunette (Figure 8) and the Virtue of Temperance. Malvito is credited with sculpting the Virtue of Justice (Figure 9), while another northerner, Jacopo della Pila, most likely worked on the figure of Prudence (Figure 10) and perhaps the recumbent figure of Diomedea himself.⁵⁶ Abbate writes that both Malvito and della Pila illustrate their distinct northern style in the tomb.⁵⁷ The Annunciation relief by Gagini is smoothly carved and a typical rendering of the scene. The angel Gabriel enters on the left side to greet Mary. Overall, the scene has a balance of dynamism and fixed aspects.

⁵³ Francesco Abbate, "Problemi della scultura napoletana del Quattrocento," *Bollettino d'arte* 4 (1954): 18-20.

⁵⁴ Yoni Ascher, "Tommaso Malvito and Neapolitan Tomb Design of the Early Cinquecento," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 63 (2000): 111. Documented in *Documenti per la storia, le arti e le industrie delle provincie napoletane*, ed. G. Filangieri, 6 vols, Naples 1883-91. v.1, 474.

⁵⁵ Abbate, *La Scultura Napoletana*, 19.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 35.



Figure 8 Domenico Gagini, Annunciation, detail from tomb of Diomede Carafa, San Domenico Maggiore, Naples.



Figure 9 Left: Tommaso Malvito, Justice, detail of the tomb of Diomede Carafa, San Domenico Maggiore, Naples.

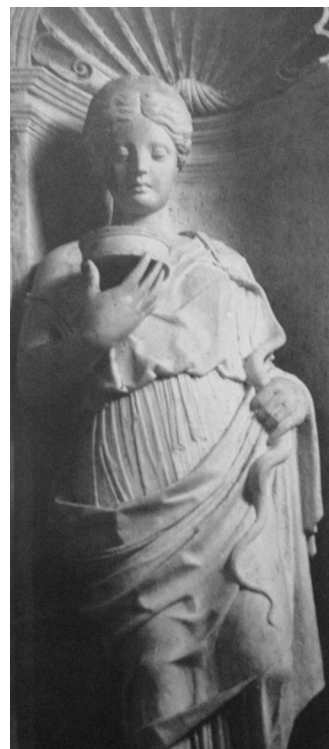


Figure 10 Right: Jacopo della Pila, Prudence, detail of the tomb of Diomede Carafa, San Domenico Maggiore, Naples.

The movement of the relief comes mostly from the angel's robes, which seem to flutter backward with motion. Aside from this portion of the structure, the rest consists of traditional forms and poses. Like the tomb of Malizia Carafa, this monument again illustrates the custom of the nobility preferring imported artists such as della Pila, Malvito, and Gagini.

The tomb of Diomedede Carafa does not use caryatid Virtues on the lower level of its structure. In their place is a shallow, marble bench. The caryatid Virtues that would have previously been found on the lower level of the structure are now a part of the framing arch. Four carved figures are placed in individual shell niches, with two on each side. A strong horizontal stone lip divides the structure into two halves. Instead of one framing triumphal arch, the tomb has the appearance of two separate structures placed one on top of another. This brings to mind the Aragonese arch at Castel Nuovo previously mentioned in Chapter One (Figure 4, p. 13).

To provide some context for the overall placement of the tomb of Diomedede Carafa: it is placed in a very important and famous chapel, the Cappellone del Crocifisso. The figure of St. Thomas Aquinas is very important in the church of San Domenico Maggiore, as it is a Dominican church. The chapel housing the tomb is said to have held a crucifix that spoke to Thomas Aquinas. It is a large chapel, with tombs of members of different families. Tommaso Malvito da Como worked on one of these tombs for Mariano D'Alagno and Caterinella Ursini in 1506.⁵⁸ The tomb of Diomedede's brother, Francesco Carafa, is also found in this chapel.

⁵⁸ Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 77.

In comparison to the tomb of his father, Diomede's tomb is more compact and organized. The sarcophagus front for Diomede's tomb features a simple vegetative pattern and inscription, unlike the fourteenth-century sarcophagus front of Malizia's tomb, which shows three portrait reliefs. The framing arch on the tomb of Diomede is divided cleanly into three sections: the bench with the coat of arms, the sarcophagus with the inscription, and the religious lunette. This also separates it into family, self, and faith, while the Virtues in the frame, as well as the curtained effigy suggest royal iconography. It is unfortunate to not have a name of the person who commissioned Diomede's tomb, as it could have shed light on the visual intentions, or even the artist-patron relationship. Geiger suggests Oliviero Carafa for the commission of both Diomede and Francesco's tombs.⁵⁹ Norman argues that it is conceivable that Jacopo della Pila originally designed Diomede's tomb, while Malvito remodeled it during the construction of Francesco's in the same chapel.⁶⁰ For Francesco's tomb, however, we know that it was his son, Oliviero, who commissioned it.

The Tomb of Francesco Carafa, Naples

Cardinal Oliviero Carafa commissioned the tomb of his father, Francesco Carafa, the Lord of Torre del Greco, and eldest son to the previously discussed Malizia Carafa.⁶¹ As with the tomb of his brother, Diomede Carafa, Francesco's tomb is located in the

⁵⁹ Gail Geiger, *Filippino Lippi's Carafa Chapel: Renaissance Art in Rome* (MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1986), 35.

⁶⁰ Norman, "Patronage," 390.

⁶¹ Ibid., 402, fn. 23. An inscription found on the tomb of Francesco credits Cardinal Carafa with the patronage of his father's tomb. "Francisco carrapha equity neapolitano insigni christianae/ religionis qui summa omnium moralium benivo/lentia ac veneratione aetatis annum agens LXXXIII obit senii/nunquam questus oliverius card(inalis) neap[olitanus] parenti optimo pos[uit]."

