

Creating an Episcopal Patron:
The Cult of San Gennaro in Naples, *c.* 1300- *c.* 1500

Clare Whitton
Blackfriars Hall

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For my grandmothers: Sue Whitton and Sara D'Ambrosio

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Short Abstract

This thesis traces the evolution of the cult of San Gennaro in the city of Naples and the Monastery of Montevergine between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Situating key developments in the cult in Naples' historical context, I identify the several stakeholders who intervened in, interpreted, and actively shaped San Gennaro's sanctity. In doing so, this dissertation explores how an old patron was reconfigured and revitalised for new audiences in an era marked by canonisation procedures and increasingly competitive models of sanctity. This thesis especially investigates the role of the late medieval archbishop in this dynamic process of saint-making.

This dissertation is broken into three parts of two chapters each. Each part is anchored in a different type of source: material, textual, and architectural. Part One, 'Materialising a Patron Saint' explores the abrupt introductions of the saint's skull and blood relics, respectively, during the fourteenth century. Here, I demonstrate how both objects played critical roles in re-establishing the saint as the city's patron. Part Two, 'Experiencing San Gennaro,' turns our attention towards his translation feast as described in two key texts: a set of liturgical instructions known as the Orsini Constitutions, promulgated in 1337, and Giovanni Pontano's dialogue, *Charon*, published in 1491. Together, these two chapters depict a rich civic festival, which served critical social and ecclesiastical functions. Part Three, 'Reconfiguring an Episcopal Cult,' reevaluates the circumstances surrounding the discovery and translation of the saint's body in the later fifteenth century. To do this, this part centres on two architectural projects, including the restoration of the monastic church at Montevergine, which prompted the body's discovery, and the construction of the *succorpo*, a crypt chapel in the Neapolitan cathedral, designed to house the remains.

Together, I argue that this 200-year period saw the dynamic revival of San Gennaro's cult and the revitalisation of his patronal sanctity at the hands of several stakeholders, but most especially those of the archbishop of Naples.

Long Abstract

For the last 1600 years, San Gennaro has been hailed as the patron saint of Naples. He has been cited as Naples' principal defender, an emblem of the local church, an intercessor against Mount Vesuvius, a healer of bodily ailments – among so many other titles. While much has been said regarding his late antique and early modern cults, we have paid little attention to its dynamic transformation over the late medieval period. This dissertation focuses on this neglected chapter in San Gennaro's history. Tracing the evolution of the cult across the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, I contend that Gennaro's sanctity was dramatically shaped – and reshaped – through the intentional efforts of key stakeholders, including Naples' archbishops, royal authorities, lay people, and others, with diverse aims, chief among them the reinvigoration of the saint's patronage during moments of transformation and distress. By situating the development of the cult within Naples' historical circumstances, I ask how political upheaval, devotional contexts, and social transformation informed the meanings assigned to miraculous relics and patronal sanctity.

Through an analysis of textual and material evidence, this dissertation illustrates how San Gennaro was exceptionally reconfigured by the city's archbishops as the patron of Naples' episcopal office and, by extension, the Neapolitan church – albeit with varying results. To clarify the relationship between the cult and Naples' archbishops, the parameters of this thesis are dictated by an ecclesiastical timeline. We thus begin with the episcopate of Giacomo da Viterbo (1302 – 1307) and end with that of Oliviero Carafa (1458-1484; 1501-1503). By prioritising an episcopal chronology, it becomes apparent how key developments in the cult coincided with critical moments of ecclesiastical transformation, if not crisis. Consequently, as much as this thesis traces the development of Gennaro's sanctity, so too does it demonstrate the dynamic transformation of Naples' episcopal office across the late medieval period.

My thesis begins with a historiographical survey of what has and, more importantly, what has *not* been said regarding the history of San Gennaro's cult. Here, I repudiate previous characterisations of the saint which reduce him to little more than an anthropological marvel, unworthy of serious study. Instead, drawing upon Patrick Boucheron's method for investigating the cult of St Ambrose, I advocate for Gennaro's multiplicity, that is, for the coexistence of several overlapping, at times contradicting, interpretations of the same saint. To emphasise this point, I have titled each chapter after a different iteration of San Gennaro. Moreover, I analyse historiographical trends in the history of Neapolitan sanctity and patronal sanctity in late medieval Italy. I insist that a better understanding of the construction of San Gennaro's sanctity complicates our understanding of the development of patronal sanctity in late medieval Italy.

San Gennaro's cult enjoys a lengthy and ancient history. Resultingly, I am compelled to briefly survey the dynamics of his cult from its inception in the fifth century through the thirteenth century. The Prologue will thus outline the extant body of evidence for this period and demonstrate Gennaro's long-standing status as Naples' patron saint. Though the scarcity of the evidence during the central Middle Ages makes it difficult to interpret the cult prior to the Angevin conquest, this Prologue nevertheless allows me to argue for the strategic reinvigoration of Gennaro's cult in Chapter One.

This dissertation is then divided into three parts, each consisting of two chapters. Each part also relies on three kinds of source material: relics, texts, and architecture. Part One, 'Materialising a Patron Saint' is devoted to San Gennaro's skull and blood relics, both of which emerge in mysterious circumstances during the fourteenth century. This part asks fundamental questions pertaining to the cult of relics and their reliquaries: how was this sacred matter used and

interpreted? Can we identify the shareholders who shaped how these objects were employed, presented, and understood by a wider audience? How did their containers influence how these relics were conceived and denote their liturgical use? In Chapter One, 'San Gennaro of the Skull,' I apply these questions to the skull relic, which has received far less scholarly attention than its bloody counterpart. After questioning its abrupt appearance amidst the ongoing construction of the Angevin cathedral, I investigate King Charles II of Anjou and Archbishop Giacomo da Viterbo's intended liturgical, and devotional uses for the skull and its accompanying head-reliquary. To do this, this chapter relies on a rich body of scholarship pertaining to body-part reliquaries.

Chapter Two, 'San Gennaro of the Western Schism,' reevaluates how the blood and its liquefaction were conceived of in 1389. The anonymous history of southern Italy, the *Chronicon Siculum* (c. 1396), is my primary source for this chapter. Despite the plethora of studies on the liquefaction, little has been said about its first known appearance in 1389. In this chapter, I aim to situate the liquefaction within Naples' immediate circumstances to theorise how such a bloody miracle may have been understood. Consequently, this chapter opens with an overview of Naples' ongoing civil war and experience with the Western Schism. This section will demonstrate how intensely the city fractured along political and papal allegiances during the 1380s. From there, I delve into the world of late medieval blood relics and their subsequent interpretations. Situating Gennaro's blood within this broader devotional context thus allows me to consider how this relic may have been conceived by several, often conflicting, vantagepoints. The question of how miraculous relics were understood by a fragmented audience, especially when interpretations stood in opposition to one another, lies at the heart of this chapter. While my methods for investigating each relic vary, Part One demonstrates the utility of each object during a critical moment of ecclesiastical transformation.

Part Two, 'Experiencing San Gennaro' considers how San Gennaro's translation feast was experienced in Naples during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, respectively. In both chapters, I rely on a model for the commemoration of civic feasts in central and northern Italy primarily provided by Diana Webb.¹ As evidence for Gennaro's feast is far more limited than those to the north of Naples, situating San Gennaro's celebration within this framework allows me to flesh out the feast's structure and its range of social functions. Furthermore, both chapters question how this Neapolitan feast did - and did not- conform to the larger model of patronal feasts in central and northern Italy which, as hitherto in previous scholarship, is considered normative. To do this, chapters three and four take a text-centric approach.

Chapter Three, 'San Gennaro of the Inghirlandati,' utilises the neglected Orsini Constitutions, a series of liturgical reforms promulgated by Archbishop Giovanni Orsini in 1337, to reconstruct the celebration of the translation feast during a moment of diocesan reform and the consolidation of ecclesiastical authority. Through a close reading of this text, I argue that the liturgy was capable of staging social and ecclesiastical hierarchies, recreating hagiographical legends, expressing the physical presence of a divine entity. I also propose that Gennaro's feast functioned as a civic feast day in Naples, not unlike other patronal feasts found in the northern half of the Italian peninsula. Chapter Four, 'San Gennaro of the Pig,' continues our analysis of the translation feast into the mid-fifteenth century by concentrating on a peculiar, but little studied, pig game. This event has received almost no scholarly attention because its description survives in only two texts: Giovanni Pontano's *Charon*, published in 1491, and an Inquisition testimony recorded in 1580. By closely scrutinising these sources, this chapter explores how, despite its outlandish

¹ Diana Webb, *Patrons and Defenders: Saints in the Italian City-State* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996).

nature, the pig game functioned as one of the many of animal-related tournaments enacted on saints' feasts in late medieval Italy. As numerous previous studies have demonstrated, such games were employed during civic feasts to encourage social bonding, ridicule authority, and uphold hierarchal boundaries. Chapters Three and Four thus demonstrate that although Gennaro's feast functioned similarly to those further north, its development and experience were nevertheless contingent upon Naples' unique political and ecclesiastical circumstances. In doing so, I propose an alternative experience of Italian patronal feasts during this period.

Part Three, 'Reconfiguring an Episcopal Cult,' moves from the textual world into the architectural. Here, I investigate two critical interventions into the cult, both of which hinged upon architectural initiatives: the discovery of Gennaro's bodily relics at the Monastery of Montevergine in 1480 and their subsequent interment in the cathedral's specially-made crypt chapel known as the *succorpo*. Moreover, these chapters investigate the many uses for Gennaro's body and questions what occurs when an older iteration of a saint is merged with the newer. In Chapter Five, 'St Januarius of Montevergine,' we move beyond Naples' city walls and climb the mountaintop which hosts the Monastery of Montevergine. Here, beneath the main altar of the monastic church, Januarius' long-lost body was unearthed during the renovations to the nave. Previous scholarship has rigorously maintained the narrative that the relics were: (1) collateral damage from the ongoing construction and (2) otherwise neglected at Montevergine before their ultimate translation to Naples. Instead, I posit that the relics were the product of an intentional relic-hunt. Francesco Aceto and Paola Vitolo's scholarship on the monastery's architectural history is particularly useful in this regard. Though Januarius' manifestation at Montevergine was brief, this chapter nevertheless considers what role his remains, among the others uncovered in 1480, played in the reconstruction of monastic identity during a protracted economic and institutional crisis. To do this, I examine several liturgical manuscripts, including a martyrology and necrology, housed within Montevergine's archives. This investigation not only reveals Januarius' integration into the monastic community, but also a markedly different interpretation of the saint from its contemporary Neapolitan iterations. It is for this reason chapter five refers to the saint as 'Januarius' rather than Gennaro.

Chapter Six, 'San Gennaro of the Carafa Brothers,' explores the consequences, those intended and otherwise, of Gennaro's translation from Montevergine to Naples in 1497. Here, I consider a modest base of evidence which suggests that several of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa's plans for the cult went unfulfilled. Such sources primarily refer to the *succorpo* but also includes a new *vita*, written by Fra Bernardino of Sicily, as well as a papal indulgence. To further appreciate Oliviero's failed initiatives, this chapter briefly fast-forwards to 1525, at which time Gennaro's feast was significantly reformed to prioritise lay experiences with, if not authority over, the cult. Together, Chapters Five and Six demonstrate the dramatic expansion of San Gennaro's cult beyond the walls of the cathedral towards the conclusion of the fifteenth century.

Taken together, these three parts illustrate how the construction - or reconstruction - of sanctity was contingent upon local and immediate circumstances while still adhering to broader trends in liturgy, relic veneration, and civic festivities. This thesis concludes with a synthesis of the many 'versions' of San Gennaro, including those which appear in the twenty-first century feast in Naples and in New York City.

Abbreviations

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>
BHL	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina</i>
COGD	<i>Conciliorum oecumenicorum generaliumque decreta</i>
Chron. Cas.	<i>Chronica Monasterii Casinensis</i>
DBI	<i>Dizionario biografico degli italiani</i>
Falco	<i>Chronicon Beneventanum</i>
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
	SS = <i>Scriptores</i>
	SRLI = <i>Scriptores Rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum</i>
MS 18	<i>MS 18</i> , Mercogliano, Biblioteca Statale di Montevergine
MS 3970	<i>MS 3970</i> , Mercogliano, Biblioteca Statale di Montevergine
MS 4412	<i>MS 4412</i> , Mercogliano, Biblioteca Statale di Montevergine
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>

Tables and Figures

Table 1: The Archbishops of Naples, c. 1378 - 1389²

<i>Year</i>	<i>Dynasty in Power</i>	<i>Archbishop</i>	<i>Papal Allegiance</i>
1368	Anjou	Bernard de Rodes	Urban
1378	Anjou	Bernard de Rodes	Clement
	Anjou	Ludovico Bozzuto	Urban
1379	Anjou	Tommaso Ammanati	Clement
1381	Durazzo	Ludovico Bozzuto	Urban
1384	Durazzo	Nicolo Zanasio	Urban
1388	Anjou	Guglielmo Guindazzo	Clement
17 Aug 1389	Anjou	Guglielmo Guindazzo	Clement

Key: Clementine Allegiances; Urbanist Allegiances

Table 2: Neapolitan Allegiances, c. 1389

	Margaret/ Ladislaus of Durazzo	Louis II of Anjou	Archbishop Guglielmo Guindazzo	The <i>Seggi</i>	Archdiocesan Clergy	The People of Naples
<i>Political Allegiance</i>	Durazzo	Anjou	Anjou	Anjou	Anjou	Anjou
<i>Schism Allegiance</i>	Anti -Urban VI (but not Pro- Clement)	Clement	Clement	Unclear; Varied	Clement	Urban

Key: Clementine Allegiances; Urbanist Allegiances

² As I mentioned, competing archbishops often overlapped with one another. This table lists the men who were present in Naples and occupied the episcopal throne.

Table 3: Relics Listed in Parchment MS.4412³

Name of Saint	Location of Relic
Mercurius, Martyr	<i>Under the Altar</i>
Eleutherius and Ancia (his mother), Martyrs	
Victor of Capua, Bishop	
Hermolaus, Presbyter and Martyr	
Barbatus, Bishop	
Januarius, Bishop and Martyr	
Festus, Deacon and Martyr	
Desiderius, Presbyter and Martyr	
Nicandrus, Martyr	
Secundinus, Bishop and Martyr	
Barbatus, Bishop	
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego	<i>Above the Altar, in the “Scabello”</i>
Potitus, Martyr	<i>Around the Altar</i>
Juliana of Nicomedia, Virgin and Martyr	
Eliano, Martyr	
Maurice, Martyr	
Modestus the Levite, Martyr	
Victor, Martyr	
Deodatus of Nola, Bishop and Confessor	<i>Above the Tabernacle</i>
Constantius of Capri, Bishop and Confessor	
Pope St Mark, Bishop and Confessor	
Maximus, Bishop and Confessor	
Crispin, Presbyter and Martyr	
Priscus, Bishop	
Jason of Thessolonica, Martyr	
Crispin, Martyr	
Maurice, Martyr	

³ Where appropriate, names have been translated from the original Latin.

Table 4: List of Verginian Feasts listed in MS 18

Feast	Date in Codex 18
Potitus, Martyr	14 January
Hermolaus, Martyr	14 February
Juliana of Nicomedia, Virgin and Martyr	16 February
Barbatus, Bishop	19 February
Secundinus, Bishop and Martyr	6 May
Victor, Martyr	10 May
Constantius of Capri, Bishop and Confessor	14 May
Eleutherius and his mother Ancia	5 June
William of Vercelli	25 June
Deodatus, Bishop and Confessor	27 June
Translation of Modestus, Martyr ⁴	20 July
Hermolaus, Presbyter and Martyr	27 July
Januarius and Festus, Desiderius, and Sestus	19 September
Modestus the Levite, Martyr	2 October
Pope Mark	7 October
Dedication of the Monastery	11 Nov
Mercurius, Martyr	25 November
Faustus and Ammonius of Alexandria, Martyrs	26 November
Barbara, Virgin and Martyr	4 December

⁴ According to N.4412, Modestus' relics were found with the rest of the relic horde in 1480. It is curious, therefore, that only Modestus is honored with a translation feast. The existence of this feast could suggest a previous legend regarding Modestus' individual translation to Montevergine, now lost.