Cappellone del Crocefisso in San Domenico Maggiore, Naples (Figure 11). The two brothers' tombs are not only located in the same place, but are visually similar. Abbate considers the two tombs twin tomb types.⁶²

The life of Francesco Carafa is hard to piece together, with no known date of death. The date of his wall tomb is also not clear. Even so, the tomb is generally attributed to the workshop of Tommaso Malvito, with a construction date of around 1487.⁶³ Malvito was an artist originally from Lombardy, in northern Italy. His involvement with most of the monuments discussed here is no coincidence. Malvito and his workshop were the main source of artists for sculptural projects in Naples from 1485 to 1508.⁶⁴ It can be argued, however, that the tomb features a similar variety of artists as the tomb of Diomedea Carafa. Abbate credits Malvito's son, Giantommaso, as the artist for some of the work.⁶⁵

Yoni Ascher discusses the tombs of Carlo Pignatelli (Figure 12) and Bishop Bernardino Carafa (Figure 13) in her essay on the artist workshop of Tommaso and Giantommaso Malvito. In particular, the tomb of Pignatelli shows some telltale signs of the Malvito workshop. Malvito's touch can be seen in the details, such as the sharply cut folds of cloth, and the treatment of the effigy.⁶⁶ Even specifics like the plump, smooth face of the figure of Prudence in one of the sculpture niches can be linked to Malvito's work on the tomb of Bishop Bernardino Carafa.

⁶² Abbate, *La Scultura Napoletana*, 43.

⁶³ Ascher, "Tommaso Malvito," 115.

⁶⁴ Diana Norman, "The Succorpo in the Cathedral of Naples: 'Empress of All Chapels,'" *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 49, no. 3 (1986): 353.

⁶⁵ Abbate, *La Scultura Napoletana*, 43.

⁶⁶ Ascher, "Tommaso Malvito," 115.

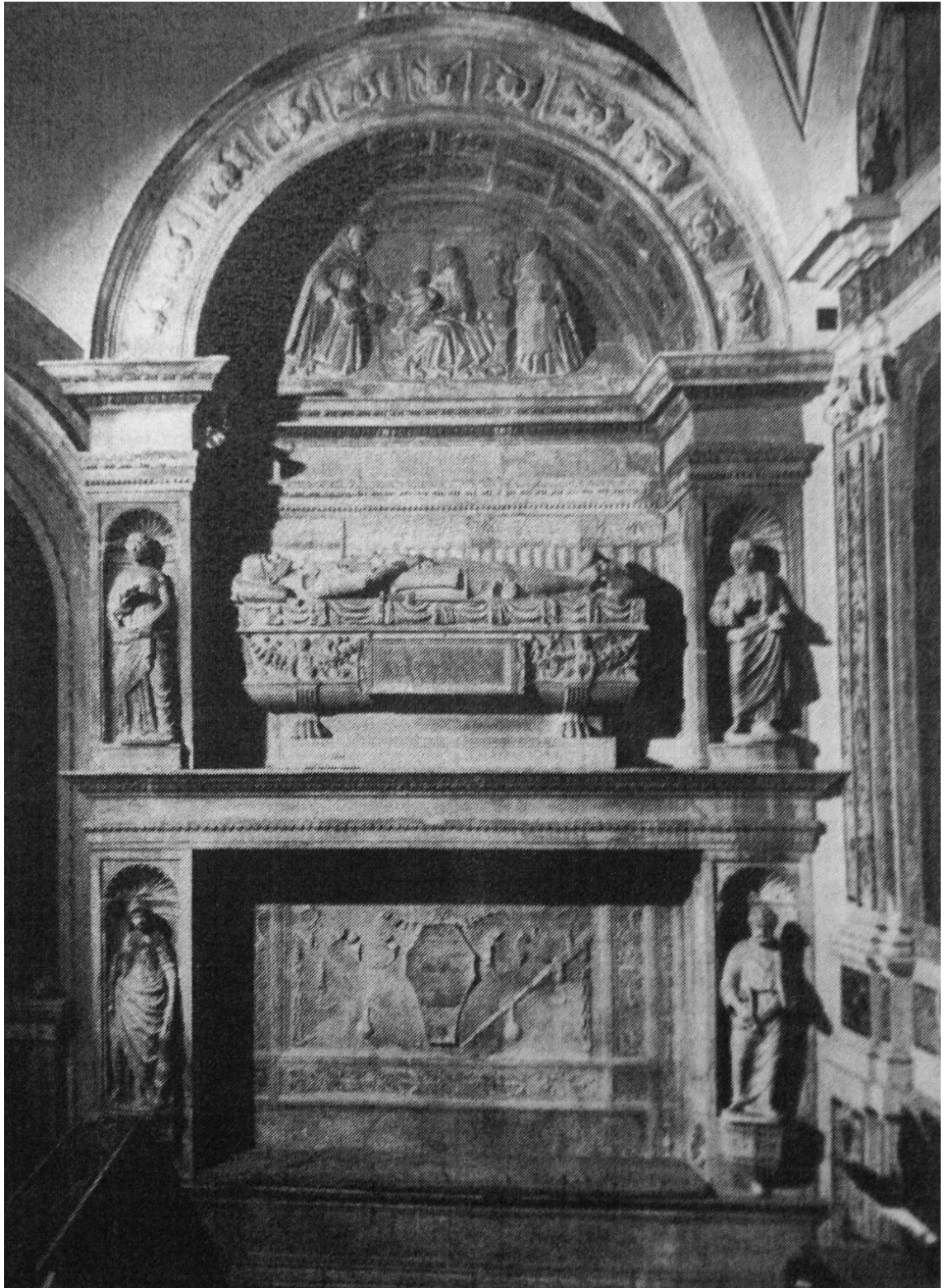


Figure 11 Workshop of Tommaso Malvito, tomb of Francesco Carafa, 1480s, San Domenico Maggiore, Naples.

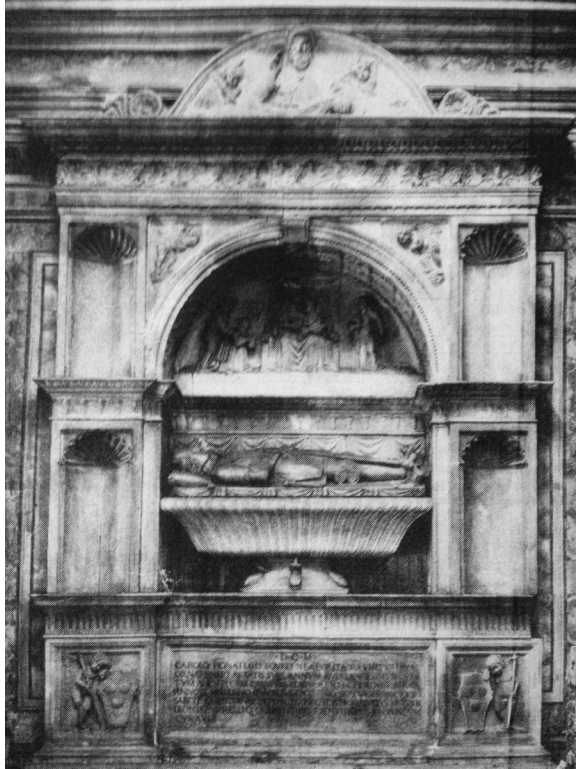


Figure 12 Tommaso Malvito, tomb of Carlo Pignatelli, 1506-7, S. Maria Assunta dei Pignatelli, Naples.

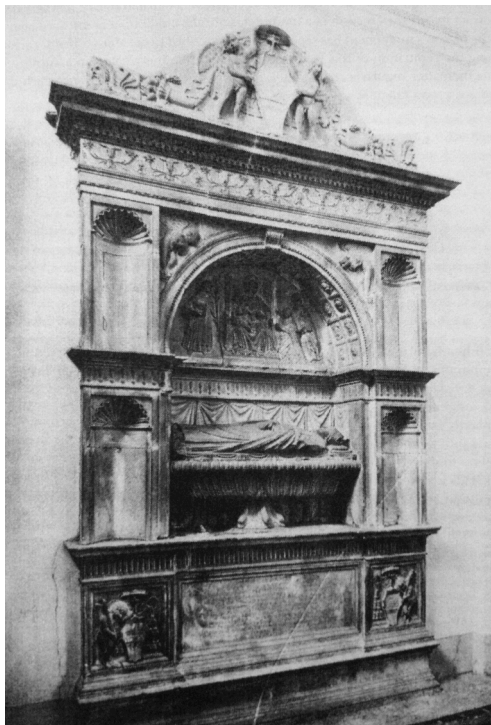


Figure 13 Tommaso Malvito, tomb of Bishop Bernardino Carafa, 16th century, S. Domenico Maggiore, Naples.

Ascher describes the effigy of Pignatelli's tomb as nearly identical to the one found on the tomb of Francesco Carafa.⁶⁷ In particular, both effigies have individually carved faces in the likeness of the deceased, but the pose, costume, and placement of the other details are nearly identical. The similar effigies in two separately completed wall tombs suggest that Malvito built them with an intended uniformity in mind.⁶⁸ Sepulchral art was conservative, which meant that artists usually kept to a set of rules and existing models.⁶⁹

As explained previously, tombs from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries commonly incorporated personifications of Virtues in order to represent the piety of the deceased. The presence of the Virtues was meant to be representative of the qualities that the person would have had during his life. The presence of the Virtues as caryatids in the Angevin royal tombs of Mary of Hungary and Ladislas, and even in some ecclesiastic monuments, was also a sign of wealth.⁷⁰ Caryatids were an extra expense, and would require a patron able to afford the addition. Ronan cites this expense as a reason why the use of caryatid Virtues was not wide spread in Tuscany.⁷¹ Through this use of Virtues, the nobility connected themselves not only to the political power of the royal house, but also to their own individual wealth.

In its design, the tomb of Francesco Carafa is very similar to that of Diomedea Carafa's. It features three distinct levels: a bench with the Carafa coat of arms, a sarcophagus with an inscription, and a lunette with a religious scene. The lunette features

⁶⁷ Ascher, "Tommaso Malvito," 117.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 125.

⁷⁰ Ronan, "Tuscan Wall Tomb," 39.

⁷¹ Ibid.

the figure of Francesco and a Dominican friar before the Madonna and Christ child.⁷² The tomb shares the heavy, rounded arch frame as the tomb of Diomede, with four Virtues set into shell niches (Figures 14 and 15). Instead of pure vegetation on the sarcophagus, there are two winged cherubs gesturing toward the inscription. In Malvito's work on the Succorpo in Naples, the use of a Virtue of Minerva as Sapientia is used on the left panel beside the episcopal throne. In Francesco Carafa's wall tomb, Sapientia is portrayed as a snake, and Fortitude is wearing all'antica armor. Sculptural aspects of Malvito's earlier work found its way into his later work, which was heavily classicizing, and a popular style in Naples during this time.⁷³



Figure 14 Left: Tommaso Malvito, Prudence, detail from the tomb of Francesco Carafa, San Domenico Maggiore, Naples.

Figure 15 Right: Giantommaso Malvito, St Peter, detail from the tomb of Francesco Carafa, San Domenico Maggiore, Naples.

⁷² Norman, "Patronage," 388-89.

⁷³ Ascher, "Tommaso Malvito," 129.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, Oliviero Carafa was the patron of his father's tomb. Cardinal Carafa was a high-ranking member of the church, with a lot of political power in Naples. The relationship between patron and artist once again becomes relevant. Tommaso Malvito worked in various extents on each tomb of the nobility discussed in this thesis. Jacopo della Pila could have also had a hand in each of them. With the same group of artists, and a template of how noble tombs were supposed to be constructed, it is understandable that the tombs of both Francesco and Diomedea are similar. The tombs were likely completed around the same time. Diomedea's death occurred in the year 1487, the same approximate year that Malvito is credited with beginning the tomb of Francesco. If they were created at the same time, it would help explain the striking similarities between the tombs, especially since they are located in the same chapel. There is also the possibility that Oliviero Carafa commissioned both tombs, although there is not much documentary evidence that supports this theory. Cardinal Carafa certainly had a good understanding of available artists and options for the commission of his father's tomb. He chose to use an existing pool of artists and a tomb type well known in Naples. Despite the Cardinal's choice of a traditional tomb type for his father, the designs of his own chapels are atypical for members of the clergy.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CHAPELS OF THE CLERGY

Cardinal Oliviero Carafa

Cardinal Oliviero Carafa was born in Rome in 1430, but throughout his life and career, he showed a great love of Naples. His father, Francesco, was a member of a patrician family in Naples. The ancestry of his mother, Maria Origlia, may have played a part in his later theological ideas. It was rumored at the time that she was distantly related to Thomas Aquinas, a theologian that Cardinal Carafa greatly admired.⁷⁴ Carafa spent much of his time in Rome, but kept his connections to the city of Naples. This relationship, however, caused friction between Rome and the monarchy in place in Naples.