Table 5: Comparison of Verginian Feasts and Relics
(as found in MS 18 and MS 4412, respectively)

Feast	Date in MS 18	Relics Found in 1480?
Potitus, Martyr	14 January	Yes
Hermolaus, Martyr	14 February	Yes
Juliana of Nicomedia, Virgin and Martyr	16 February	Yes
Barbatus, Bishop	19 February	Yes
Secundinus, Bishop and Martyr	6 May	Yes
Victor, Martyr	10 May	Yes
Constantius of Capri, Bishop and Confessor	14 May	Yes
Eleutherius	5 June	Yes
Ancia (mother of Eleutherius)	5 June	Yes
William of Vercelli	25 June	No
Deodatus, Bishop and Confessor	27 June	Yes
Hermolaus, Presbyter and Martyr	27 July	Yes
Januarius	19 September	Yes
Festus (Januarius' Companion)	19 September	Yes
Desiderius (Januarius' Companion)	19 September	Yes
Sesto (Januarius' Companion)	19 September	No
Modestus the Levite, Martyr	2 October	Yes
Pope Mark	7 October	Yes
Mercurius, Martyr	25 November	Yes
Faustus, Martyr	16 November	No
Ammonius of Alexandria, Martyr	16 November	No
Barbara, Virgin and Martyr	4 December	No

*Table 6: List of Relics interred in Montevergine's Monastic Church
on 11 November 1182*

(Aceto and Vitolo, eds., *L'Abbazia di Montevergine*, p. 68)

<i>Name of Saint</i>	<i>Location</i>
Bartholomew, Apostle	Major Altar (Dedicated to the Virgin)
Matthew, Apostle	
Barnabus, Apostle	
Thaddeus, Apostle	
George, Martyr	
Wood of the Cross	
Bread from Lord's Supper	
Wood from the Burning Bush	
Sixtus	
Felix	
Leonard, Abbot and Confessor	
Mary Magdalen	
Marcellus, Pope	
The Three Patriarchs (Abraham, Issac, Jacob)	
Martial, Bishop and Martyr	Altar of Peter and Paul
Agatha	
Felicity	
Helen, Virgin	
Stone from Christ's Sepulchre	
Stone from Mary's Sepulchre	
Stone from Mount Calvary	
Hair of saints Laurence and Vincent	
Cosmas and Damian	
Stone from where Christ placed the loaves and fishes	
Peter, Apostle	Altar of St. Benedict
Philip, Apostle	
James, Apostle	
Modestus, Martyr	
Florentius and Fabian, martyrs	
Theodore, martyr	
Sebastian, martyr	
Sergius and Bacchus, martyrs	
Eugenius, confessor	
Maurus	
Blaise	

Martial, bishop and martyr	
Marius and Victor	
Anastasia, martyr	
Modestus	
Cosmus	
Fragment of Rule of St Benedict	
Maximus	People's Altar (Outside the Choir)
Felix	
Thomas, Confessor	
Vestments of Thomas (of Canterbury), martyr	
Gaudius	
Artemius	
Quintus, Bishop of Nola	
Manna of St Nicholas	
Benedict, Abbot and Confessor	
Silvester	

Figure 1: Choir of Montevergine, c. 1310
(Aceto and Vitolo, eds., *L'Abbazia di Montevergine*, p. 357)

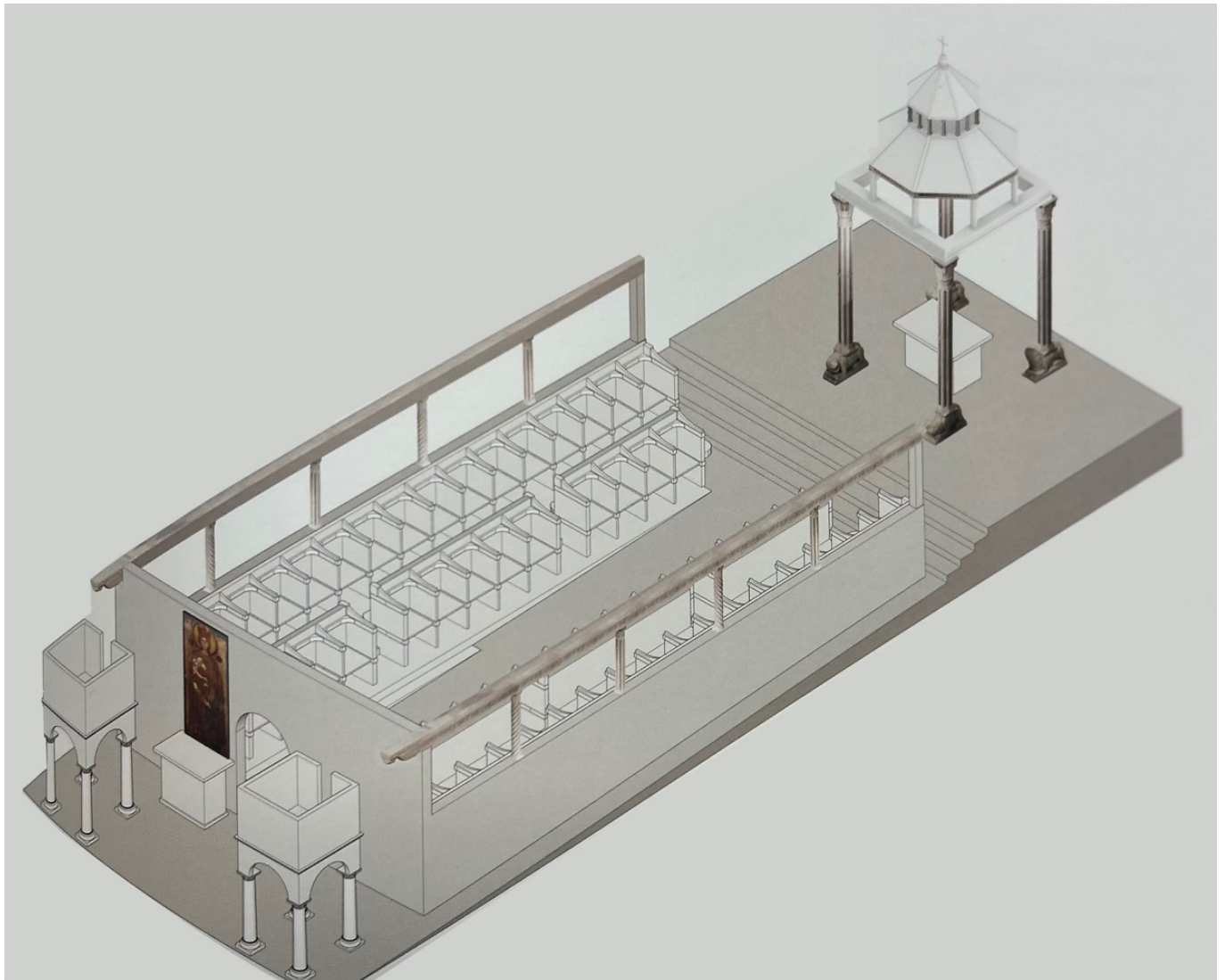
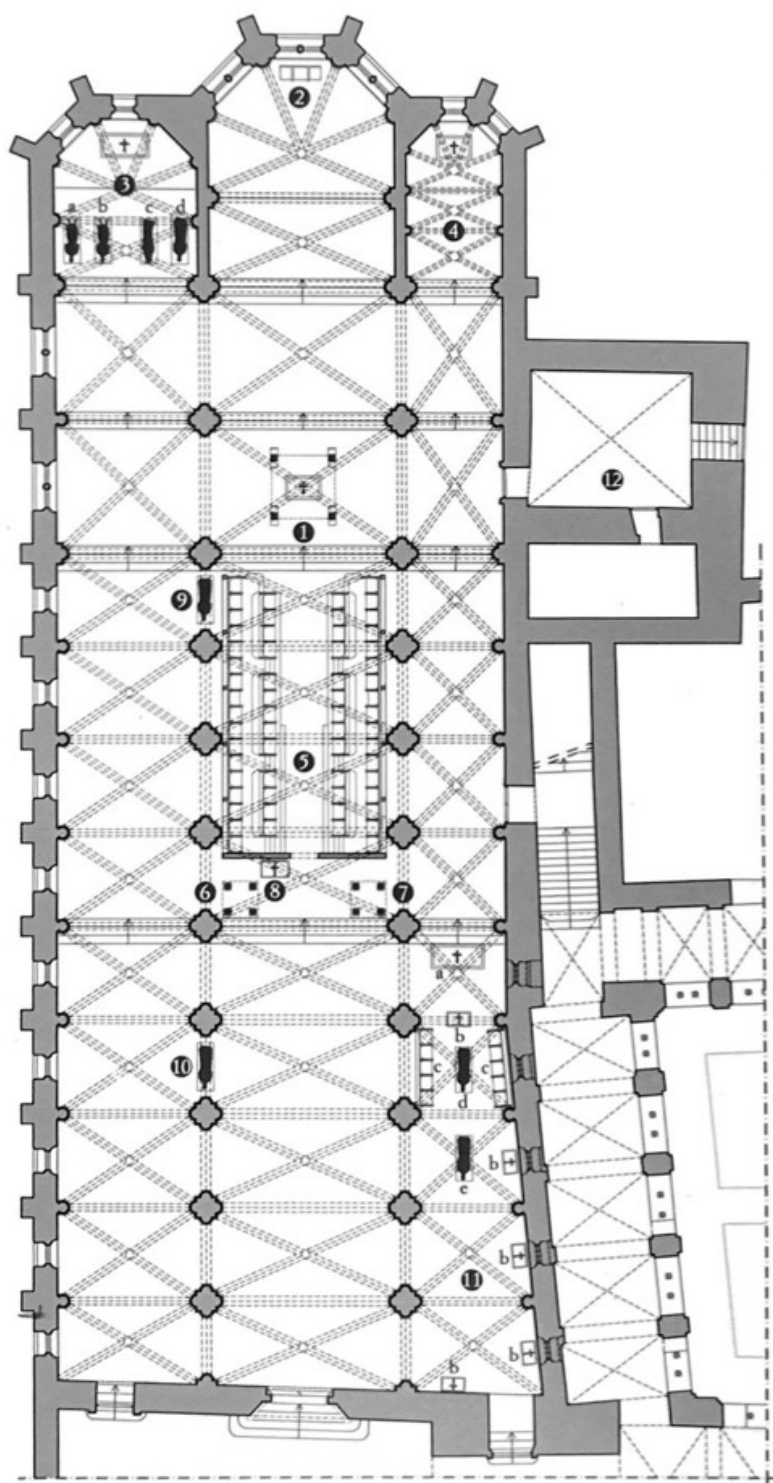


Figure 2: Layout of Montevergine, c. 1310
 (Aceto and Vitolo, eds., *L'Abbazia di Montevergine*, p. 345)

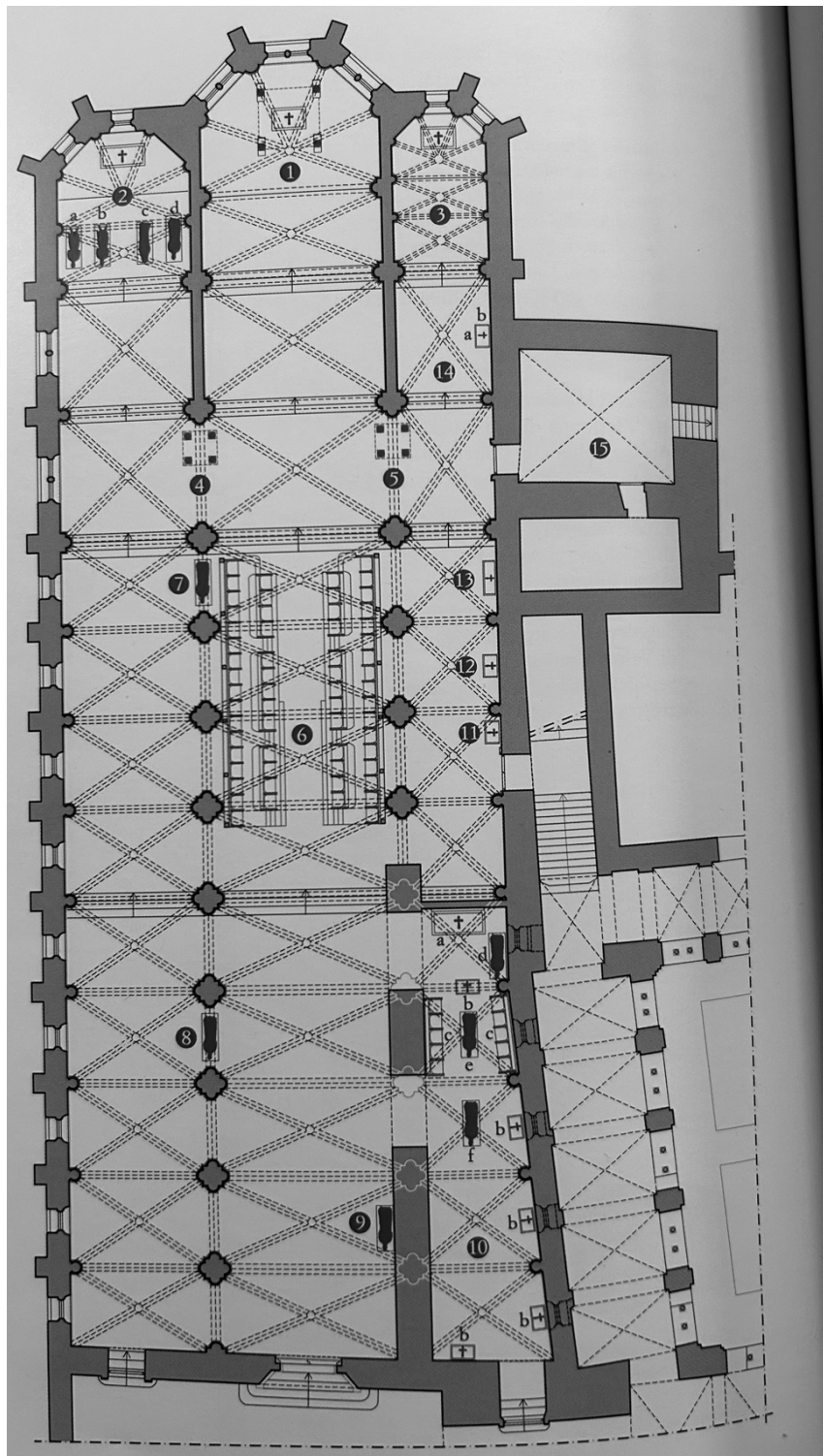


Key:

1. Ciborium and High Altar
2. Cathedral Chair
3. Chapel of Valdemonte-Leonessa
 - a. Tomb of Giovanni Leonessa
 - b. Tomb of Carlo Leonessa
 - c. Tomb of Caterina Valdemonte
 - d. Tomb of Giudo Valdemonto
4. De Capua Chapel
5. Choir
6. Pillar
7. Pillar
8. Altar with the "Madonna di San Guglielmo"
9. Tomb of Abbot Giovanni I
10. Tomb of Berterado and Giovanni Lautrec
11. Angevin Chapel
 - a. Main altar with "Madonna di Montevergine" by Montano d'Arezzo
 - b. Minor Altar
 - c. Choir for 10 monks
 - d. Tomb of Ludovico di Taranto
 - e. Tomb of Caterina II
 - f. Tomb of Maria di Tarano
12. Sacristy

Figure 3: Layout of Montevergine after D'Aragona's Renovations, 1480

(Aceto and Vitolo, eds., *L'Abbazia di Montevergine*, p. 346)



Key:

1. Ciborium and High Altar
2. Chapel of Valdemonte-Leonessa
 - a. Tomb of Giovanni Leonessa
 - b. Tomb of Carlo Leonessa
 - c. Tomb of Caterina Valdemonte
 - d. Tomb of Giudo Valdemonte
3. De Capua Chapel
4. Pillar
5. Pillar
6. Choir
7. Tomb of Abbot Giovanni I
8. Tomb of Berterado and Giovanni Lautrec
9. Tomb of Giacoma Sanseverino Sabrano, then Caterina Filangieri
10. Angevin Chapel
 - a. Main altar with "Madonna di Montevergine" by Montano d'Arezzo
 - b. Minor Altar
 - c. Choir for 10 monks
 - d. Tomb of Ludovico di Taranto
 - e. Tomb of Caterina II
 - f. Tomb of Maria di Tarano
11. Annunciation Chapel
12. Presepio Altar
13. Reliquary Chapel
14. Chapel of the Marra Family
 - a. Altar
 - b. Tomb of Giacomo Antonio della Marra
15. Sacristy

Figure 4: Close up of Queen Mary's Ciborium, c. 1310
(Aceto and Vitolo, eds., *L'Abbazia di Montevergine*, p. 361)



Map One: Churches in Late Medieval Naples⁵

Key:

-  Angevin City Walls
-  Late Medieval Shoreline
-  Station Churches visited on San Gennaro's Translation Feast
(as listed in the Orsini Constitutions)
-  Other Significant Churches/sites

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Porta San Gennaro (San Gennaro Gate) | 18. Diaconia San Gennaro All'Olmo (also known as San Gennaro a Biagio) |
| 2. San Gennaro Spogliamorti | 19. San Lorenzo (Franciscan Headquarters) |
| 3. Santa Maria Donnaregina | 20. San Paolo |
| 4. Santi Apostoli | 21. Sant'Angelo a Segno |
| 5. Santa Restituta | 22. San Gregorio Armeno |
| 6. Cathedral of the Assumption | 23. San'Andrea a Nido |
| 7. Castle Capuano | 24. Santa Maria Donnaromita |
| 8. Diaconia San Pietro | 25. Santa Maria in Rotonda |
| 9. Hospital of the Annunziata | 26. San Domenico (Dominican Headquarters) |
| 10. Santa Maria a Piazza | 27. Santa Maria Maggiore alla Pietrasanta |
| 11. Sant'Agrippino a Forcella | 28. Pietro a Maiella |
| 12. Sant'Agostino dell'Zecca | 29. Santi Sergio, Bacco e Sebastiano |
| 13. Santa Maria del Carmine | 30. Santa Chiara |
| 14. Piazza Mercato | 31. San Giovanni Maggiore |
| 15. Sant'Eligio | |
| 16. San Giorgio Maggiore | |
| 17. Santi Severino and Sossio (Benedictine Headquarters) | |