As Cardinal, Oliviero Carafa held many positions, sometimes simultaneously, and was a very important figure in politics, art, and theology. Much of this work defined him as a significant figure in history and irreplaceable within the Catholic Church. As with many positions of status and influence, cardinals were under close scrutiny, not only by the people, but also their colleagues. The red hats worn by the cardinals were a visible sign of religious stature, but also of high social status and the ability to be politically influential.⁷⁵ It seems that Cardinal Carafa took these responsibilities very seriously throughout his ecclesiastical career. As the archbishop of the wealthy diocese of Naples, Carafa would have been accustomed to the temptations of wealth and power. Naples was a politically powerful city, and the loyalty of the Carafa family to the Aragonese likely

⁷⁴ Michael Walsh, *The Cardinals: Thirteen Centuries of the Men Behind the Papal Throne* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, Pub., 2011), 142.

⁷⁵ Mary Hollingsworth and Carol Richardson, *The Possessions of a Cardinal: Politics, Piety, and Art, 1450-1700* (PA: University Park, 2010), 2.

played a part in the Cardinal's advancement in the church.⁷⁶ As a prominent member of the Catholic Church, Cardinal Oliviero Carafa was a man known for his influence, but also his humility.

Carafa served as a diplomat between Rome and the kings of southern Italy. He is known more for his diplomatic talents and accomplishments than specifically ecclesiastic ones. Carafa received a doctorate in canon and civil law, an educational background that prepared him to ascend in the church hierarchy. Cardinal Carafa was the Archbishop of Naples on more than one occasion over the span of fifty years. Initially, he gained the position in 1458 when King Ferdinand I requested that he be appointed archbishop of the Naples diocese. Carafa took on other posts, including positions in Spain, as well as other parts of Italy, over the course of his career; nevertheless, he always either returned to the position of archbishop of Naples, or made sure a member of his family held it. During these periods, his brother and two of his nephews were Archbishops of Naples.⁷⁷

In 1467, the Aragonese king of Naples again urged the pope, Paul II, to elevate Carafa to the position of cardinal.⁷⁸ King Ferrante wrote to the College of the Cardinals conveying his regret that there was no political representative of the kingdom of Naples in the College. In the same correspondence, the king mentioned his approval of Oliviero Carafa.⁷⁹ When he first became a cardinal, Carafa became presbyter of Santi Pietro e Marcellino. This was just the first appointment of many to follow.

Cardinal Carafa often used his position as a cardinal to influence appointments in Naples in his family's favor, an action that the word 'nepotism' was created to define.

⁷⁶ Norman, "Succorpo," 335.

⁷⁷ Walsh, *The Cardinals*, 144; Hersey, *Alfonso II*, 118 n. 40; Norman, "Succorpo," 335.

⁷⁸ Walsh, *The Cardinals*, 142.

⁷⁹ Norman, "Succorpo," 335, fn. 15.

In the early fifteenth century, a set of rules was given, settling what cardinals could and could not do, and what type of lives they should lead. It was decided that the relatives of any pope or cardinal could not be elevated to their same position in the hierarchy of the church. Walsh humorously writes that this was “a provision which was systematically ignored.”⁸⁰ During the Renaissance and late-Medieval periods, it was generally understood that, after being elevated to a high rank in the church, it was an individual’s responsibility to share that success with his family. Carafa was not one to disagree with the accumulation of benefices.⁸¹ In fact, he held many “permanent” positions within the church, and bestowed many of his relatives with titles.

Carafa eventually became the cardinal-bishop of Ostia. With the exception of a period of time under Pope Sixtus IV, the position of cardinal-bishop of Ostia was combined with that of the dean of the College of Cardinals, the committee that advised the pope.⁸² Cardinal Carafa became the dean of the College in 1492, and it was in 1503 during his tenure as the dean that the position was again combined with that of the cardinal-bishop of Ostia.⁸³ As the highest-ranking member of the College, the cardinal-bishop of Ostia was an important associate of the pope. The consecration of a new pope as the Bishop of Rome was a responsibility of the cardinal-bishop.⁸⁴

Cardinal Oliviero Carafa spent much of his time in Rome, but commissioned works in Naples regularly, and served as a diplomatic ambassador to the king of Naples. As stated earlier, Oliviero Carafa’s relationship with Naples occasionally put him in an

⁸⁰ Walsh, *The Cardinals*, 12.

⁸¹ Ibid., 145.

⁸² Hollingsworth and Richardson, *Possessions of a Cardinal*, 1.

⁸³ Carol Richardson, “Reclaiming Rome Cardinals in the Fifteenth Century” (Brill, 2009), 241.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 240.

uncomfortable position. Naples and Rome often found themselves at war, or at least involved in aggressions between other city-states. These situations led to an uncomfortable period of time for Cardinal Carafa, but he remained the King of Naples' representative at the papal court. As explained in Chapter One, the position and prosperity of Naples meant that it was continuously under threat by other European powers. Even in Rome, Carafa still found himself in a dangerous position. King Charles VIII of France acted upon the assertion that he held a claim to the Neapolitan throne, and arrived in Rome to aggressively "discuss" this with Pope Alexander VI. The pope supported the Spanish rulers of Naples, and Cardinal Carafa did so as well, and both of them were forced to take refuge in Castel Sant'Angelo. Carafa paid off Charles VIII in order to keep his family safe, and the French successfully conquered and held Naples for a short time.⁸⁵

When it came to patronage of the arts, Cardinal Carafa successfully balanced his activities between Rome and Naples, as well as between his family and his ecclesiastic ties. During the Renaissance, the clergy illustrated the wealth and power of the Catholic Church through their art patronage. Once he was appointed as a cardinal and arrived in Rome, he quickly began to commission works of art and architecture. He established himself in the art community as a patron of the arts and a collector of antiquities. Late in his career, the Cardinal had gathered a lot of wealth, but took his positions in the church and work in his faith very seriously.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Walsh, *The Cardinals*, 144.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

The Succorpo, Naples Cathedral

Cardinal Carafa's ecclesiastic career began at the cathedral of Naples. As a Cardinal, Carafa would have had a different set of requirements to fulfill for any sort of funerary monument. Monuments for the clergy would have needed a distinct religious aspect. He fulfilled this religious requirement in the Succorpo while also including important references to his noble family, as well as iconography usually reserved for kings.

The Succorpo itself is not only a chapel, but also a reliquary (Figure 16). The chapel was designed to hold the relics of Saint Januarius. Saint Januarius was one of the patron saints of Naples, and his relics were very important to the city's identity. In particular, the saint was responsible for protecting the city of Naples from plague or invasion, and was credited with occasions of curing the sick.⁸⁷ There are several accounts of where some of Saint Januarius' relics were kept before placement in the Succorpo. Some of these accounts relate that, after Saint Januarius' martyrdom sometime during the fourth century, his remains were either placed in a Benedictine church outside of Naples, or in the Sanctuary of Montevergine. The catacombs of San Gennaro (St Januarius) outside the city limits of Naples have also been cited as a possible location.⁸⁸

The relics of Saint Januarius had many legends associated with them. A poem by Fra Bernardino Siciliano informs much of the research of the chapel, as it contains information on the life of the saint, as well as a physical description of the Succorpo he witnessed as it was being built.

⁸⁷ Norman, "Succorpo," 331.

⁸⁸ Hersey, *Alfonso II*, 118 fn. 40; Strazzullo, "La Cappella Carafa del duomo di Napoli in un poemetto del primo cinquecento," *Napoli Nobilissima*, ser. 3, 5 (March/April 1966), 59-71; Norman, "Succorpo," 324-25, 331.



Figure 16 Workshop of Tommaso Malvito, the Succorpo and sculpture of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, 1497-1506, Duomo, Naples.

Fra Bernardino writes of an important ritual in Naples involving the saint's relics that was used by the Neapolitans to assure themselves of the saint's good favor and protection. When vials containing the blood of Saint Januarius were placed next to his skull, the flakes of blood would turn to liquid. On one occasion, the relics were taken on a "special procession" for the mortally ill King Ferdinand in 1496, and "according to one witness, the combined presence of the head and blood enabled the blood to melt as if it were water."⁸⁹ The saint's body was rediscovered in 1480 during a restoration of the high altar of the abbey church at Montevergine. It seems as though the body of Saint Januarius was placed in a separate location than that of the head and vial of blood. Cardinal Carafa had been assigned the abbeys of Cava and Montevergine after the death of the previous abbot, Cardinal Giovanni of Aragon, the son of King Ferrante of Naples.⁹⁰ The appointment of Cardinal Carafa as abbot led to his plan to translate of the relics of Saint Januarius to the cathedral church of Naples.⁹¹

It was in 1490 that King Ferrante wrote Carafa asking him to inquire with the pope about the translation of the body of Saint Januarius so as to reunite it with the head and blood of the saint at the cathedral of Naples. A dispute between Naples and Rome kept the translation from happening until years later. When Carafa finally received permission from the pope, his brother Alessandro, the Archbishop of Naples, traveled to

⁸⁹ Giuliano Passero, *Giornali*, ed. V. M. Altobelli (Naples: V. Orsino, 1785), 108. "...Arciepiscopo de Napoli lo quale portai con ditta processione lo sange di San Gennaro con la testa di detto santo con tutte le confratanze de Napoli, et con tutti li clerici, et con grandissimo pianto portaro per Napoli lo sangue, lo quale fo visto squagliato come se fosse stato un'acqua."

⁹⁰ Norman, "Succorpo," 334.

⁹¹ Norman, "Succorpo," 334, n.11; *Il carteggio fra il cardinal Marco Barbo e Giovanni Lorenzi (1481-1490)*, ed. P. Paschini, 137, *Studi e Testi*, Città del Vaticano 1948, 127.

Montevergine only to have the monks refuse his group entry.⁹² After some aggressive negotiations, the Archbishop brought the relics back to Naples at the end of the fifteenth century. The unification of Saint Januarius' relics in Naples was extremely important both politically and spiritually for Cardinal Oliviero Carafa. Relics were a driving factor in the economy, one that brought pilgrims to the site. Uniting Saint Januarius' body with his other relics meant that Naples would be a primary site of pilgrimage, and the city would benefit spiritually and monetarily. Cardinal Carafa and his family would have gained recognition for helping unite the relics.⁹³

The Carafa Chapel in the lower level of the cathedral of Naples was installed between 1497 and 1506⁹⁴. Tommaso Malvito and his son, Giantommaso, created the sculptural reliefs that line its walls. There is an ongoing debate as to whether Malvito and his workshop were responsible for the entire design, including the architectural plan. The Succorpo was the largest project done by the workshop.⁹⁵ It has been suggested that Malvito was only responsible for the decoration, while Donato Bramante was responsible for the architectural design.⁹⁶ Bramante had worked with Carafa on projects in Rome, and it would make sense for him to have worked here. The chapel is located in the lower level of the cathedral, and takes the form of the church itself, with two side aisles and a nave.⁹⁷

In projects like the Succorpo, Malvito would have had more artistic freedom in comparison to his wall tombs. The artist is credited with the wall tomb of Francesco Carafa, and, for projects such as that, would have had to follow a different kind of

⁹² Norman, "Succorpo," 336.

⁹³ Ibid., 336-37.

⁹⁴ Passero, *Giornali*, 117-8.