⁵ This map is based on the interactive map of medieval Naples which was made to accompany: Richard G. Musto, *Medieval Naples, 400-1400: A Documentary History* (New York, Italica Press, 2013). See its website: https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&ll=40.84490894789173%2C14.259314131167766&spn=0.022725%2C0.021458&z=15&source=embed&mid=1_MyhitdmxSFGHIZHmHvezD7N9Y0

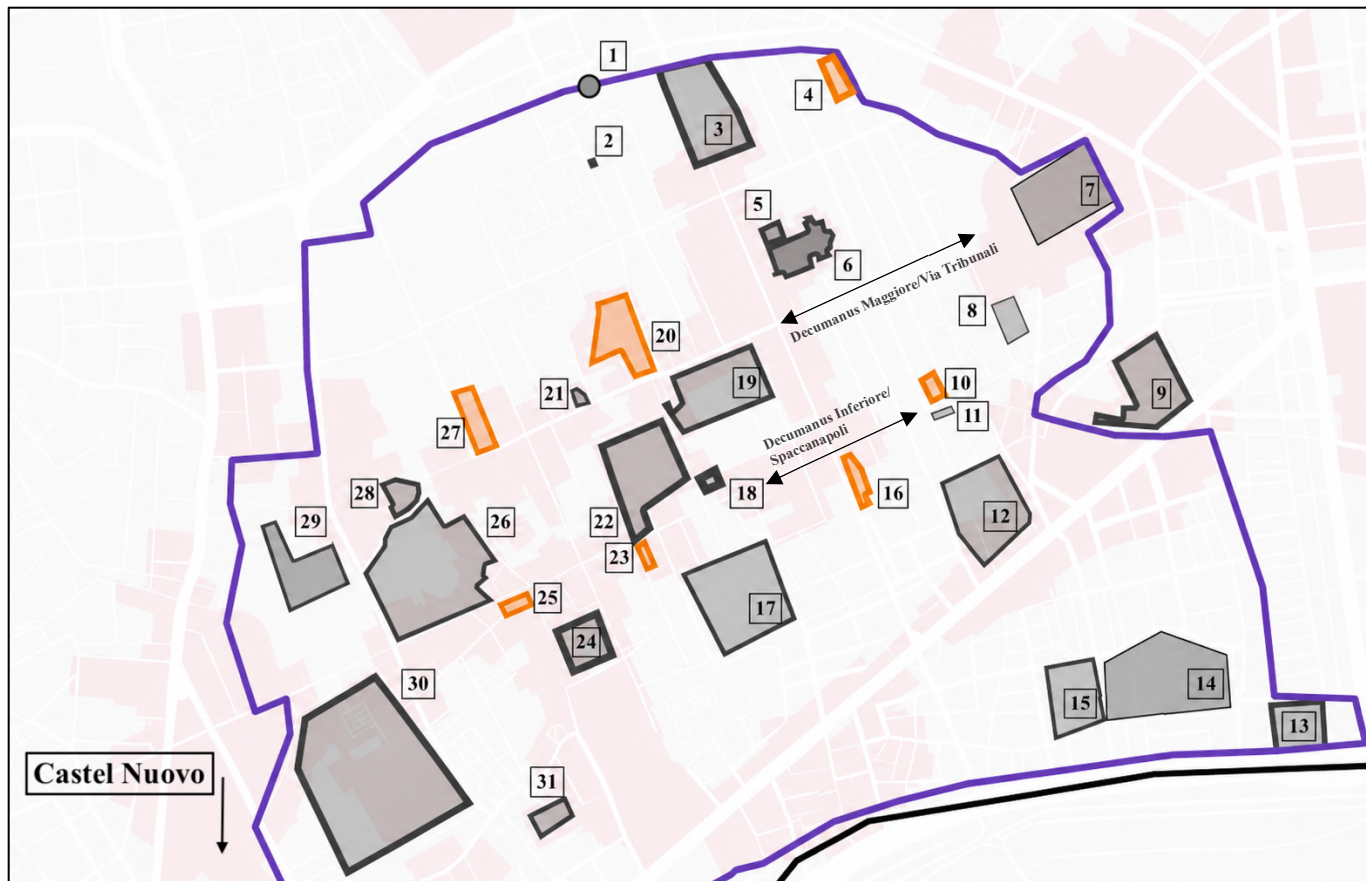


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Introduction:

*"[Today,] the streets become naves, the balconies become choirs, the city becomes an entire cathedral. At the centre, not an object, but a sign: a vial, a blood, a name — Gennaro. Here we celebrate not a trophy but a living memory."*⁶

Thus began Cardinal Domenico Battaglia, archbishop of Naples, on 19 September 2025, the Feast of San Gennaro. The archbishop stood at the pulpit of Naples' cathedral; to his left, the skull and blood of Naples' patron saint lay in their respective reliquaries on either side of the altar. About thirty minutes earlier, San Gennaro's blood had miraculously liquified and the packed cathedral erupted into applause. Recalling the saint's bloody martyrdom, Battaglia spoke of the shed blood in our contemporary times, from the streets of Naples to the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. At the heart of his sermon, however, was the saint's transformative abilities. He declared that today, San Gennaro's *dies natalis*, the entire city of Naples transformed into a living cathedral, altering the landscape and sanctifying the residents within. Though such a metamorphosis sounds far more akin to a Sci-Fi novel than a liturgical act, San Gennaro, the archbishop insisted, traversed temporal and spatial boundaries - and carried Naples along with him.

San Gennaro has been the patron saint of Naples for at least 1600 years. On several occasions in the city's history, Gennaro has ward off the destruction of the city, most notoriously from Mount Vesuvius, whose presence looms in the background. His image can be found across the city in wall murals, graffiti, and on small prayer cards leaning against the city's numerous votive shrines. In many ways, the saint has come to symbolise Naples' civic identity. And yet, according to our earliest evidence, San Gennaro never set foot in these urban precincts during his life. How, then, did the saint and his relics come to have such hold on this city's imagination?

In previous scholarship, the story of Gennaro's sanctity has been told in two parts. The first is set in the late antique period, in an age of early Christian martyrs and elusive saint's legends. Here, San Gennaro remains in his most original form: St. Januarius, bishop and martyr. The second takes place in the early modern period. In this era, Gennaro's presence emanates from his blood which is continuously re-shed to protect the Neapolitan capital city, most famously from Vesuvius' eruption in 1631. This dissertation, however, sets San Gennaro's cult in the period in between. It concentrates on Naples during the late medieval period, a time of profound political, ecclesiastical and cultural transformation, but takes as its necessary backdrop his cult in the early and central Middle Ages. Over the course of this period, no territory on the Italian peninsula was as contested as that of the Kingdom of Naples. Successive regimes, including the Angevin and Aragonese dynasties, followed by Spanish Viceregal rule, presided over a kingdom marked by contested kingship, internal conflict, and papal intervention. The late medieval story is thus one of schismatic popes, warring kings, and ambitious bishops - and the saint caught in between. Though patchy evidence makes this story difficult to tell, this dissertation investigates the construction of San Gennaro's sanctity in Naples from across the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

This thesis pays special attention to Gennaro's patronal sanctity and cult. As I illustrate further in the Prologue, this saint was revered as Naples' patron as early as the fifth century. After

⁶ "Le strade si fanno navate, i balconi cantorie, la città una cattedrale intera. Al centro, non un oggetto, ma un segno: un'ampolla, un sangue, un nome — Gennaro. Qui celebriamo non un trofeo, ma una memoria viva." The full remarks can be found here: Antonio Tarallo, "Napoli, si ripete il prodigio del sangue di San Gennaro," *ACIStampa*, September 19, 2025, <https://www.acistampa.com/story/31553/napoli-si-ripete-il-prodigio-del-sangue-di-san-gennaro>

the tenth, however, references to his status slowly disappear from the evidence pool, until he dramatically reemerged during the early modern period - or so it would seem. Questioning when Gennaro's status was reinstated, previous scholars have conceived of his sanctity as the product of one, specific historical moment linked to the liquefaction. For example, Franco Strazzullo declared that the successful liquefaction of 1527 and the subsequent building of the *Tesoro di San Gennaro* represented the birth of Gennaro's patronal status whereas Giuliana Vitale pinpointed the 1490s, during which time the liquefaction's 'trigger' developed.⁷ As an alternative, Francesco Paolo De Ceglia instead poetically identified 1389, the earliest testimony of the miracle, as the birth "of a *numen*."⁸

Instead, this dissertation attributes the revival Gennaro's patronal sanctity to a dynamic, negotiating process between Neapolitan archbishops, royal authorities, and the Neapolitan people throughout the late medieval period. By identifying the stakeholders and participants of San Gennaro's cult, and by dissecting key historical moments, this dissertation offers a long-overdue historical portrait of San Gennaro during the late medieval period. In doing so, it reconstructs the rich context upon which the early modern cult developed, challenging the prevailing view that it emerged solely as a result of the blood. The late medieval period has not completely escaped attention, of course, and this thesis is grounded in critical engagement with a rich historiography which I address below.

By tracing the cult's development, I endeavour to explore its neglected or overlooked components. In doing so, I emphasise San Gennaro's multiplicity, a term which requires some explanation. In his work on the cult of St. Ambrose, Patrick Boucheron illustrated how several stakeholders, which he refers to as 'curators', invoked, remembered, and adapted multiple versions of the same saint over the course of his history.⁹ These iterations were capable of existing separately from, overlapping with, and contesting one another. Boucheron thus stressed Ambrose's multifarious nature; I strive to do the same for San Gennaro during this period. For this reason, each chapter addresses a 'different' iteration of the saint. I will then explore how these multiple San Gennaros coexisted, clashed, and were renegotiated by Naples' curators over the late medieval period. In the spirit of the saint's many identities, this thesis employs both his Latin and Italian names. When referring to his cult free of any connotations of its late medieval Neapolitan development, I use the name 'Januarius.' I do so, for example, when discussing its manifestation at Montevergine, as well as its late antique/early medieval periods in Naples. When speaking of the cult in Naples after the introduction of the skull (1304), I call the saint 'Gennaro.'

This dissertation pays special attention to the role of the archbishops of Naples in the revival of Gennaro's cult during this period. This stands in contrast with most previous scholarship which has prioritised the function of political authorities, such as the Spanish Viceroy, in the curation of Gennaro's cult. This dissertation will thus identify and dissect the varied roles of the Neapolitan archbishops in the construction of Gennaro's patronal sanctity. The parameters of this dissertation are thus designed on an ecclesiastical timeline rather than a secular political one. I have chosen two archbishops to form the bookends of this project. I begin with the episcopate of

⁷ Franco Strazzullo, *San Gennaro 'defensor civitatis' e il voto del 1527* (Naples: Arte Tipografica, 1987); Giuliana Vitale, "Il culto ianuario in età aragonese," *Campania Sacra* 37 (2006): 327–56.

⁸ Francesco Paolo de Ceglia, *The Natural History of a Neapolitan Miracle: The Secret of San Gennaro's Blood* (London: Routledge, 2025), 29.

⁹ Patrick Boucheron, *Trace and Aura: The Recurring Lives of St. Ambrose of Milan*, trans. Lara Vergnaud and Willard Wood (New York: Other Press, 2022), 1–13.

Giacomo da Viterbo (1302-1308) and end with that of Oliviero Carafa (1465 - 1484; 1503 -1505). By highlighting the episcopate's intentions, I seek to explore the following questions: In what ways did the archbishops of Naples shape, adapt, and otherwise intervene in the cult of San Gennaro during this period? Can we identify moments of tension between the archbishop's vision for the cult and others' interpretations? What can the development of Gennaro's cult tell us about the development of the Neapolitan episcopate during this period? Even more broadly, do their interventions mirror or challenge our previous conceptions regarding the role of the bishop in the development of the cult of saints during this period?

San Gennaro's is an exceptional candidate for historical investigation for several reasons. First, in comparison to other patronal saints of large Italian capital cities, his hagiographic dossier is markedly modest, and the geographic spread of his cult was limited. As I will expand upon in the Prologue, the legend of Gennaro's life and martyrdom is limited to two, early medieval *passiones*, known as the *Acta Bononiensia* (AB) and the *Acta Vaticana* (AV).¹⁰ These anonymous texts have been argued to date to the late sixth and late ninth centuries, respectively, but there is no consensus on this.¹¹ Both texts identify St Januarius as the bishop of Benevento. The rest of the accounts are devoted to the saint's beheading at the amphitheatre of Pozzuoli in the early fourth century. Januarius thus remains an elusive figure; these brief accounts offer little to no information on the saint's life. Apart from two *passiones*, Gennaro has no *vita* nor any *miracula*. Only one medieval homily on Gennaro survives (BHL 3148), seemingly from the ninth century.¹² Though Gennaro's legend was included in early medieval martyrologies, including that of Bede, he was omitted from later popular legends such as Jacobus de Voragine's *The Golden Legend*.¹³ The limited transmission of his legend points to the localised nature of his cult. With one notable exception, the monastery of Montevergine, to be discussed below, it did not spread far beyond the city of Naples.¹⁴ Accordingly, this study is geographically limited to Naples and Montevergine, where Gennaro's remains were interred for several centuries.

Sparse hagiographic records and localised cults were not unusual for the ancient bishop-patrons of smaller Italian cities, such as St Petronius in Bologna or St Geminianus in Modena. However, such characteristics are striking in the case of a patron saint of a major Italian urban centre. By contrast, figures such as St Ambrose in Milan, St Nicholas in Bari, and St Mark in Venice enjoyed extensive hagiographic traditions which circulated widely outside the locus of their respective cults.¹⁵ Moreover, these cults were venerated across Western Christendom, unlike that

¹⁰ The two texts are currently referred to by the locations of their earliest manuscripts, Bologna and Rome), respectively. They have different titles in the *Acta Sanctorum*; the AB is entitled "Acta Mendosa," and the AV, "Acta Auctore Anonymo." See: *AASS, Sept.* VI, 866-872.

¹¹ For an analysis of these works and their origins: Prologue, pp. 23-25.

¹² *De Miraculis S. Januarii* (BHL 4138): *AASS, Sept.* VI, 884 - 888; Thomas Granier, "Un miracle accompli par le contact d'une effigie de saint Janvier à Naples au IX^e siècle," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 75 (1997): 957-66.

¹³ Thomas Granier, "San Gennaro e compagni nelle fonti dei secoli x-xii," *Campania Sacra* 37 (2006): 251-74. For Januarius in Bede's Martyrology: Henri Quentin, *Les Martyrologes Historiques du Moyen-Age* (Paris: J. Gabalda & Cie, 1908), 440.

¹⁴ Some of Januarius' relics were translated from Benevento to the Monastery of Reichenau in the mid-9th century. The translation was described by the monk and poet, Walahfrid Strabo. For an overview: D.H. Turner, "The Reichenau Sacramentaries at Zurich and Oxford," *Revue Bénédictine* 75 (1965): 240-76.

¹⁵ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012). For Ambrose: Boucheron, *Trace and Aura*. For Nicholas: Charles Jones, *Nicholas of Myra, Bari and Manhattan: Biography of a Legend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

of Gennaro, which remained mostly confined to Naples' city limits. So how did a saint who was never bishop of Naples, with obscure origins and a geographically limited cult, become the principal patron of one of the largest cities in late medieval Europe?

Gennaro's relics also highlight his candidacy for this investigation. We can divide them into three portions: his body, his blood, and his skull. The first enjoys a lengthy, complicated history involving a translation to Naples, a theft to Benevento, potential competing relic cults, and a surprising discovery at Montevergine.¹⁶ The skull and blood relics were both abruptly introduced under mysterious circumstances in the fourteenth century. The skull first appeared in Naples in 1304 when King Charles II commissioned a new reliquary bust.¹⁷ Though previous historians have attempted to reconstruct the skull's history, its origins remain mysterious, if not problematic. This brings us to what is, by far, the most popular component of the cult: Gennaro's miraculous blood. Our earliest reference to the blood appears over a millennium after the saint's death, in the anonymous history of southern Italy, the *Chronicon Siculum* (c.1392).¹⁸ Like the bust, we do not know where - or when - the blood originated. The relic continues to perform its miraculous duties thrice a year.¹⁹ Thanks to its thaumaturgical abilities, the blood has, understandably, garnered overwhelming historiographical attention. Sustained interest from journalists, theologians, and popular historians continues to shape the academic field, as discussed in section I of this introduction below.

Throughout this thesis, I argue that San Gennaro's relics are often representative of those circulating in this period; competing relic cults, surprise discoveries, disputed translations and miraculous body parts were regular facets of the medieval cult of saints.²⁰ At the same time, the blood represents an exceptional case, not necessarily for its thaumaturgical abilities, but because of the devotional context in which it emerged. Gennaro's relic appeared at a time when only the blood relics of Christ - not that of the saints- were performing liquefaction miracles in Western Europe. Without previous saintly models for comparison, what messages could the liquefaction of 1389 convey to the people of Naples? What can it tell us about the development of late medieval blood devotions? In what ways did the meanings previously assigned to the blood of Christ transfer to that of the saints? Of course, I am not the first to identify the peculiarity of Gennaro's blood nor other exceptional components of his cult.²¹ To fully appreciate which questions have - and have not - been asked and answered, I turn now to an historiographic overview.