⁹⁵ Ascher, "Tommaso Malvito," 126.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Norman, "Succorpo," 324.

structural constraint.⁹⁸ Wall tombs have a limited amount of space, and typically a three- or four-level structure. Malvito's projects were generally smaller than the Succorpo, which means that his workshop was likely a smaller one. The enormous size and intricacy of the sculptural program of the chapel would have demanded more artists than could be provided by Malvito. Abbate suggests that a group of artists were hired from Rome in order to assist the workshop.⁹⁹

The walls and ceiling of the Succorpo are covered in colorful marble paneling, while there is a sculpture of a kneeling Cardinal Carafa in the center. A columned arcade creates a space familiar to the interior of a cathedral (Figure 17). As a chapel underneath the church, the plan follows the support system of the cathedral, since it has to bear the weight of the structure above. The subterranean chapel is not only intended to hold relics of a saint, but also serve as a tomb for the Cardinal. A structure with similar conditions would have customarily been used for a different purpose, specifically a *confessio*, as a designated spot for devotion to Saint Januarius. Norman cites two similar locations in Rome: the *Confessio* in Old Saint Peter's, and the basilica of San Lorenzo fuori le Mura as sites the Cardinal would have been familiar with. Cardinal Carafa had personal connections to both of these places; therefore he could have looked to them for inspiration.¹⁰⁰ In its traditional form, the *confessio* was a physical space behind or underneath the main altar. The saint's body would be placed beneath the altar, while the

⁹⁸ Ascher, "Tommaso Malvito," 127.

⁹⁹ Abbate, *La Scultura Napoletana*, 47; Abbate, "Le sculture del Succorpo di San Gennaro e rapport Napoli-Roma tra Quattro e Cinquecento," *Bollettino d'Arte*, (1981): 89.

¹⁰⁰ Norman, "Succorpo," 340.

confessio was a lowered area near it. To receive more pilgrims, the *confessio* sometimes took the form of a subterranean church much like the Succorpo.¹⁰¹

The chapel has undergone many changes over the centuries, and what a visitor would see upon entering the chapel today is much different than the way it was designed. A restoration was done in 1964, where workers moved objects in the Succorpo to places they believed were correct; there was also some research done in the eighteenth century.¹⁰² The best indication of the original design is found in a poem written by Fra Bernardino Siciliano. In 1897, Miola published a portion of this poem in *Napoli Nobilissima*. According to Fra Bernardino, Cardinal Carafa planned on creating a large chapel to house the relics, and specifically names Tommaso Malvito as the artist.¹⁰³



Figure 17 Workshop of Tommaso Malvito, capital detail of the Succorpo, Duomo, Naples.

¹⁰¹ Oursel, *Invention*, 227-8.

¹⁰² Norman, "Succorpo," 325.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 328.

While the physical description supplied by Fra Bernardino certainly helps, it is important to keep in mind that when his poem was written, construction of the chapel was ongoing. Many of the objects Fra Bernardino describes were never created, or were moved.¹⁰⁴ Originally, the chapel was to feature a large tomb for the remains of Saint Januarius in the center, supported by four harpies. The sarcophagus probably would have had sculptural reliefs, which Fra Bernardino describes as angels.¹⁰⁵ The casket as it exists today, lacks some of the details that Fra Bernardino describes in his poem, and has been moved several times. For a chapel that holds the remains of one of the main patron saints of Naples, one would think that most of the sculptural program would be placed around the figure of Saint Januarius. In reality, much of the sculpture refers to the church in Naples, and implies the ecclesiastic triumphs of the Carafa family. There is little outright religious sculpture, as the relics of Saint Januarius would have sufficed. Religious sculpture could only teach of a religious experience, while relics themselves were the origin of them. Relics were powerful because of their physical manifestation of spiritual deeds.¹⁰⁶

While the chapel shows extensive sculptural decoration on the walls and ceiling, it would be prudent to focus attention on the reliefs that refer to Carafa, his family, and Naples itself. There are eighteen sculptural reliefs found on the ceiling. These feature

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 339.

¹⁰⁵ Fra Bernardino, *Manuscript in the Biblioteca Nazionale, Naples*, “Quattro animal quil maestro vol scolpire / equal in forma et simili in aspect / sopra li qual intende stabilire / quel gran sepulcro de l’omo perfetto./ D’aquila tien lo capo, intesi dire,/ di donna li soi bracia, ventri et pecto: / un piede recto tiene de liono, / arpia se chiama da tucte persune. /Et a similitudini de Christo, / el quale stecte nel sepulcro morto, / un angelo de luce li fo visto / a capo, e l’altro a piede fra quell orto / per allegare quello core tristo / de quella Magdalena, multo smorto; / quell maestro accorto vol representare / ta lacto in quell sepulcro qual ha fare.”

¹⁰⁶ Norman, “Succorpo,” 352.

images of Mary, the Christ Child, and important saints that relate to the history of Naples, particularly its seven patron saints. As with many chapels, the position of highest importance is given to Mary and the Christ Child, with a relief of Saint Januarius on the same axis (Figure 18). Given another place of importance are the reliefs of Saints Peter and Paul. Saint Peter, the first pope, is alleged to have visited Naples, which led directly to the designation of some of Naples' patron saints. Saint Peter baptized Saint Asprenus, and he went on to become the first archbishop of Naples. The connection between Naples and the first pope was therefore very strong.¹⁰⁷



Figure 18 Workshop of Tommaso Malvito, relief of Saint Januarius, detail from the Succorpo, Duomo, Naples.

¹⁰⁷ Norman, "Succorpo," 343.