I. Historiographic Overview

¹⁶ See Prologue, pp. 27-29.

¹⁷ To be discussed in Chapter One.

¹⁸ Giuseppe de Blasiis, ed. *Cronicon Siculum incerti authoris ab anno 340 ad annum 1396 in forma diary [sic]: ex inedito codice Ottoboniano Vaticano 1396* (Naples: F. Giannini & fil., 1887).

¹⁹ Today, the miracle regularly occurs on Gennaro's May, September, and December feast days and occasionally on random occurrences. However, we should note that Gennaro's December feast was only added to Naples' liturgical calendar after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 1631.

²⁰ Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead do Such Great Things?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

²¹ For a selected bibliography: Giovanni Battista Alfano and Antonio Amitrano, *Il miracolo di San Gennaro in Napoli*, 2 ed. (Naples: Arti Grafiche Vincenzo Scarpati, 1950); Giovanni Battista Alfano and Antonio Amitrano, *Notizie storiche ed osservazioni sulle reliquie di sangue dei martiri* (Naples: Adriana, 1952); Valerio Petrarca, "Un miracolo rituale: la liquefazione del sangue di San Gennaro," *La Ricerca Folklorica* 29 (1994): 57-67; de Ceglia, *The Natural History*.

When Giovanni Alfano and Antonio Amitrano published *Il Miracolo di San Gennaro* in 1924, they included a bibliography of 1,346 works, both scholarly and journalistic, on the cult of San Gennaro.²² This list was expanded in 1950 for the second edition of *Il Miracolo* (1,470 works) and then again in 1989 for a special edition of *Campania Sacra* (2,056 works).²³ What more, then, could we possibly say about Naples' principal defender? Though a great deal of ink has been spilled on the saint, this study diverges from previous efforts in four particular ways: (1) a concentration on the late medieval period, (2) the prioritisation of the role of the bishops, (3) an emphasis on development over time, and (4) the treatment of 'popular religion'. I turn now to my first point, regarding periodisation.

As mentioned, previous scholarship has prioritised San Gennaro's late antique and early modern cults and only lightly treated the late medieval. This disparity is perhaps best seen during a 2005 conference on the saint organised by Gennaro Luongo to commemorate the 1700th anniversary of Gennaro's beheading.²⁴ However, out of 29 academic papers, eight were dedicated to the late antique period and 13 to the early modern. Only four attended to the medieval. As André Vauchez pointed out in his closing remarks, this breakdown thus reflected the lack of interest in the medieval period, especially the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries.²⁵ The attention garnered by the late antique and early modern periods can largely be explained by the accessibility of source material. For example, the excavation of the Catacombs of San Gennaro in 1971 unearthed a rich body of new evidence pertaining to Naples' ancient cult of saints.²⁶ Franco Strazzullo's scholarship and his transcriptions of early modern materials held in the Diocesan Archives paved the way for several later historians, such as Helen Hills and Céline Dauverd.²⁷ In contrast, the 1943 destruction of the Angevin and Aragonese archives, which I will return to below, has inhibited research on those respective periods.

Nevertheless, there are, of course, exceptions to these late antique and early modern examples. Of particular note is the work of Francesco Paolo de Ceglia.²⁸ Chiefly concerned with

²² Giovanni Battista Amitrano and Antonio Alfano, *Il Miracolo di San Gennaro: documentazione storica e scientifica con bibliografia* (Naples: Scarpato, 1924).

²³ Amitrano and Alfano, *Il Miracolo*, 2nd Ed.; Giovanni Alagi, "A proposito di recente letteratura Ianuariana," *Campania Sacra* 20, (2) (1989): 447–53.

²⁴ The subsequent volume remains a critical resource on the development of the cult: Gennaro Luongo, ed. *San Gennaro nel XVII centenario del martirio (305-2005): atti del convegno internazionale* (Napoli: Campania Notizie, 2006). The conference proceedings were also published in the 37th edition of *Campania Sacra*.

²⁵ André Vauchez, "Conclusion," in *San Gennaro nel xvii centenario del martirio (305-2005): atti del convegno internazionale*, ed. Gennaro Luongo (Napoli: Campania Notizie, 2005), 309–18.

²⁶ See especially: Umberto M. Fasola, *Le Catacombe di San Gennaro a Capodimonte* (Roma: Distalia, 1975); R. Calvino, *La Catacombe di San Gennaro a Capodimonte dopo le recenti campagne di scavo e il restauro delle pitture* (Città di Vaticano: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, 1978); Carlo Ebanista, "Padre Umberto M. Fasola e la catacombe di S. Gennaro a Napoli: nuovi dati sulle campagne di scavo del 1973-74," *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 94 (2018): 527–618. Also see: Nicola Ciavolino, "Nuovi affreschi catacombe di S. Gennaro," *Campania Sacra* 20 (1989): 357–78; Maria Amodio, "Riflessi monumentali del culto ianuariano: le catacombe di San Gennaro a Capodimonte. dalla curiosità degli eruditi alle indagini archeologiche," in *San Gennaro nel xvii centenario* (Napoli: Campania Notizie, 2006), 123–45.

²⁷ Franco Strazzullo, *I diari dei cerimonieri della cattedrale di Napoli: una fonte per la storia napoletana* (Napoli: Agar, 1961); *San Gennaro 'defensor civitatis' e il voto del 1527; Guida del tesoro di S. Gennaro* (Napoli: Agar, 1966).

²⁸ Francesco Paolo de Ceglia, "Thinking with the saint: the miracle of Saint Januarius of Naples and science in early modern Europe," *Early Science Medicine* 19 (2014): 133–73; "A Liquid Miracle: The Origins of the Liquefaction

the development of the liquefaction, de Ceglia showcases a range of overlooked perspectives on the miracle, including its occurrence in the late medieval period. Though de Ceglia treats the Angevin and Aragonese phases of Gennaro's cult, neither are his principal concern nor does he attempt an analysis of the cult's development. Nonetheless, his persistent questioning of the meanings embedded with the blood relic has informed my own investigation.²⁹ Equally significant is the work of Giovanna Vitale, who contended that the cult's most fundamental aspects took shape in the 1490s, not the mid-sixteenth century as previously understood by Strazzullo.³⁰ While this project argues for an even earlier chronology, it remains indebted to Vitale's call for greater consideration of the late medieval period and its neglected sources. Subsequent contributions by Vinni Lucherini and Jill Caskey have provided insights into the liturgical dimension of Gennaro's Angevin cult, which have been hugely helpful in my own analysis of the liturgical evidence.³¹ As this brief survey has demonstrated, Gennaro's late medieval cult has not been ignored, but there is substantial room for further enquiry into this period.

This brings me to my second objective: prioritising the role of the bishops. This approach is informed by the scholarship of Strazzullo, Vitale, Hills, and Dauverd, whose work illuminates the political uses for Gennaro's cult especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example, Hills has illustrated how Gennaro's cult, by way of the *Tesoro di San Gennaro*, served as a site of negotiation between political (and ecclesiastical) authorities and Naples' lay bodies.³² Dauverd efficiently demonstrated how the Viceroys and the leaders of the *seggi* negotiated their power during San Gennaro's translation feast.³³ Rather than recreate their efforts for an earlier period, which the limited evidence prevents me from anyhow, this dissertation instead turns to the role of Naples' archbishops, who, with the exception of Oliviero Carafa, have largely been neglected.³⁴ Consequently, this dissertation will consider the archbishops of Naples as key stakeholders - if not *the* key stakeholder - in an overlooked, dynamic process of saint-building in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Thus, this project deliberately prioritises an ecclesiastical timeline which is informed by, but not beholden to, Naples' political vicissitudes.

Thirdly, in this thesis I explore the evolution of Gennaro's cult over time. Rather than tracing longer trajectories of continuity and change, previous studies of the cult often fragment its history into individual components. We can blame this, in part, due to the nature of previous scholarship which has preferred article-length studies rather than monographs, exempting the work of Strazzullo and de Ceglia. Though such research as the 2005 conference proceedings offer insights into particular aspects of his sanctity, it often does not consider how such facets interacted, evolved, and came into conflict with one another. To place such aspects in dialogue with one

Ritual of the blood of Saint Januarius," in *Public Uses of Human Remains and Relics in History*, ed. Silvia Caviccholi and Luigi Provero (New York: Routledge, 2022), 49–65.

²⁹ This is especially true in Chapter Two, pp. 66–67.

³⁰ Vitale, "Il culto ianuario," 327–55.

³¹ Jill Caskey, "The Look of Liturgy, Identity and Ars sacra in Southern Italy," in *Ritual and Space in the Middle Ages*, ed. Frances Andrews (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2011), 108–19; Vinni Lucherini, "San Gennaro negato: il Chronicon Sanctæ Mariæ de Principio e le sue due redazioni," in *Tempi e Forme dell'Arte*, ed. L. Derosa and C. Gelao (Foggia: Claudio Granzi Editore, 2011), 204–15; "Le processione di reliquie e lo spazio del sacro," in *Reliquie in processione nell'Europa medievale*, ed. Vinni Lucherini (Rome: Viella, 2018), 7–20.

³² Helen Hills, *The Matter of Miracles: Neapolitan Baroque Architecture and Sanctity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

³³ Céline Dauverd, *Church and State in Spanish Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

³⁴ We will hear a great deal about Oliviero in Chapter Six.

another, and thereby emphasising Gennaro's multiplicity, I consider their individual as well as cumulative development over two centuries.

Having outlined this project's objectives, I now turn to the historiographical frameworks it engages with. In particular, I aim to challenge previous reductive readings of San Gennaro's sanctity which have largely been informed by the outdated 'popular' religion model, and its subsequent clergy/laity dichotomy, a historiographical concept that has especially complicated the religious history of southern Italy.³⁵ While the discourse surrounding this course of study is too lengthy to delve into here, the role of the laity and the clergy are especially relevant to the historiographical context of this thesis. Here, the clergy and laity represented strict, opposing categories, often in conflict with one another.³⁶ The folkloristic and 'popular' religion of the masses has thus been pitted against that of the orthodox and educated clergy.³⁷ Similarly, bishops have been, at times, cast as oppressive forces whilst the laity succumbed to their uneducated and superstitious beliefs.³⁸

As Giuliano Sodano has recently reminded us, such a paradigm is especially found in scholarship pertaining to the Italian south, in part for reasons relating to the 'Southern Question' that is, southern Italy's real or perceived delay in socio-economic and cultural development in comparison to the north.³⁹ As Anna Maria Rao has identified, the history of Naples has been written as a series of "missed opportunities," or as a "game for which the rules are set elsewhere."⁴⁰ The work of Benedetto Croce, at times exemplifies this point; in his monograph on Spanish Naples, for example, Croce framed Spain's conquest of the kingdom as a civilising force, pivoting Naples

³⁵ For a recent overview of the problem as it pertains to the South of Italy: Giulio Sodano, "Miracoli e devozioni nel Mezzogiorno moderna tra tradizione e innovazione storiografica," in *Mezzogiorno prodigioso: ricerche sul miracolo nel Meridione d'Italia dell'età moderna*, ed. Giulio Sodano (Palermo: Quaderni di Mediterranea, 2023), 7–33. As Ottavia Niccoli also noted, this concept is strongly linked to broader interests in southern Italian 'popular culture', as popularised in the 1970s especially by Ernesto Martino and Mikhail Bakhtin. See her survey of the problem, and its future avenues: Ottavia Niccoli, "Cultura popolare: un relitto abbandonato?" *Studi storici* 51 (2015): 997–1010.

³⁶ For some classic examples: Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error* (New York: George Braziller, 1978); Carlo Ginzburg, ed. *Religioni delle classi popolari: interventi su ricerca storica, didattica, editoria* (Ancona: Istituto di storia e sociologia della Facoltà di Economia e Commercio, 1979); Jacques Le Goff, *Time, Work & Culture in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). For the rejection of this model: Natalie Zemon Davis, "Some tasks and themes in the study of popular religion," in *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, ed. Charles Trinkaus and Heiko Oberman (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 307–36; Pieter Hendrik Vrijhof and Jacques Waardenburg, eds. *Official and Popular Religion: Analysis of a Theme for Religious Studies* (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1979); Ottavia Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), xi–1; Julia M.H. Smith, "Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles and Relics in Brittany, c. 850 - 1250," *Speculum* 65 (1990): 309–43; Maureen Miller, "Religion makes a Difference: Clerical and Lay Cultures in the Courts of Northern Italy, 1000-1300," *The American Historical Review* 105 (2000): 1095–130.

³⁷ Most famously the case in: Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

³⁸ For such a model: Scott Waugh and Peter Diehl, eds. *Christendom and its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³⁹ Sodano, "Miracoli e devozioni," 20. Scholarship on the Southern Question is too vast a topic to delve into here. For the debates: Jane Schneider, ed. *Italy's 'Southern Question'* (London: Routledge, 1998); Giovanni Vitolo and Aurelio Musi, *Il Mezzogiorno prima della questione meridionale* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 2004); Iain Chambers, "The Southern Question...again," in *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Italy: History, Politics, Society*, ed. E.G. Parini, G. Veltri, & A. Mammone (London: Routledge, 2015), 13–22.

⁴⁰ Anna Maria Rao, "Missed Opportunities in the History of Naples," in *New Approaches to Naples c. 1500-1800: The Power of Place*, ed. Melissa Calaresu and Helen Hills (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 203.

away from its previous disarray and weakness and into the decadence of the sixteenth century.⁴¹ In the past 20 years, liberating southern Italy from such pre-determined trajectories has been the goal of many contemporary historians, including Tommaso Astarita, Helen Hills, Melissa Calaresu, and Bianca de Divitiis, who have all called for histories which situate this territory within its broader contemporary contexts.⁴²

Negative stereotypes emerging from this 'Question' often cast southern Italian religious practices - both modern and historical - as heretical, heterodox, and superstitious.⁴³ The rebellious Neapolitan, uninterested in reform or 'orthodox' religion, has thus become something of a cliché.⁴⁴ Of course, not all scholars have maintained the division between the religion of the masses and that of the clergy. Jean-Michel Sallmann, Giuseppe Galasso, Gabriele de Rosa, and Ottavia Niccoli, for example, have sought to bridge the gap.⁴⁵ However, the divide between 'quasi-magical' lay and orthodox clerical practices, to cite Galasso, continues to present southern Italian religion as lesser in quality and in value - and thus unworthy of serious, historical enquiry.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, Januarian studies are not exempt from these assumptions; at times, the saint and his "barbaric blood cult,"⁴⁷ have been employed to exemplify the divide between the unruly 'popular' religion of the masses and the religion of the clergy. We can see this, at times, in the works of de Ceglia and Hills.⁴⁸ This model also permeates in non-academic writing, such as in the work of Vittorio Paliotti, a Neapolitan journalist. Though an engaging read, his 1983 history of the cult was criticised by the historical community for its numerous inaccuracies as well as its presentation of the saint and his devotees.⁴⁹ In one review, historian Ugo Doveire critiqued the account for characterising the Neapolitan people as a fanatical and homogeneous group pitted against the city's orthodox and oppressive clergy.⁵⁰ Doveire thus called for the cult's reappraisal, one which situated

⁴¹ Benedetto Croce, *Storia del Regno di Napoli* (Bari: Giuseppe Laterza & Figli, 1925). For a summary of this problem in Croce's work: Benito Brancaforte, "Benedetto Croce's Changing Attitude toward the Relevance of Spanish Influences in Italy," *Italica* 44 (1967): 326–43.

⁴² See their edited volumes: Tommaso Astarita, ed. *A Companion to Early Modern Naples* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Melissa Calaresu and Helen Hills, eds. *New Approaches to Naples c. 1500-c. 1800: The Power of Place* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016); Bianca de Divitiis, ed. *A Companion to the Renaissance in Southern Italy (1350-1600)* (Leiden: Brill, 2025).

⁴³ For a survey of the problem: Giulio Sodano, "La 'religiosità popolare' di Carla Russo tra Storiografia e Archivi," *Archivio Storico Per La Province Napoletane* 162 (2024): 481–85.

⁴⁴ As seen in: Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Jennifer Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: The Jesuits' Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

⁴⁵ Giuseppe Galasso, *L'altra Europa. per un'antropologia storica del Mezzogiorno d'Italia* (Milano: Mondadori, 1982); Gabriele De Rosa, *Vescovi, popolo e magia nel Sud* (Naples: Guida, 1971); Jean Michel Sallmann, *Santi barocchi: modelli di santità, pratiche devozionali e comportamenti religiosi nel Regno di Napoli dal 1540 al 1750* (Lecce: Argo, 1996); Ottavia Niccoli, *La vita religiosa nell'Italia moderna, secoli XV-XVIII* (Roma: Carocci, 1998). For further reflections: Sodano, "Miracoli e devozioni," 7–33.

⁴⁶ Giuseppe Galasso, "Le particolarità del Mezzogiorno cristiano e cattolico," *Treccani*, 25 June 2025, [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/le-particolarita-del-mezzogiorno-cristiano-e-cattolico_\(Cristiani-d'Italia\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/le-particolarita-del-mezzogiorno-cristiano-e-cattolico_(Cristiani-d'Italia)/)

⁴⁷ In the words of historian of religion Alfonso Maria di Nola in 1972: de Ceglia, *The Natural History*, 380.

⁴⁸ I am thinking of de Ceglia's treatment of the laity (homogenous; fanatical) and Hills casting of Naples' archbishops, especially Cardinal Oliviero Carafa. See: Hills, *The Matter of Miracles*; de Ceglia, *The Natural History*.

⁴⁹ Vittorio Paliotti, *San Gennaro: storia di un culto, di un mito, dell'anima popolo* (Milan: Rusconi, 1983).

⁵⁰ Ugo Doveire, "Su S. Gennaro: Note in Margine a una recente pubblicazione," *Campania Sacra* 13-14 (1982–1983): 308–19. For an alternative review of Paliotti's book: Alagi, "A proposito."

its development within its historical circumstances.⁵¹ Such a directive was rearticulated by Luongo in 2006.⁵²

Paliotti's work, while in no way representative of the whole of Januarian scholarship, illuminates the recurring stereotypes and broader debates within the field of religious history which has shaped previous investigations into San Gennaro's cult. Such a reductive depiction of the saint also results from other factors, including persistent uncertainty surrounding Gennaro's origins, which has manifested in scholarly debates,⁵³ scientific investigations into his relics,⁵⁴ and even his removal from the General Roman Calendar in 1969.⁵⁵ These concerns have, at times, encouraged scholars to question the legitimacy of his cult or trivialise it. Accordingly, this thesis rejects prior interpretations of San Gennaro's cult which, shaped by doubts about his historical existence and entrenched stereotypes, emphasise his strangeness or the recusant nature of the Neapolitan people. Instead, I adopt an approach exemplified by Vitale, among others, which identifies where lay experiences with the cult diverged from, or directly conflicted with, those prescribed by the institutional church, without casting them as deviant.⁵⁶

Furthermore, this polarising model also strips both the clergy and the laity of their agency and casts the two as homogeneous entities - which they were not. During this period, the clergy encompassed the pope, curia, bishops, abbots, secular and religious clergy, priests, deacons, among others. The laity was similarly a varied and composite group. For example, we might speak of the poor, tradesmen, merchants, nobility, and members of the royal family, among so many others - as the laity. Granting their respective roles and responsibilities, as well as their heterogeneity, this dissertation places the laity and clergy in dialogue rather than in opposition.⁵⁷

Furthermore, while I strive to incorporate a range of experiences across social and ecclesiastical strata, the extant evidence does not always make it easy or possible to do so. As I will expand upon later, this thesis relies heavily on liturgical evidence. While such texts greatly enhance our understanding of the lived experience of religious activity, they privilege clerical voices over that of the laity and describe rituals and ceremonies prescribed by the institutional

⁵¹ Dovère's criticisms appear at a turning point in the study of cult of the saints. His review was published shortly after Peter Brown's *The Cult of Saints* (1981 in English; 1983 in Italian). Though Dovère did not cite Brown directly, many of his concerns reflected Brown's call to reinterpret the cult of saints not as a product of a superstitious laity, but of the bishops. See: Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

⁵² Gennaro Luongo, "Premessa," *Campania Sacra* 37 (2006): 5–7.

⁵³ Debates over the saint's historic identity erupted in 1936, when Hans Achelis argued that "San Gennaro" was actually a legendary retelling of the Bishop Januarius present at the Council of Serdica in 343. Achelis sparked a lengthy debate with Hippolyte Delehaye, a fellow skeptic, and Domenico Mallardo, a defender of Januarius' Beneventan identity. For more: Hans Achelis, *Die Katakomben von Neapel* (Leipzig: Verlag Karl W. Hiersemann, 1936). Domenico Mallardo, "La via Antiniana e le memorie di S. Gennaro," *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti* 19 (1939): 303–06; Hippolyte Delehaye, "Hagiographie Napolitaine," *Analecta Bollandiana* 59 (1941): 1–33.

⁵⁴ Between 1964 and 1974, for example, Archbishop Alfonso Castaldo of Naples sponsored scientific investigations into Gennaro's remains. For this and the Roman Calendar: de Ceglia, *The Natural History*, 378–80; Aldo Caserta and Gastone Lambertini, *Storia e scienza di fronte al miracolo di San Gennaro* (Naples: Agar, 1968); "La Ricognizione delle ossa di San Gennaro," *Asprenas* 14 (1967): 278–87.

⁵⁵ Gennaro's demotion appears in studies which emphasise his mythological features and question the legitimacy of his cult: Petrarca, "Morfologie rituali."; de Ceglia, *The Natural History*, 29.

⁵⁶ Vitale, "Il culto ianuariano," 327–56.

⁵⁷ For this model in practice, see: Niccoli, *La vita religiosa*. Miller raises several poignant points about the distinctions between clerical and lay culture in the Middle Ages. See: Miller, "Religion makes a Difference."

church. Though they might reflect contemporary concerns, be it religious, political, or otherwise, they are not inclusive of late medieval religious experiences. Nevertheless, the laity are not absent; their engagement with liturgically prescribed practices demonstrates that the construction of San Gennaro's cult was not solely driven by the whims and ambitions of Naples' archbishop. Instead, these sources testify to their active participation in his cult. In some cases, the sources allow me to explicitly address non-clerical liturgical experiences. In others, I rely on models from central and northern Italy to augment the visibility of the laity.⁵⁸ This is especially true for that of women; as they are largely absent from the extant sources, readers will find that the experiences of women are lacking in this thesis. However, I make some broad assumptions about their interactions with the cult as based on larger Italian devotional and festive culture. For example, I presume that religious and lay women, of varied social classes, attended Gennaro's feasts, as was custom during this period during saints' celebrations. I therefore take care to note their presence. Beyond a few words on Gennaro's relationship to female saints, my comments on the gender dynamics of this cult are otherwise limited.

To clarify my treatment of the laity further, it is helpful to define what this study is *not*. In the last 30 years, studies on the laity prioritise lay religious practices, confraternities, or, even most recently, lay material culture.⁵⁹ Due to limitations in the source material, I am unable to address such topics in this dissertation. There is little evidence of material devotions, such as *ex-votos* or pilgrimage badges, from the late medieval period and while confraternities existed, their involvement in the cult is difficult to discern. Still, as I will further outline below, material evidence forms a substantial portion of my evidence base. Relatedly, this is also not a history of religious deviance or inquisition,⁶⁰ nor does it seek to define what makes an 'authentic' or 'orthodox' religious experience. While I do discuss the tensions between the clerical and lay experiences - which frequently run in parallel - I refrain from labelling such moments with value-judgements.

Before turning to the historic circumstances in which I set Gennaro's late medieval cult, it would be helpful to briefly summarise the aims of this project. This dissertation is uninterested in finding a historic San Gennaro and challenges any previous interpretations which emphasise his strangeness rather than evaluating his sanctity within its broader historical contexts. Furthermore, this project rejects the simplistic clergy/laity dichotomy and instead seeks to place these entities, acknowledging their diverse compositions, in dialogue. In doing so, I explore how both the clergy

⁵⁸ For example: Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980); Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); André Vauchez, "Patronage des saints et religion civique dans l'Italie communale à la fin du Moyen Âge," in *Patronage and Public in the Trecento: Proceedings of the St Lambrecht Symposium*, ed. Vincent Moleta (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1986), 169–86; Webb, *Patrons*; Gabriella Zarri, "The Church, Civic Religion, and Civic Identity," in *A Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Bologna*, ed. Sarah Rubin Blanshei (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 361–85.

⁵⁹ Augustine Thompson, *Cities of God: The Religion of the Italian Communes* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005); Andrew Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion in Medieval Bruges c.1300–1520* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Maya Corry, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven, eds. *Madonnas & Miracles: The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2017); Deborah Howard, Abigail Brundin, and Mary Laven, eds. *The Sacred Home in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); John Arnold, *The Making of Lay Religion in Southern France, c. 1000–1350* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024).

⁶⁰ The history of the inquisition in Naples is a popular course of study: Giovanni Romeo, *Ricerche su confessione dei peccati e Inquisizione nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (Napoli: La Città del Sole, 1997); Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils*; Giovanni Romeo, "Inquisition and Church in Early Modern Naples," in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 235–56.

and the laity experienced Gennaro's cult and what roles they had in the cult's development. Lastly, rather than compiling several fragmented manifestations of Gennaro's cult, this thesis explores the dynamic process through which San Gennaro was constituted as Naples' patron saint.

II: Late Medieval Sanctity

The field of late medieval sanctity, the wider context for this study, is a well-trodden path, particularly in the Italian context. Yet, Naples has remained comparatively marginal to this body of scholarship. In general, southern Italian saints receive much less attention than those of central and northern Italy. While individual cults have been the subject of inquiry, such as St. Nicholas of Bari, investigations into wider patterns in southern Italian sanctity remain limited.⁶¹ Paul Oldfield, Jean-Michel Sallmann, and Giovanni Vitolo are notable exceptions to this rule.⁶² Oldfield's monograph on saints and pilgrimage in southern Italy during the central Middle Ages and Sallmann's monograph on Baroque Neapolitan sanctity remain the gold-standard for their respective periods, while the works of Vitolo have observed the divergences between northern and southern Italian devotions. Nevertheless, the broader field continues to prioritise the northern half of the peninsula. Anna Benvenuti Papi and Sofia Boesch Gajano, for example, both leaders in the field of medieval sanctity, focus their efforts north of Rome.⁶³ Augustine Thompson, Diana Webb, and Janine Larmon Peterson have traced the development of the cult of saints in the communes.⁶⁴ I could cite dozens of other works dedicated to individual cults in central and northern Italian cities.⁶⁵ The cumulative effect of this disparity has created the impression that the sanctity of these territories is the 'normative' Italian sanctity for this period.

This impression is reinforced by scholarship on canonisation, which continues to dominate the field of late medieval sanctity.⁶⁶ Since André Vauchez's *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*,

⁶¹ Jones, *Nicholas*; Giuseppe Gargano, "La cattedrale santuario: il culto di S. Andrea ad Amalfi," in *Pellegrinaggi e Itinerari dei Santi nel Mezzogiorno Medievale*, ed. Giovanni Vitolo (Naples: Liguori, 1999), 193–204.

⁶² Sallmann, *Santi barocchi*; Giovanni Vitolo, ed. *Pellegrinaggi e itinerari dei santi Mezzogiorno medievale* (Naples: Quaderni, 1999); Giovanni Vitolo, *Tra Napoli e Salerno. La costruzione dell'identità cittadina nel Mezzogiorno medievale* (Salerno: Carlone, 2001); Paul Oldfield, *Sanctity and Pilgrimage in Medieval Southern Italy, 1000-1200* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2014).

⁶³ Anna Benvenuti Papi, *In castro poenitentiae santità e società femminile nell'Italia medievale* (Rome: Italia Sacra, 1990); Anna Benvenuti Papi, "I culti patronali tra memoria ecclesiastica e costruzione dell'identità civica: l'esempio di Firenze," in *La religion civique à l'époque médiévale et moderne* ed. Anna Benvenuti Papi (Rome: École Française de France de Rome, 1995), 99–118; Sofia Boesch Gajano, *La santità* (Roma: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1999).

⁶⁴ Thompson, *Cities of God*; Janine Larmon Peterson, *Suspect Saints and Holy Heretics: Disputed Sanctity and Communal Identity in Late Medieval Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019); Diana Webb, *Saints and Cities in Medieval Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

⁶⁵ Paolo Golinelli, *Culto dei santi e vita cittadina a Reggio Emilia* (Modena: Aedes Muratoriana, 1980); Luigi Canetti, *Culto dei santi e società cittadina a Piacenza nel medio evo* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1993); Diana Norman, *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a Late Medieval City-State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Karen E. McCluskey, *New Saints in Late Medieval Venice, 1200-1500: A Typology Study* (London: Routledge, 2019).

⁶⁶ This includes explicit studies on canonisations as well as those regarding contested sanctity. Two such examples include: Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, ed. *A Companion to Medieval Canonization Processes* (Leiden: Brill, 2025); Ronald C. Finucane, *Contested Canonizations: The Last Medieval Saints, 1482-1523* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011); Peterson, *Suspect Saints and Holy Heretics*.

there has been a sustained interest in the modes of sanctity preserved in canonisation procedures.⁶⁷ Vauchez's series of saintly types continue to shape the field.⁶⁸ For example, Diana Webb has demonstrated how the lay communities in the Italian communes increasingly sought to replace their traditional episcopal patrons with mendicant saints, who represented a more popular form of sanctity. While such models provide critical insights into the transformation of sainthood during this period, they also risk reinforcing the notion of a unified Italian experience. This is especially true since the types of investigations conducted in the central and north of Italy are not always possible for the south. While Vauchez, Webb, and many others, utilise municipal and canonisation records to uncover the development of sanctity, we cannot do the same in Naples. As the city was ruled by a monarchy, such municipal records do not exist and comparable sources, such as chancery records, were largely destroyed during the Second World War.⁶⁹ Canonisation records are also scant as no causes for the canonisation of a Neapolitan holy person were put forth during this period.⁷⁰ The disparity in sources thus precludes Naples from many of the historiographical conversations relating to sanctity in late medieval Italy.

Furthermore, the emphasis on central and northern Italian sanctity, as well as canonisation, has positioned southern Italy as a deviation from northern norms. As Vitolo and others have demonstrated, trends in sainthood in southern Italy do not conform to Vauchez's typologies.⁷¹ For example, Naples did not acquire mendicant patrons during this period, though Vauchez insists this development occurred unilaterally across Italy.⁷² The absence of Neapolitan canonisations is particularly striking given that the promotion of such causes was among the chief priorities for late medieval bishops, especially those of major European metropolitan centres.⁷³ Yet, the archbishops of Naples appear not to have pursued such initiatives. The reasons for this are not well understood.⁷⁴ Thanks to its apparent lack of a "saints' factory," to quote Vitolo, the development of sanctity in late medieval Naples has thus been defined by its deficiencies, especially when compared to central and northern Italian models.⁷⁵

⁶⁷ Originally: André Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge (1198-1431)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1981). Throughout this dissertation, I cite the English edition: *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997).

⁶⁸ Gerald Parson, *The Cult of Saint Catherine of Siena: A Study in Civil Religion* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008); Augustine Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: A New Biography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Mary Harvey Doyno, *The Lay Saint: Charity and Charismatic Authority in Medieval Italy, 1150-1350* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019).

⁶⁹ See p. 17-18.

⁷⁰ Barring St. Louis of Anjou and St. Thomas Aquinas, whose statuses as Neapolitan are contested. Though both men had various ties to the city, their identities were firmly rooted in their status as mendicants rather than sons of Naples. After their respective canonisations, their cultic centres moved to France where their relics were ultimately interred. Louis' cult achieved little success in Naples; Thomas Aquinas' cult eventually grew in popularity in the sixteenth century, culminating with his elevation to patron saint of Naples in 1605. Hills, *The Matter of Miracles*, 246-47.

⁷¹ Giovanni Vitolo, "Santità, culti, e strutture socio-politiche," in *Pellegrinaggi e itinerari dei santi nel Mezzogiorno medievale*, ed. Giovanni Vitolo (Naples: Liguori, 1999), 37-38.

⁷² The proliferation of Naples' patron saints did not occur until the 17th century, as noted by both Helen Hills and Sallmann. Hills, *The Matter of Miracles*; Sallmann, *Santi barocchi*.

⁷³ Finucane, *Contested Canonizations*; Katajala-Peltomaa, *A Companion to Medieval Canonization Processes*.

⁷⁴ Giovanni Vitolo has advocated for the role of the Greek Orthodox churches in Naples which similarly encouraged devotion to martyred and ancient saints over the more fashionable wandering preachers - though this does not solve the problem entirely. Vitolo, "Santità, culti, e strutture socio-politiche," 23-28.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

I therefore offer a course-correction to this preexisting framework. By directing our attention to the transformation of San Gennaro's cult, this thesis recasts the late medieval period as one of construction rather than one of absence. Though I cannot deny the lack of canonisation cases, I can contest the idea that there was no 'saints' factory' in late medieval Naples. The dynamic development of Gennaro's sanctity during this period illustrates an alternative mode of saint-making than that of formal processes. It also invites us to more closely explore the role Naples' patron played in this dearth of canonisations as well as the efforts of the archbishops during this period. Did the success of Gennaro's cult hamper the development of others during this period? If the bishops were not actively promoting canonisation causes, what other forms of devotions did they pursue? How might their priorities reflect the city's distinct political, ecclesiastical, and devotional landscape? More broadly, for what reasons did Naples cling to its ancient saints, seemingly in a manner distinct from that of the central and north of Italy?