Around the relief of Saint Januarius, along with Saint Asprenus, there are reliefs of six other early bishops of Naples.¹⁰⁸ The choice to feature prior bishops of Naples on the sculptural reliefs was suggestive of the Carafa family's importance, as Oliviero and his brother Alessandro would continue this progression of bishops of Naples.¹⁰⁹ With the greater emphasis of the sculptural program on the patron saints and bishops of Naples, it can be said that the purpose of the chapel was not just to house the relics of Saint Januarius. There were also places in the chapel planned to house the relics of other saints important to Naples. Carlo de Lellis wrote in the seventeenth century that each of the smaller altars was to hold separate relics, and each would have a marble statue associated with it. These marble statues were never created, and instead wooden ones took their place.¹¹⁰

There were two inscriptions set over the entrance doors that emphasize the function of the chapel. The two inscriptions read:

Oliviero Carafa, Bishop of Ostia of the Holy Roman Church, Cardinal of Naples. He has dedicated this tomb to the holy martyr and bishop, patron of Naples, Januarius. He built the chapel in marble, a work of miraculous skill, he ornamented it and assigned to it priests who sacrifice daily to God. He established a perpetual endowment and wished the rights of patronage for the chapel to remain with the members of his family. He sought first the honour of God and the praise of the saints. Give support to their souls and pour forth prayers to God the creator. In the year 1506.

¹⁰⁸ Norman, "Succorpo," 343.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Carlo de Lellis, *Aggiunta alla Napoli sacra del D'Engenio, Naples, 1666-8*, ed. F. Aceto, (Naples, 1977). "...aveva il Cardinale...designato di collocare sotto degli altri Altari minori l'ossa degli altri Santi Protettori di Napoli e d'altri Santi, ma che non poté esguire prevenuto dalla morte, con ponere su di ciascuno di essi Altari le statue marmoree di quell Santo di cui sotto si conservavano le Reliquie...però, su di essi si veggono le statue di legno, fatte come di marmot, di tutti i Protettori della Città."

You, who desire the rewards of heavenly life, hasten and bring here pure prayers, since this door opens the way to heaven. Here God offers mercy to the vows and tears of those who pray to him. He, who through the martyrdom and prayers of Saint Januarius, with his consent a powerful will, purges Naples from every crime committed. Hasten, since the royal door of the heavenly kingdom gives strength.¹¹¹

The inscriptions explain that the chapel was clearly intended to function partially as a family chapel. In the first inscription, it plainly states that the chapel should remain within his family. The Cardinal's brother, Alessandro Carafa, is documented as having been buried in the Succorpo. The first purpose of the chapel was to serve as a private funerary chapel for the Carafa family, but with the invitation for the public to enter and visit the relics of Saint Januarius, the space served as a decidedly public one as well.

Perhaps one of the more striking features of the chapel is the kneeling sculpted figure of Cardinal Carafa (Figure 19). In contrast to other depictions of the deceased, this represents a very unusual artistic decision. In previous examples of sculptural effigy on tombs, the figures were recumbent and represented the deceased as a corpse. Cardinal Carafa is depicted very much alive. He is in a kneeling position of prayer, and is shown wearing liturgical vestments meant for funerary rites. Carafa's wealth is displayed by

¹¹¹ Cesare D'Engenio Caracciolo, *Napoli Sacra* (Naples: Per Ottavio Beltrano, 1624), 6. "Olivierius Carafa Episcopus Ostiensis S.R.E. Cardin. Neap. D. Ianuario Martyri, Pontifiq[ue] Neap. Patrono Sarcophagum hoc dedicavit: Sacellum[ue], marmoribus miro opera construxit, ornavitq[ue] additis ei Sacerdotibus, qui quotidie Deo sacrificent; quibus dotem perpetui proventus constituit. Iuspatronatus Sacelli Gentilitium esse voluit. In primis Dei honorem, ac laudem Sanctorum quaesivit. Favete animis, et Auctori Deo preces fundite. Anno Sal. 1506." "Currite, qui cupitis Coelestis praemia vitae / Et castas huc ferte preces, haec Ianua Coeli / Pandit iter votis Deus, hic lacrymisq[ue] precantum / Mitis adest, qui martyrio, precibusq[ue] Beati / Ianuarii, totam commisso crimine ab ombi / Parthenopen nutu ac praesenti numine purgat: / Currite vim paitur divini Regia Regni."

the numerous and delicately carved rings, and the sculpture's excess of carved cloth pooling on the floor.¹¹²

It is not necessarily the pose of the sculpture of Oliviero Carafa that is unusual, but instead its centrality within a chapel. Patrons in a kneeling position can be seen in Renaissance painting and sculpture, and even as a part of the sculptural program of Neapolitan tombs. The fourteenth-century sarcophagus front of the tomb of Malizia Carafa features a kneeling figure, presumed to represent the deceased, and the lunette of the tomb of Francesco Carafa shows him kneeling in prayer.¹¹³ In the Succorpo, the figure of Cardinal Carafa kneels as a freestanding sculpture instead of on a sculptural relief.



Figure 19 Tommaso Malvito, detail of the sculpture of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa in the Succorpo, Duomo, Naples.

¹¹² Norman, "Succorpo," 344.

¹¹³ Michalsky, "The Local Eye," 75; Norman, "Patronage," 303.

Examples of other tombs that feature such individual portraiture, whether kneeling or enthroned, are those of the royal or papal types. Even some of these sculptures would have been placed in addition to a recumbent figure. A contemporary example of a papal tomb is the monument to Innocent VIII, by Antonio del Pollaiuolo from 1498. An enthroned Pope Innocent VIII is placed with a more characteristic effigy of the deceased. Pollaiuolo introduced this papal tomb design that would become popular in later centuries.¹¹⁴ The tomb of Ladislas of Anjou (Figure 2, pg. 10) also features an enthroned Ladislas with a recumbent effigy. There is no effigy within the Succorpo to represent the deceased Cardinal Carafa but the kneeling figure.

The lack of a clear partnering of Carafa with a patron saint makes the significance of the sculpture even more evident. While the sculpture stands alone by nature of its three-dimensionality, the environment of the chapel as a reliquary could suggest that Carafa is praying to Saint Januarius. In other commissions, the Cardinal followed the general rule of an inclusion of a saint next to his kneeling figure. An example of this pose can be seen in Carafa's chapel in Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome. Cardinal Carafa's commission of the Carafa Chapel features reminders of his position as Cardinal Protector of the Dominican Order. The chapel is known for its extensive and popular set of frescoes depicting Saint Thomas Aquinas, a central figure of the Dominican Order. Carafa inserts himself into multiple frescoes focusing on Dominican church doctrine. In Filippino Lippi's Annunciation (Figure 20), a kneeling Oliviero can be seen next to the Virgin Mary. At the high altar of the cathedral of Naples, an altarpiece painted by Perugino

¹¹⁴ L.D. Ettlinger, "Pollaiuolo's Tomb of Pope Sixtus IV," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16 (1953), 239.

depicts a kneeling Carafa with the figure of Saint Januarius behind him, also commissioned by the Cardinal himself.