This discussion has highlighted one of the critical arguments of this thesis: that the development of San Gennaro's cult was contingent upon Naples' unique historical circumstances. As noted above, the Kingdom of Naples was highly contested during this period, and political turnover was frequent. Such conditions had significant implications for the promotion and reception of saints' cults. With new rulers came new saintly devotions. As Giuliana Vitale has illustrated, although the Angevins and Aragonese attempted to introduce their respective patrons, St Mary Magdalen and St. George, the people of Naples and the cathedral were slow to adopt - if they did not completely resist - these imported saints.⁷⁶ The case of Mary Magdalen exemplifies this.⁷⁷ As Vitolo has pointed out, the cathedral's *sanctorale* remained committed to its local ancient bishops' cults and conspicuously omitted mendicant and royal saints, including Louis of Toulouse and Thomas Aquinas.⁷⁸ Naples thus demonstrated an exceptional, "tenacious resistance" to new saints' cults - either canonised or imported - during the late medieval period.⁷⁹ Moreover, while the Angevin and Aragonese dynasties occasionally patronised local cults, they did not adopt a local saint as one of their patrons. Consequently, there was a pronounced divergence between the patrons of Naples' rulers and its cathedral.

This divide raises several questions relating to the development of civic patrons in late medieval Italy. As hitherto in previous scholarship, the creation of civic patrons, and indeed the concept of civic religion more broadly, is often anchored in the deeds of local and municipal authorities who appropriated components of devotional life for "the purposes of legitimisation, celebration and public well-being."⁸⁰ Resultingly, patronal figures increasingly transformed into emblems of political autonomy or sovereignty, or even military strength during the later Middle Ages.⁸¹ St Zenobius in Florence, for example, came to symbolise the city's authority over other

⁷⁶ Giuliana Vitale, "I santi del re: potere politico e pratiche devozionali nella Napoli angioina ed aragonese," *ibid.*, 93–128.

⁷⁷ Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

⁷⁸ Vitolo, "Santità, culti, e strutture socio-politiche," 35–37.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ As articulated by Vauchez in 1993. His sentiments have been widely accepted by scholars of religion in northern Italy. See: André Vauchez, "Introduction," in *La religion civique à l'époque médiévale et moderne (Chrétienté et Islam)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1995), 1. For an example of this tradition: Zarri, "The Church, Civic Religion, and Civic Identity," 361–85.

⁸¹ Vauchez, "La religion civique," 1–5; Nicholas Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

smaller communes.⁸² This was also true elsewhere in northern Italy. For example, St Mark came to symbolise Venice's *libertas* whereas Ambrose signified the autonomy, and military might, of the Duchy.⁸³ In such cases, civic patronage is closely aligned to political leadership.

This thesis explores the civic function of San Gennaro's cult, especially in Part Two, which examines his patronal feast. As this thesis will demonstrate, this celebration performed key social and political functions, like its counterparts in central and northern Italy. In this way, this investigation sits squarely within recent historiographical claims articulated by Pasquale Palmieri that, contrary to previous scholarship, saintly festivals in southern Italy not only resembled those in the north but similarly performed critical civic duties in their respective localities.⁸⁴ At the same time, the development of San Gennaro's civic sanctity diverged from the pattern found in the northern half of the peninsula. While at times, San Gennaro was invoked in support of Angevin and Aragonese monarchs, he did not come to embody dynastic power, nor did he serve as a symbol for the city's political or military identity. Rather, he did so for ecclesiastical authorities. While such a divergence has previously excluded this saint from historiographical discourse on civic patrons, and indeed Naples from that of civic religion, this thesis argues for a broadening of definitions in both instances. The case of Gennaro's patronal sanctity, therefore, forces us to reconceive our traditional understanding of the construction of a civic patron in late medieval Italy.

To do this, I frequently draw upon the experiences of patronal cults in central and northern Italy as an interpretative framework through which to examine the formation of San Gennaro's cult. Situating the development of Gennaro's cult within these broader devotional contexts makes it possible to identify both the points at which this Neapolitan devotion converged with established patterns observed elsewhere on the peninsula and those at which it departed from them. Such comparison also assists me in illuminating aspects of this cult that remain only partially visible in the extant evidence.

Yet, this method is not without its shortcomings. To evaluate San Gennaro principally through the experience of cults north of Rome risks framing such models as conventional, thereby defining Gennaro either by the degree to which he conformed or deviated from them. Such an approach stands in contradiction to this thesis' broader ambitions to challenge any assumption that saintly models from the northern half of the peninsula serve as the normative form of Italian sanctity. To combat such hazards, I take care to situate the evolution of Gennaro's cult within medieval Naples' particular historical circumstances while also identifying, where evidence permits, alternative influences and frameworks. This includes, for example, French material culture and southern Italian ecclesiastical policy. The aim, then, is not simply to compare Neapolitan and northern and central Italian models. Instead, I use that comparison to complicate our existing understanding of the development of sanctity – especially civic sanctity – on the Italian peninsula. As the patron of one of the largest cities in Italy, San Gennaro is an excellent case-study for such an investigation.

III: Sources, Methods, and Structure

Before turning to this thesis' structure, it would be helpful to outline the source base and methods for this study. As with other histories of Naples, this dissertation must grapple with an

⁸² Webb demonstrates this concept clearly. See: Webb, *Patrons*.

⁸³ Muir, *Civic Religion*; Boucheron, *Trace and Aura*, 239–301.

⁸⁴ Pasquale Palmieri, "Religion: Institutions, Devotion, and Heresy," in *A Companion to the Renaissance in Southern Italy (1350-1600)*, ed. Bianca de Divitiis (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 94–114.

incomplete and unbalanced base of evidence. This is especially true of the late medieval period as records from the Angevin and Aragonese periods were largely destroyed during the Second World War.⁸⁵ After the war, the archives' director Riccardo Filangieri spearheaded the reconstruction of the lost Angevin materials by compiling previous microfilms and transcriptions. His work and subsequent efforts especially by Jole Mazzoleni, including more recently an online database, have produced a partial reconstruction of the materials pertaining to the rule of King Charles I (c.1266 - 1285).⁸⁶ Nevertheless, those relating to the reigns of Charles II (c.1285 - 1309) and Robert of Anjou (c.1309-1343) remain fragmented. Consequently, it is sometimes difficult to reconstruct the history of San Gennaro's cult within Angevin Naples.

Rather than treat such difficulties as obstacles, this dissertation adopts a deliberately interdisciplinary approach and integrates textual, material, visual, and architectural evidence. The textual corpus employed is diverse. The ninth century *Deeds of the Neapolitan Bishops* is a critical resource for the early development of Naples' episcopate and cult of saints.⁸⁷ This thesis also relies heavily upon the late medieval histories of southern Italy, including *Cronaca di Partenope* and *Chronicon Siculum*.⁸⁸ Both are utilised for their critical insights into historical events and how earlier traditions were reshaped over time. Early modern travelogues and histories likewise provide vital perspectives on the cult's development, particularly where they preserve descriptions or transcriptions of evidence that have been lost. Where possible, this thesis privileges liturgical evidence including reforms, instructions, breviaries and martyrologies. Taken together, these sources are illustrative of prescribed cultic practices. Yet, as Philippe Buc cautioned, medieval texts must always be read with careful attention to their textuality.⁸⁹ Their authors were not without their own interpretations of the world around them; as such, we must take care not to take their words at face value but instead identify their own "thought-world."⁹⁰ Consequently, throughout this project textual sources are situated in their historical contexts and read critically with attention to authorial intention, audience, and purpose. This allows me to better assess the vantagepoint from which my own investigation begins as well as its limitations.

Textual evidence alone, however, cannot adequately reconstruct the lived experience of San Gennaro's cult. This thesis therefore places equal emphasis upon material evidence including relics, reliquaries, works of art and architecture, and, where appropriate, animals. Considered alongside written sources, these objects illuminate aspects of devotion that textual evidence often leaves unrecorded, particularly the experiences of lay participants. As Arlette Farge eloquently observed, objects communicate "the feeling of reality better than anything else can,"⁹¹ an insight which is especially pertinent where documentary evidence is fragmented. My emphasis upon

⁸⁵ For a more detail summary of the destruction, and the efforts to reconstruct the archive, see: Robert Bartlett, *History in Flames: The Destruction and Survival of Medieval Manuscripts* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2024), 118–33.

⁸⁶ *I registri della Cancelleria Angioina*, ed. Riccardo Filangieri (Naples: Accademia Pontaniana, 1949–).

⁸⁷ I use the recent edition: Luigi Andrea Berto, ed. *The Deeds of the Neapolitan Bishops: A Critical Edition and Translation of the 'Gesta Episcoporum Neapolitanorum'* (London: Routledge, 2023).

⁸⁸ For the former, I cite: Samantha Kelly, *The Cronaca di Partenope: An introduction to and critical edition of the first vernacular history of Naples (c.1350)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). For the latter: de Blasiis, *Cronicon*.

⁸⁹ Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁹⁰ Buc, *The Dangers*, 3.

⁹¹ Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, trans. Thomas Scott-Railton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 10.

materiality reflects a broader interpretative framework. In line with recent material culture studies, this thesis understands them as active participants in the production and performance of religious devotions rather than passive reflections of contemporary beliefs.⁹² Of course, I do not reject the item's materiality; before employing any such source, I take care to examine its provenance, production, and intended function, as evidence permits. Works of art are considered within this wider framework of material culture, but through the perspective of art history and visual culture studies.⁹³ Here, works of art is a broad category, encompassing a range of objects including wall paintings as well as reliquaries. By evaluating iconographic symbols and artistic styles, this dissertation considers the ways in which images functioned within devotional environments and influenced their viewers.⁹⁴ This perspective is particularly important for works commissioned for liturgical settings, where artistic interpretations emerged in spatial and ritual contexts.

Due to their significance in this project, relics and reliquaries require special attention. As Julia Smith and Caroline Walker Bynum have demonstrated, these objects were particularly capable of expressing material *and* immaterial beliefs simultaneously.⁹⁵ For example, their physicality often testified to Biblical teachings, the cult of the saints, and the promise of resurrection, rendering material and spiritual realities inseparable. While Smith and Bynum's understanding of their purpose and function underpins my analysis, I also investigate the "communally shared associations"⁹⁶ infused within them. In the case of relics, for example, such associations include contemporary perceptions regarding the human body, and its capabilities. For reliquaries, I consider how their artistic designs reflected larger devotional and cultural trends as well as specific messaging crafted by key stakeholders, such as monarchs and bishops. Together, I aim to produce a robust and complicated portrait of these objects, thus picking apart the multi-layered experience of San Gennaro's relics during this period.

Architectural evidence similarly occupies a central place in this investigation. Influenced by the historiographical 'spatial turn,' I treat space not as a static backdrop, but as active and "continuously changing cultural manifestation,"⁹⁷ shaped through reciprocal processes of construction, use, and adaptation.⁹⁸ This is especially true of sacred spaces. Their designs and

⁹² For a selected bibliography on material culture: Beth Williamson, "Material Culture and Medieval Christianity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity*, ed. John Arnold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 60-75; *The Oxford Handbook of History and Material Culture*, ed. Ivan Gaskell and Sarah Anne Carter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

⁹³ As helpfully framed in: Aden Kumler, "Materials, Materia, "Materiality"," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph and Dana Arnold (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006): 95-118.

⁹⁴ As described in: Madeline Harrison Caviness, "Reception of Images by Medieval Viewers," in *A Companion to Medieval Art*, 119-146. For an example of the 'visual turn' in action: Jane Garnett and Gervase Rosser, "The Ex Voto between Domestic and Public Space: From Personal Testimony to Collective Memory," in *Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Maya Corry, Marco Faini, and Alessia Meneghin (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 45-62.

⁹⁵ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (Brooklyn, Zone Books: 2011); Julia M.H. Smith, "Portable Christianity: Relics in the Medieval West (c. 700 – 1200)," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 181 (2012): 143-167.

⁹⁶ Ivan Gaskell and Sarah Anne Carter, "Introduction: Why History and Material Culture?" *The Oxford Handbook of History and Material Culture*, 2.

⁹⁷ Marcus Stock and Nicola Vöhringer, "Spatial Practices, Medieval/Modern," in *Spatial Practices: Medieval/Modern*, ed. Marcus Stock and Nicola Vöhringer (Göttingen: V&R Press, 2014), 9.

⁹⁸ Medieval spatiality enjoys a robust historiographic tradition. For an overview of the tradition and a lengthy bibliography: Meredith Cohen and Fanny Madeline, eds. *Space in the Medieval West: Places, Territories and Imagined Geographies* (London: Ashgate, 2014).

functions were influenced by liturgical and devotional practices, artistic trends, and cultural memory. At the same time, these practices themselves were conditioned by spatial environments. Though a later period, Helen Hill's work has been especially helpful in conceptualising space in this manner.⁹⁹ Furthermore, I do not confine space to the interior. Processions and other outdoor rituals, for example, actively shaped urban boundaries, civic identity, and the relationship between sacred and secular landscapes.¹⁰⁰ This approach is critical for the study of medieval Naples, whose urban fabric underwent repeated reconfiguration by political change, ambitious building programmes, and natural disasters. Such developments not only altered the city's physical format but also the spatial contexts in which San Gennaro's cult developed. Spatiality is critical in the study of sanctity; the organisation of sacred places often structured interactions between saints, relics, and devotees. At the same time, following Sarah Hamilton and Andrew Spicer, I recognise that the borders between sacred and profane areas are not always fixed, an insight which will be particularly helpful in Chapter Four.¹⁰¹ Thus, to treat sacred space as an active historical agent in the formation and experience of San Gennaro's cult, I read architectural evidence alongside the historical, liturgical and devotional and thereby reconstruct how such spaces were invested with meaning during this period.

Methodologically, this dissertation is indebted to the tradition of historical anthropology associated with scholars such as Carlo Ginzburg, Peter Burke, and Richard Darnton.¹⁰² Rather than seeking broad generalisations or patterns about Neapolitan sanctity (a worthy investigation in its own right) my project examines one cult in depth. Each chapter offers microscopic analyses of manifestations of the cult within a specific historical context. In doing so, I aim to question assumptions derived from larger comparative models of Italian sanctity, as I explained above. At times, I employ a "thick description" of the cult, that is, I delve into the cultural and social contexts from which manifestations of Gennaro's cult emerge to explain its significance and meaning to late medieval Neapolitans.¹⁰³ As Darnton especially demonstrated, this methodological approach is especially useful in investigating the bizarre or the unusual. There are several components of Gennaro's medieval cult which fit this bill, including his miraculous blood and pig-game. Situating these facets into larger social analyses, *à la* Darnton's cat massacre, provides a helpful framework by which to think through the lived experience of this cult.¹⁰⁴

Of course, historical anthropology is not without its critique. As several authors have noted, especially Buc, this approach risks functionalism, that is: reducing religious devotion to expressions of social cohesion or political utility, thus giving the impression of one, unified

⁹⁹ Hills, *The Matter of Miracles*; Calaresu and Hills, ed. *New Approaches to Naples*.

¹⁰⁰ See esp.: Renata Salvarani, *The Body, the Liturgy, and the City: Shaping and Transforming Public Urban Spaces in Medieval Christianity* (Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2019).

¹⁰¹ Sarah Hamilton and Andrew Spicer, "Defining the Holy: The Delineation of Sacred Space," in *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton (London: Ashgate, 2006): 1 – 23.

¹⁰² Carlo Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi: il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500* (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1976); Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1984); Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). See especially Chapter Fourteen of Burke's work, regarding Naples and the Maisanello revolt.

¹⁰³ As developed by Clifford Geertz: Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

¹⁰⁴ Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*, 75-104.

experience.¹⁰⁵ Relatedly, devotions and their related rituals are often cast as the fruit of collective or subconscious motives. To combat these pitfalls, it may be helpful if I make explicit certain views about the development and experiences of late medieval sanctity. Undoubtedly, saints' cults contributed to civic identity, political legitimacy, and communal cohesion. Yet, these were neither its only purposes nor necessarily its primary motivations. On the contrary, other factors such as politics, economics, and theology were highly influential in the construction and experience of saintly cults. Moreover, we cannot negate the power of religious belief in this process, though it is not always possible to discern or make sense of its depths from the extant evidence. For these reasons, this dissertation was not conceived simply as a social history of a saint's cult but as an investigation into the various forces through which sanctity is constructed.

This dissertation begins with a Prologue which surveys the history of the cult from its inception in the fifth century through the dawn of the Angevin Regno. It is then divided into three parts each with two chapters, which combine thematic and chronological approaches. These chapters are intentionally grouped thematically: relics, experiences, and architectural innovations. Part One, "Materialising a Saint," investigates the introductions of, and uses for, the saint's skull and blood, as well as their respective reliquaries, in the fourteenth century. It opens with Chapter One, "San Gennaro of the Skull". After questioning the relic's abrupt appearance in 1305, I investigate King Charles II of Anjou and Archbishop Giacomo da Viterbo's intended liturgical and devotional uses for the skull and its accompanying head-reliquary. To do this, I survey other contemporary head-reliquaries which informed the monarch's commission. Chapter Two, "San Gennaro of the Western Schism," reevaluates how the relic, and its subsequent liquefaction, were conceived of in 1389. The anonymous history of southern Italy, the *Chronicon Siculum* (c. 1396), is my principal source for this chapter. Taken together, these two chapters ask fundamental questions pertaining to the cult of relics and their reliquaries: how was this sacred matter used and interpreted? Can we identify the shareholders who shaped how these objects were employed, presented, and understood by a wider audience? How did their containers influence how these relics were conceived and denote their liturgical use?

Part Two, "Experiencing San Gennaro," considers how San Gennaro's translation feast was experienced by participants of varying social and ecclesiastical strata. In both chapters, I rely on a model for the commemoration of civic feasts in central and northern Italy primarily provided by Diana Webb.¹⁰⁶ Situating San Gennaro's celebration within this framework allows me to flesh out how the feast was structured and its range of social functions, especially as direct evidence for Gennaro's feast is far more limited than those to the north of Naples. It opens with Chapter Three, "San Gennaro of the Inghirlandati," named for the so-called 'garlanded clergy' who emerge as the hallmark of this celebration. Utilising the neglected Orsini Constitutions, a series of liturgical reforms promulgated by Archbishop Giovanni Orsini in 1337, I reconstruct the celebration of this feast as prescribed by Orsini. Through a close reading of this text, I argue that the liturgy was capable of staging social and ecclesiastical hierarchies, recreating hagiographical legends, expressing the physical presence of a divine entity. Furthermore, I contend that, contrary to previous reductive interpretations, this event functioned as a Neapolitan civic feast, and was therefore a rich, communal liturgical and devotional experience. In this way, Gennaro's patronal celebration functioned similarly to those found in the northern half of the peninsula.

¹⁰⁵ For a full analysis of the method's shortcomings: Buc, *The Dangers*.

¹⁰⁶ Webb, *Patrons*.

From here, we continue this investigation into the latter half of the fifteenth century in Chapter Four, "San Gennaro of the Pig." This analysis concentrates on a peculiar, but little studied, pig game that was enacted in the cathedral complex during the feast. To explore how this event, like several other animal-related tournaments played on saints' feasts, functioned as a form of social bonding and a criticism of authority, I rely on two texts: Giovanni Pontano's *Charon*, published in 1491, and an Inquisition testimony recorded in 1580. As in the previous chapter, I situate this game within a broader framework of competitions provided by Webb. In these two chapters, I thus demonstrate that although Gennaro's feast functioned similarly to those further north, its development and experience were nevertheless contingent upon Naples' unique political and ecclesiastical circumstances. In doing so, I propose an alternative experience of an Italian patronal feast during this period.

Part Three, "Reconfiguring an Episcopal Cult," questions the strength of the episcopate's grip on San Gennaro's late fifteenth century cult. Here, I investigate two critical interventions into the cult, both of which hinged upon architectural initiatives: the discovery of Gennaro's bodily relics at the Monastery of Montevergine in 1480 and their subsequent interment in the cathedral's specially-made crypt chapel known as the *succorpo*. In Chapter Five, "St Januarius of Montevergine," we climb the mountaintop which hosts the Monastery of Montevergine. This chapter questions the traditional narrative surrounding Januarius' translation from Montevergine. By closely scrutinising the monastery's architectural history, provided by Francesco Aceto and Paola Vitolo¹⁰⁷, as well as its surviving liturgical texts, I posit that the discovery of the body relic was not so much an accident as it was the product of an intentional relic-hunt. Furthermore, I explore how Januarius' cult manifested at the monastery and what uses the monks had for his remains. This investigation not only reveals Januarius' integration into the monastic community, but also a markedly different interpretation of the saint from its contemporary Neapolitan iterations. It is for this reason chapter five refers to the saint as 'Januarius' rather than Gennaro.

Chapter Six explores Oliviero and Alessandro Carafa's intentions, those realised and otherwise, to dramatically reshape Gennaro's cult in Naples during the transition between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This chapter seeks to incorporate aspects of their project which have been largely neglected, including a new saint's *vita* and feast day. Furthermore, this chapter turns attention away from their attempts to privatise the cult, which has consumed previous scholarship, and recasts the *succorpo* as a public saint's shrine, complete with a papal indulgence. To do this, it opens with a brief analysis of the *vita* written by Fra Bernardino of Sicily by 1503.¹⁰⁸ It then goes on to question the brothers' vision for the patron's cult and explores how many of his initiatives went unrealised or were unevenly enacted. This will lead us into a broader discussion on the increasingly public dimension of Gennaro's sanctity, which manifested acutely in the reforms of 1525.

Together, these three parts explore how San Gennaro's sanctity was constructed and trace the reinvigoration of his patronal status across the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Before we can do either, however, it would be helpful to recount the history of the cult from its inception until the fourteenth century.

¹⁰⁷ Francesco Aceto and Paola Vitolo, eds., *L'Abbazia di Montevergine dalle origini alla ricostruzione barocca: architettura, topografia sacra, arti figurative* (Naples: Editori Paparo, 2023).

¹⁰⁸ I rely on Nadia Ciampaglia's transcription, but all translations are my own: Nadia Ciampaglia, "'La Vita di S. Gennaro' di Fra Bernardino Siculo alias Bernardino de Renda de Pactis Siciliano," *Contributi di Filologia dell'Italia Mediana* XXII (2008): 77–158.

Prologue: The Cult of St Januarius (c.400 – c.1300)

The cult of St Januarius was born in a Roman amphitheatre in the city of Pozzuoli sometime during the reign of Emperor Diocletian, as is well recounted in the saint's hagiographic *dossier*. The following few pages surveys the developments which followed between the fifth through the thirteenth centuries. It is not a full investigation of this period. Rather, it is designed to introduce the saint, his companions, his legends and a few lingering historiographic problems. It will also demonstrate the longevity of Januarius' patronage over Naples. This Prologue proceeds in chronological order, beginning with an overview of his legends and their respective manuscript traditions. From there, I continue by surveying the rich body of evidence from the early medieval period and how such sources diminished across the central Middle Ages. This exploration concludes at the dawn of the Angevin conquest of Naples, which serves as our jumping-off point in Chapter One. Before turning to that chapter, however, I will summarise a few key themes which emerge from this review.

Januarius' modest hagiographic dossier has received a great deal of scholarly attention.¹⁰⁹ While the debates relating to manuscript tradition are not our purpose here, I might begin by roughly outlining the provenance of the most important texts. San Gennaro's martyrdom appears in eight early medieval hagiographic sources.¹¹⁰ Of these, two emerge as the most significant: the *Acta Bononiensia* (*AB*) (BHL 4132) and the *Acta Vaticana* (*AV*) (BHL 4115).¹¹¹ As Domenico Mallardo and Antonio Vuolo have established, the other six accounts were adapted from either the *AB*, the *AV*, or some combination of both. These texts also serve several different purposes; some recount the martyrdoms of Januarius' companions, others are a compendium of local martyrs, others serve liturgical purposes, and one refers to the translation of Januarius' remains.¹¹² For the sake of simplicity, I will only outline the contents of the *AB* and *AV* here.

Our earliest account of Gennaro's martyrdom and subsequent translation is the *AB*, an anonymous *passio*. While the legend has been dated to the end of the sixth century, its earliest surviving copy survives in a twelfth century manuscript, originally housed at the Monastery of San Stefano dei Celestini.¹¹³ The *AB* is set in the era of the Diocletian persecutions, while Dracontius was the governor of Campania and Januarius was the bishop of Benevento. According to the text, Gennaro travelled to Miseno to visit a friend, the deacon Sossius, who was recently imprisoned. His deacon, Festus, and lector, Desiderius, act as his travel companions. In Miseno, the three Beneventans were arrested for their Christian faith. The Beneventan bishop was then interrogated by the governor Dracontius, who he fails to convert. Instead, Januarius and his friends are sentenced to death. The four men are taken to Pozzuoli where they are first thrown into an

¹⁰⁹ Domenico Mallardo, "San Gennaro e compagni nei più antichi testi e monumenti," *Rendiconti della Real Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti della Società Reale di Napoli* 20 (1939–1940): 161–268; Delehay, "Hagiographie," 1–33; Antonio Vuolo, "La 'Passio S. Januarii' nelle epitomi medievali," *Campania Sacra* 20 (1989): 268–92; Granier, "San Gennaro e compagni," 251–74.

¹¹⁰ Januarius' texts represent only a fraction of Naples' impressive hagiographical output during the early medieval period: Oldfield, *Sanctity and Pilgrimage*, 21–50.

¹¹¹ BHL 4132: *AASS*, Sept. VI, 870–872; BHL 4115: *AASS*, Sept. VI, 866–869.

¹¹² The other eight include: *Translatio S. Sossii* (BHL 4135), *Acta Puteolana* (BHL 4133), *Ad gloriam laudemque* (BHL 4120–4123), *In Campania Civitate Puteolana* (BHL 4136), *Strenuissime* (BHL 4137); *Tempore quo Karus* (BHL 4124–4130); the *Passio* according to John the Deacon, and an unpublished, untitled *Acta* housed at Kynzward. For summaries of these texts, their provenance, and their dissemination, I turn to: Vuolo, "La 'Passio'."

¹¹³ By Domenico Mallardo, with the general consensus of the historical community. *Ibid.*, 269.

amphitheatre filled with wild beasts. Januarius managed to tame the animals, and everyone temporarily avoids death. To ensure their execution, Dracontius then orders that the group be beheaded. While marching back towards the amphitheatre, a local beggar asks Januarius for a piece of his clothing. The bishop promises to gift the man his *orarium*, that is, the cloth tied around his eyes during his execution. Three citizens of Pozzuoli, the deacon Proculus and two laymen, Eutichus and Acutius, further interrupt procedures by attempting to plead Januarius' innocence. Their act of compassion leads to their own demise; the three men are thrust into the amphitheatre alongside Januarius, Sossius, Festus and Desiderius. Together, the seven men are decapitated on 19 September.

From there, the *AB* recounts the fate of Gennaro's remains. The bishop's body was then tossed into an unmarked grave near the Solfatara (a volcanic crater near Pozzuoli). At some later point, after the reign of Diocletian, the Christian community in Naples returned to the site to claim Gennaro's remains. With the saint's help, who appeared to members of the search party in a vision, the community unearthed the holy relics and translated them to Naples. While Gennaro's body is only referenced to briefly in the *AB*, the discovery of individual relics, namely the martyr's finger and his *orarium*, is painstakingly reported. First, Gennaro appears posthumously to a Christian man and directs him to search for his finger, which had been haphazardly cut off during his martyrdom. The man retrieved the bone and, as per the saint's instructions, reunited it with the corpse. Gennaro similarly appeared to the beggar and offered him his *orarium*, thus fulfilling the promise he made while enroute to the amphitheatre. The *AB* specifies that the relics were subsequently interred within the Basilica of San Gennaro *extra moenia* which, as we will see momentarily, was built adjacent to Naples' catacombs.

The *Acta Vaticana* slightly amended and expanded upon this narrative. The dating of this text has proved more difficult than that of the *AB*. While Mallardo proposed the mid-ninth century, Vuolo and Granier have questioned whether it might have been written earlier.¹¹⁴ It is clear, however, that the *AV* is a later, adapted edition of the *AB*. While still set amidst the Diocletian persecutions, the aggressor of the *AV* is Timothy, the governor of Pozzuoli, not Dracontius. The *AV* also inserts a second failed attempt on Gennaro's life. Before his *damnatio ad bestias*, Gennaro is thrown into a fiery furnace from which he, and his companions, emerge unscathed. Whereas the *AB* only details the fate of Gennaro's relics, the *AV* also notes those of his companions. Furthermore, the *AV* transformed Gennaro's brief interrogation by Dracontius into a fully-fledged dialogue with Timothy. Nevertheless, the similarities between the *AB* and *AV* outweigh their differences. Both the texts prioritise the events which lead to the saint's violent demise. Neither recount any details of the martyr's life, beyond his position as the archbishop of Benevento. Though both date Gennaro's martyrdom to 19 September, neither offer a year. Only in the early modern period is the timing specified as 305 CE.¹¹⁵

Across the hagiographical accounts, San Gennaro had six companions in total: Eutichus, Acutius, Proculus, Sossius, Festus, and the Desiderius.¹¹⁶ Comprised of both clergymen and laymen, this cohort represented various cities in late antique Campania, including Benevento,

¹¹⁴ Mallardo, "San Gennaro e compagni."; Vuolo, "La "Passio"."; Granier, "San Gennaro e compagni."

¹¹⁵ As far as I am aware, Davide Romeo was the first to specify the year in his *vita* of San Gennaro, published in 1571. See: Davide Romeo, *Septem sancti custodes ac proaesides urbis Neapolis* (Rome: Josephus Cacchium, 1571), 46.

¹¹⁶ For the evolution of these cults, and their respective hagiographies: Mallardo, "San Gennaro e compagni," 161–268

Miseno, and Pozzuoli. Throughout the history of their cults, the sanctity of these martyrs was inextricably linked to that of San Gennaro. Accounts of their martyrdoms consistently reference their relationship to San Gennaro, including their shared executions. Nevertheless, these companions enjoyed their own individual feast days and individualised hagiographic accounts of their deaths were produced during the early medieval period.¹¹⁷ As we will see further in Chapter One, the cults of Sossius, Eutichus and Acutius were especially popular in medieval Naples.

The memory of Januarius' martyrdom and translation was transmitted primarily through martyrologies and other liturgical materials during the medieval period. His *dies natalis* is attested in several early medieval martyrologies, including the *Martyrologium Hieronimianum*¹¹⁸ and the Venerable Bede's.¹¹⁹ Taking from both the *AB* and the *AV*, Bede maintained the most basic narrative elements: Januarius' episcopal status, his six companions, and Januarius' interment in Naples. This entry was copied and further abbreviated in subsequent martyrologies, including those of Usuard and Notker.¹²⁰ While Januarius' legend circulated widely in the early medieval period through these liturgical texts, his *passio* was not included in the more popular legendaries of the late medieval period, such as *The Golden Legend*. Januarius' absence from these materials attests to the localisation of his cult in and around Naples during the later Middle Ages.¹²¹

Two competing traditions regarding the translation spring up in the early medieval period. Bishop John I (414 to 441) was first attributed with the event in the *Gesta Episcoporum Neapolitanorum*.¹²² This anonymous eighth-century account of the deeds of the Neapolitan bishops remains a critical resource for the history of the church in Naples and its saints. A few centuries later, St Bishop Severus (363 - 410) was credited with the transfer in his eleventh century *vita*.¹²³ Though the Severian tradition rose in popularity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,¹²⁴ contemporary historians largely favour the Johannian. Before the excavations of the Catacombs of San Gennaro in the 1970s, the date of the translation relied upon these textual traditions. Then, the discovery of the so-called 'tomb of the bishops,' which archaeologists have identified as Januarius' first Neapolitan tomb, further corroborated a fifth-century translation.¹²⁵ During the late antique and early medieval periods, the catacombs doubled as an episcopal burial ground as well as a locus for Neapolitan sanctity. Those interred here included St Aspren, the first

¹¹⁷ For their hagiographic materials and cults: *ibid*.

¹¹⁸ Jerome's martyrology lists several Januarian feast days, not only on 19 September. For Januarius' inclusion in this martyrology: "Record S01322" *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity*, accessed 06 January 2026, <http://csa.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=S01322>

¹¹⁹ Quentin, *Les Martyrologes Historiques du Moyen-Age*, 440, 483.

¹²⁰ Antonio Vuolo's investigation into the dissemination of the *passio* is especially helpful here: Antonio Vuolo, "La 'passio S. Januarii' nelle epitomi medievali," *Campania Sacra* 20 (2) (1989): 268 - 292.

¹²¹ With one exception: the relics of Januarius, Proculus, and Eutichus were also translated to the Abbey of Augia Dives (Reichenau) during the ninth century. See fn 14.

¹²² Januarius' translation appears in the first half of the text which was written by an anonymous author sometime in the late 8th or early 9th century. Berto, ed. *The Deeds*, 9.

¹²³ For St Severus: Gennaro Galante, "Ricerche sull'origine della catacomba di San Severo in Napoli." *Atti della Reale Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti* 12 (1886): 69-99; Domenico Ambrasi, *S. Severo: Un vescovo di Napoli nell'imminente Medioevo (364-410)* (Napoli, Insigne collegiata severiana, 1974); Carlo Ebanista, "Gli spazi funerari in Napoli nella tarda antichità: la catacomba di S. Severo," in *Territorio, insediamenti e necropoli fra tarda antichità e Alto Medioevo*, Carlo Ebanista and Marcello Rotili, eds. (Naples: Rogiosi Editore, 2016): 169-202.

¹²⁴ As popularised in early modern Neapolitan histories, such as: Camillo Tutini, *Memorie della vita, miracoli, e culto di San Gianuario Martire* (Napoli: Ottavio Beltrano, 1633), 66. As we will see in Chapter Six, the design of the *succorpo* (finished in 1503) also reflects this tradition.

¹²⁵ See fn 26.

bishop of Naples who was purportedly baptised by St Peter¹²⁶, and St Agrippinus, the sixth bishop of Naples.¹²⁷ Otherwise, frescoes throughout the catacombs attest to a flourishing Januarian cult which concentrated at the site and its adjoining basilica during this period. One image in particular depicts the saint next to Mount Vesuvius, thus testifying to the saint's intercession against volcanic eruption as early as the fifth century.¹²⁸

The Basilica of San Gennaro *extra moenia* was built between the fifth and sixth centuries.¹²⁹ Constructed atop and alongside the catacombs for easy access to its tombs, the basilica was the centre of Januarian cultic activity during this period.¹³⁰ As several historians have demonstrated, this space, the basilica became a critical devotional site and locus for episcopal authority during the early medieval period. It also likely that the space was utilised as a second, extra-mural cathedral at least during the eighth century, if not during others.¹³¹ As we will see throughout this thesis, it remained a critical liturgical site during the late medieval period.