The current position of the sculpture has been moved from its original location in the sixteenth century. It is currently placed in the first central bay, but originally would have likely been located in front of the bishop's throne in the choir.¹¹⁵ The Succorpo holds no visible sarcophagus for Cardinal Carafa, and the sculpture itself is used for his commemoration. Norman suggests that this sculpture resembles more a Spanish program than an Italian one. The Spanish were heavily involved in the southern kingdom both politically and culturally during the later parts of the construction of the Succorpo.



Figure 20 Filippino Lippi, Annunciation, Carafa Chapel, late 15th century, Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome.

¹¹⁵ Norman, "Succorpo," 345.

It is not just the freestanding sculpture that separates it from the tombs of the Cardinal's uncle and father, but also its dynamism. The wall tombs of the other Carafas are flat and follow a more traditional tomb design. The Succorpo is an entire room, a three-dimensional space, which requires viewers to look at their surroundings, making the connections between the reliefs and sculpture, themselves.¹¹⁶ The Succorpo shares attributes with the tomb of Oliviero Carafa's father. While the use of Minerva, the Virtues, and personal emblems in both the Succorpo and the earlier commission of his father's tomb fit within the accepted tomb type, they take different forms. The Succorpo, as a burial chapel, is also very different in concept from the tombs of Diomedea and Francesco, which are more traditional wall tombs. The spatial separations found in the wall tombs of family, self, religion and royalty are also present in the chapel. Family is represented through the clear purpose of the space for use as a private chapel for the Carafas. The Cardinal's concept of 'self' is present in much of the sculptural program, including the inscription, the historical succession of bishops, which inevitably included Carafa, and the large kneeling figure of Carafa. Along with the relics of Saint Januarius, the Cardinal chose to place the sculpture of himself in a very prominent location with a design primarily used by kings and popes.

In his will from 1509, Carafa expressed his wish to have his final resting place be the Succorpo in Naples. Norman translates: "moreover [my] body I leave to be sent to the ecclesiastical tomb and be laid within my chapel of the blessed Mary and Saint Thomas Aquinas in the Minerva and then be transferred to Naples and buried in the cathedral in

¹¹⁶ Norman, "Succorpo," 346.

my other chapel where the body and blood of Saint Januarius resides.”¹¹⁷ On the day of his death on 22 January 1511, his remains were placed in the chapel at Santa Maria sopra Minerva, and were presumably later taken to the chapel of St. Januarius in Naples. The location of his remains is unknown at this time.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Franco Strazzullo, “Il Cardinale Oliviero Carafa mecenate del Rinascimento” *Atti dell’Accademia Pontaniana*, XIV, 148-152. “...Corpus autem relinquo et mando trade ecclesiastice sepulture et presens deponi intra cappellam meam beate Marie et beati Thome Aquinatis super Minervam...ac deinde transferendum Neapolim ac sepelliendum in cathedrali ecclesia in alia cappella mea ubi corpus et sanguis beati Ianuarii requiescat tumulto mihi moderate et sine pompa facto.”

¹¹⁸ Walsh, *The Cardinals*, 146.

CONCLUSION

The Carafa family features heavily in the history of Naples because of the Carafas' ambitions not only in secular circles, but also within the Catholic Church. Malizia, Diomedede, Francesco, and Oliviero Carafa all served beside kings and popes. These individuals' artistic patronage and funerary monuments, make clear that all of the tombs are interconnected through a network of patrons and artists, who were linked by a web of common artistic concepts. The art, through the visual connections it established, prompted Neapolitan viewers to associate the power of the Carafa family with that of the monarchy.

The Carafa family was closely intertwined with the Aragonese dynasty, and intrinsically linked to their popularity. While the Carafa family served under the Aragonese, they frequently adopted styles and design elements from the French Angevins. As seen in the tombs of Ladislas of Anjou and Mary of Hungary, the Angevin royal house employed Italian artists to create monuments that were similar to Tuscan wall tombs. To make a connection to the royalty, the Carafa family employed northern-born artists such as Jacopo della Pila and Tommaso Malvito, who had either worked on royal commissions, or worked in a similar style. Both patrons and artists understood the visual characteristics of royal monuments, and sought to imitate them. The application of royal iconography, such as the personifications of Virtues and curtained effigies, is found in the tombs of Malizia, Diomedede, and Francesco Carafa.

The use of Virtues is also relevant to the chapel of Oliviero Carafa, but Tommaso Malvito's sculpture of a kneeling Cardinal Carafa establishes a stronger relationship to a royal design. Freestanding figures, whether enthroned or kneeling, are usually found in

papal and royal tomb types. Carafa's figure is placed within a chapel that also serves as a reliquary for the relics of Saint Januarius. The Succorpo of the cathedral of Naples and other chapels were dedicated to saints, and did not serve as family chapels. The placement of a figure in such a prominent location in a space dedicated to a saint makes visual the importance of the Carafa family within the ecclesiastical center of Naples. Emphasizing this importance in a more indirect way are the ceiling reliefs. Each ceiling relief depicts significant religious figures, such as Mary and the Christ-child, the patron saints of Naples, and bishops of Naples. The centrality of the bishops of Naples in the sculptural program suggests the importance of two contemporary bishops of Naples, Cardinal Carafa and his brother Alessandro.

As a powerful family grounded not only in the nobility but also the ecclesiastical centers of Naples, the Carafa family is a key example in explaining how families used a connection of foreign styles to link themselves to the royal house. By utilizing funerary monuments to suggest their connection to the kings of southern Italy, the Carafas not only committed themselves to the power and prosperity of the ruling house in the eyes of contemporary viewers, but also in the eyes of those who would view their tombs centuries afterward.

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