During the early medieval period, St Januarius emerged as the patron of the church in Naples, and the co-patron of the city of Naples alongside St Agrippinus. Januarius' ecclesiastical patronage is best seen in *De Obitu Paulini*, a fifth century account of the death of Paulinus of Nola written by the presbyter Uranius.¹³² According to the author, Paulinus had a vision of Januarius and Martin of Tours, two exemplars of episcopal sanctity. The former is described as: "bishop and martyr, who illuminates the church in the city of Naples."¹³³ Januarius also appears as the defender of Naples in several early medieval miracle narratives. In the *Ex Miraculis Sancti Agrippini*, Januarius and Agrippinus rescue the city from a Saracen naval invasion.¹³⁴ As this account demonstrates, the pair often shared civic honours during this period, with some evidence suggesting that Agrippinus was of more significance. The ninth century *vita* of Neapolitan bishop St Athanasius, for example, labelled him as the city's patron and defender and Januarius as the city's "tutor".¹³⁵ Regardless of the precise power dynamic, the extant evidence demonstrates that these two figures were Naples' most critical patrons during this period.

¹²⁶ Aspren's baptism is recounted in his *vita*: Delehay, "Hagiographie," 1–33; Thomas Granier, "Lieux de mémoire - lieux de culte à Naples aux V-X siècles: saint Javier, saint Agrippin, et le "souvenir des évêques", in *Faire mémoire. Souvenir et commémoration au Moyen âge*, ed. Claude Carozzi and Huguette Taviani-Carozzi (Aix-en-Provence: L'université de Provence, 1999), 6–8.

¹²⁷ Berto, ed. *The Deeds*, 3–4.

¹²⁸ Ciavolino, "Nuovi affreschi catacombe di S. Gennaro," 357–78.

¹²⁹ For an overview and recent theories regarding its construction: Carlo Ebanista, "La basilica sub divo nel complesso cimiteriale di S. Gennaro a Napoli: spazio liturgico, culto martiriale e utilizzo funerario," *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 20 (2014): 498 – 512.

¹³⁰ As demonstrated by: Granier, "Un miracle," 957–66; Carlo Ebanista, "Nuovi dati sulla basilica di S. Gennaro extra moenia a Napoli tra medioevo ed età contemporanea," in *Le Archeologie di Marilli*, ed. Paolo de Vingo (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2018), 305–77.

¹³¹ Vinni Lucherini, *La cattedrale di Napoli: storia, architettura, storiografia di un monumento medievale* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2009), 90–92.

¹³² AASS, Jun. IV., 223–225.

¹³³ "Januarius, episcopus simul et martyr, Neapolitanae Urbis illustrat ecclesiam." Translation my own; transcription in: Mallardo, "San Gennaro e compagni nei più antichi testi e monumenti," 161.

¹³⁴ *Ex Miraculis Sancti Agrippini*, MGH SRLI, 463–465. For an analysis: Granier, "Lieux de mémoire."

¹³⁵ *Vita et translatio S. Athanasii Neapolitani Episcopi (BHL 735 e 737) sec. IX.*, ed. Antonio Vuolo (Rome: Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 2001), 118.

Also during this period, Januarius' translation to Naples was celebrated with a feast, as attested in the so-called "Neapolitan Marble Calendar."¹³⁶ Consisting of two large marble slabs, this calendar was discovered in the threshold of the Basilica of San Giovanni Maggiore in Naples in 1742. It consists of 365 days of liturgical feasts celebrated in Naples and has been loosely dated to the ninth century. This calendar dates Januarius' translation feast to 13 April. It also notes the *dies natalis* on 19 September. Though this calendar confirms the celebration of the saint's transfer during this period, if not earlier, we have no other evidence illustrating how this feast was commemorated. It is also the only explicit reference to a translation feast until the Orsini Constitutions in 1337. We are thus left with a considerable gap in evidence regarding this celebration, as we will explore further in Chapter Three.

In 831, Januarius' relics were purportedly stolen from the basilica by Duke Sico of Benevento, a Lombard prince.¹³⁷ Continuing his father's relic-acquisition project, the prince gathered Januarius and his companions Festus and Desiderius and deposited them in the Beneventan cathedral.¹³⁸ Evidence for the theft survives chiefly in Beneventan textual and archaeological evidence. For example, an anonymous, but almost certainly Beneventan, author composed a translation account shortly after the event.¹³⁹ This account was subsequently copied into several other hagiographic works and histories. Additionally, Duke Sico's epitaph poetically attributed him with the relic acquisition.¹⁴⁰ The theft was not solely recorded in Benevento, however; much later, it appears at Montecassino, as recorded in the first portion of *Cronaca di Montecassino*, written in 1100 by Leone Marsciano.¹⁴¹ Otherwise, accounts dated between the ninth and twelfth century testify to a flourishing Januarian cult in Benevento, including several miracles at the site of his tomb.¹⁴² Until 1129, the relics are documented in the Beneventan cathedral.¹⁴³ After that, they do not appear again until their abrupt reemergence at the Monastery of Montevergine in 1480, an event I will return to momentarily.

¹³⁶ After their discovery, the slabs were moved to the archbishop's palace, where they remain. The calendar has been the subject of several historical investigations. Delehay, Mallardo, and Luongo have broadly dated the calendar to the 9th century, around the time the *AV* was written. See: Alessio Mazzocchi, *Dissertatio historica de cathedralis ecclesiae neapolitanae* (Naples: Novello de Bonis, 1751); Hippolyte Delehay, "Le calendrier de marbre," *Analecta Bollandiana* 57 (1939); Gennaro Luongo, "Il calendario marmoreo napoletano: Un approccio linguistico," *Bollettino Linguistico Campano* 13/14 (2008): 1–24; Carlo Ebanista, "Il calendario marmoreo napoletano: dalla basilica di S. Giovanni Maggiore all'atrio paleocristiano dell'insula episcopalis," in *Acri Sanctorum Investigatori: Miscellanea di Studi in Memoria di Gennaro Luongo*, ed. Luca Arcari (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2019), 639–76.

¹³⁷ For an in-depth treatment of the translation and the problems it presents: Mario Iadanza, *Principi, vescovi e reliquie a Benevento: la traslazione di San Gennaro* (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2021).

¹³⁸ The three bodies were only a fraction of the sacred remains acquired by the Lombards during this period; estimates suggest that roughly the relics of 145 saints were translated to the cathedral in Benevento between the eighth and ninth centuries. For the Lombard relic-acquisition project: Oldfield, *Sanctity and Pilgrimage*, 23–24; Thomas Granier, "Napolitains et Lombards aux VIIIe-XIe siècles. De la guerre des peuples à la 'guerre des saints' en Italie du Sud," *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Moyen-Age, Temps modernes* 108 (1996): 403–50.

¹³⁹ For the translation account and its dissemination: Iadanza, *Principi*, 133–61.

¹⁴⁰ Daniele Ferraiuolo, *Tra canone e innovazione. Lavorazione delle epigrafi nella "Langobardia minor" (secoli VIII-X)* (Florence: All'Insegna del Giglio, 2013), 27–31.

¹⁴¹ Granier, "San Gennaro e compagni," 258.

¹⁴² For the Beneventan textual tradition: Iadanza, *Principi*, 35–80.

¹⁴³ In 1129, as documented in the *Chronicon Beneventanum*, Januarius' relics, along with his companions, were removed from the altar in the cathedral and translated elsewhere in the church, so that the saints might be better honoured. *Ibid.*, 103–04.

In contrast, Naples was markedly silent about the theft of its patron. Between the ninth and sixteenth centuries, only one Neapolitan narrative of the theft survives: the *Acta S. Proculi* (BHL 4133).¹⁴⁴ This account of the martyrdom of Proculus ends with a brief note on the veneration of Proculus' and Januarius' relics. According to the *Acta*, the Neapolitans venerated the whole of Januarius' corporeal remains until the Lombards stole the saint's body. After that, only the martyr's skull remained in Naples. Vuolo has roughly dated the text to after the ninth century.¹⁴⁵ As we will see in Chapter One, I believe the dating and contents of this account to be highly suspect. Regardless, the theft does not appear again in the Neapolitan evidence until 1503.¹⁴⁶ Naples' limited acknowledgment of the theft, as well as the *Acta's* reference to the skull, has led some to argue that saintly remains continued to be venerated at the basilica after 831.¹⁴⁷ As we will continue to see in this Prologue, it is certainly possible that the two cities maintained distinct but competing relic cults during the central Middle Ages. However, the Neapolitan evidence relating to Januarius' bones, or lack thereof, presents numerous problems for the later medieval period. Whether or not such a relic cult was maintained in Naples is one of the major discussion points of the following chapter.

Between the ninth and eleventh centuries, the saint's identity as the city's defender emerges as a major theme from several hagiographic texts. I already noted above, for example, the Saracen invasion described in the *Ex Miraculi*. Two other sources from this period are further illuminating. They include an anonymous early medieval homily (BHL 4138) and the *Cronaca di Montecassino*, written in the second quarter of the twelfth century by Peter the Deacon. The former is a survey of miracles attributed to the saint, including bodily healings, raising children from the dead, and recurring intercessions against volcanic eruptions.¹⁴⁸ It was almost certainly read on his *dies natalis*.¹⁴⁹ As Granier has shown, this sermon is demonstrative of a flourishing cult, one rooted in thaumaturgical relics and the saint's efficacious patronage. Several layers of memories of the saint are represented, including various episodes of his intercession across the centuries, such as his protection against Vesuvius and invaders, and more recent miracles, including the resurrection of a child. It also demonstrates how during the early medieval period, the cult was anchored to the Basilica of San Gennaro, which not only hosts his remains but also several miraculous images of the saint.

This sermon is difficult to date; Vuolo and Granier have proposed two different theories. While the former has loosely dated it between the sixth and ninth centuries, the latter believes it was written in the aftermath of the iconoclasm crisis, that is, sometime after 843. Should Granier's theory be accepted, this sermon would appear to validate the presence of Januarius' relics at the basilica after Duke Sico's alleged theft. However, its manuscript tradition only further complicates what was already a thorny picture. The earliest extant version, written at the Monastery of Montecassino in 1010, suggests that aspects of the homily were retroactively inserted, such as a

¹⁴⁴ BHL 4133: *AASS, Sept.* VI, 872–74.

¹⁴⁵ For the little we know: Antonio Vuolo, "Rilettura del dossier agiografico di san Gennaro e compagni," *Campania Sacra* 37 (2006): 179–222.

¹⁴⁶ The theft appears in a poem written by Fra Bernardino of Sicily (c.1503), which I analyse in Chapter Six.

¹⁴⁷ As argued in: Lucherini, "San Gennaro negato."

¹⁴⁸ *De Miraculis S. Januarii* (BHL 4138): *AASS, Sept.* VI, 884 – 888. See Granier's investigation: Granier, "Un miracle accompli par le contact d'une effigie de saint Janvier à Naples au IXe siècle," 957–66.

¹⁴⁹ As noted by the author and further demonstrated by Granier: *ibid.*, 957.

reference to the looting of the Gauls.¹⁵⁰ Consequently, it remains difficult to securely date not only the original text, but also that of its stages of adaptation and transmission.

Nevertheless, the preservation of this homily demonstrates the critical significance of Januarius' previous miracles and presents the basilica as an important Neapolitan sacred space in at least the eleventh century.¹⁵¹ The active adaptation of the text suggests that the saint remained an important patron and locus for Naples' historical memory. However, it does not appear to have circulated widely in the later Middle Ages. Several of the stories contained here, including the resurrection of the child, do not appear in later accounts, such as the *Cronaca de Partenope* (c. 1350).¹⁵² Furthermore, there is no evidence that this manuscript was copied again after 1010, suggesting that the memory of this narrative faded with time.

The portion of the *Cronaca di Montecassino* written by Peter the Deacon, sometime in the second quarter of the twelfth century, similarly presents the saint as an important Neapolitan patron.¹⁵³ The text recounts the attempted siege of Naples by Prince Richard of Capua in 1078. While approaching Naples, the legend narrates, the prince notices several figures dressed in white. Richard originally believes one of these to be the archbishop, but the cleric was ill and bedridden. Ultimately, it is revealed that the figure is St Januarius, armed and ready to protect his city. Through the saint's defence, the prince's invasion fails, and the city temporarily avoids Norman capture. Januarius' sole appearance demonstrates his position as the city's principal divine protector.

Taken together, the *Ex Miraculi*, the homily, and the *Cronaca di Montecassino* suggest that Januarius remained a critical Neapolitan patron across the tenth, eleventh and early twelfth centuries. The emphasis upon his ability to physically protect the city reflects Naples' broader political-military context. Across this period, several entities attempted to invade, including the Lombards and then eventually the Normans.¹⁵⁴ The city was attacked on several occasions, necessitating a powerful heavenly intercessor. Likely for this reason, these texts not only emphasise the saint's long-standing history of divine intercession but also newer occurrences. Furthermore, the *Cronaca di Montecassino*'s reveals a great deal about the saint's relationship with the local archiepiscopate. In the *Cronaca di Montecassino*, Januarius is mistaken for the archbishop, underscoring the conflation of the saint and cleric's identities. At a bare minimum, this brief passage demonstrates Januarius' sustained patronage over the Neapolitan church during this period. However, it also indicates the intimate relationship shared between the saint and the episcopal office. By the time of the *Cronaca di Montecassino*'s composition, Naples had been elevated to an archdiocese (and its bishops to archbishops) for over two centuries.¹⁵⁵ Mistaking

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 964; Granier, "San Gennaro e compagni," 254.

¹⁵¹ Granier, "Un miracle accompli," 964.

¹⁵² We will hear more about the *Cronaca* in Chapter Two.

¹⁵³ *Chron. Cas.*, III.45, 423.

¹⁵⁴ For Norman southern Italy: G. A. Loud, *The Latin Church in Norman Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Paul Oldfield, *City and Community in Norman Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁵⁵ The elevation likely occurred in the late tenth century; Sergio II, whose episcopate began in 990, is commonly held as the first archbishop of Naples. Across this century, the papacy established several archdioceses in southern Italy, including Benevento and Capua, to compete with – and ultimately push out – the Byzantine church. Naples' elevation was likely a part of this project. For such papal ambitions, see: For more on this project: Graham Loud, "Southern Italy in the Tenth Century," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. T. Reuter (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), vol. 3: 630-31; Bridget Kathryn Riley, *Quotquot Invenire Posset: Inventiones and Historical Memory in Southern Italy, c. 900-1150* (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 2020), 22-23. For Sergio II: Daniello Maria Zigarelli, *Biografie dei vescovi e arcivescovi della Chiesa di Napoli* (Napoli: G. Gioja, 1861), 47.

Januarius' appearance for that of the archbishop suggests that, despite any theft of the saint's remains and the expansion of the metropolitan see, this holy bishop remained a critical patron over Naples' episcopal office. It may also suggest that Januarius served as a model for Naples' ecclesiastical leaders; in this case, such clerics were called to defend their church both in the spiritual and physical sense.

During this period, Januarius' legend and patronage was also maintained in dialogue with other popular Neapolitan saints, including his companions. This was the case, for example, with St Sossius, the deacon. After his remains were rediscovered in his hometown of Miseno in the early tenth century, Sossius' relics were translated to the monastery of St Severino in Naples, thereby reviving his cult within the city. An account of the translation, the *Translatio S. Sosii*, was written by John the Deacon, around 906. John depicts Sossius' relationship to Januarius in great detail, suggesting that it was written, at least in part, to preserve the latter's place as the patron of Naples after the disappearance of his remains.¹⁵⁶ Januarius' prominent status is further testified in the translation account of Eutichus and Acutius, who were moved from the catacombs to the cathedral (the Stefania) in the ninth century. The *translatio*, likely written between the tenth and eleventh centuries, similarly presents links the pair's martyrdom with that of Januarius, thus underscoring Eutichus' and Acutius' role as the companions of an even greater holy figure.¹⁵⁷ For our purposes, these written records emphasise the continued importance placed upon Januarius during this period, even when evidence pertaining to his cult seems comparatively lacking.

Thus far, I have established that Januarius' patronal cult persisted in Naples, even after the potential relic-theft, in the central Middle Ages. After the eleventh century, however, the surviving textual evidence denotes a shift. With the exception of the *Cronaca di Montecassino*, no new interventions by the saint are recorded. Rather, between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, several iterations of older hagiographic texts were copied and adapted. This includes, for example, the *AB* and *AV*.¹⁵⁸ The adaptations of such texts, rather than the creation of new ones, shows that Naples' impressive hagiographic output of the early Middle Ages had come to an end.¹⁵⁹ On the one hand, this preservation suggests that the memory of the saint remained of critical significance to Naples and nearby monasteries, such as Montecassino. On the other, the emphasis on the distant past rather than the present suggests that the Neapolitan people were, to quote Granier, "living on the legacy" of the saint's memory during this period.¹⁶⁰

This may suggest that cultic activity waned during the central Middle Ages, particularly during Naples' Norman and Hohenstaufen periods. This theory is bolstered by the scarcity of any devotional or liturgical evidence pertaining to the cult during this period. One of the few exceptions includes the production of the anonymous *Ad gloriam laudemque*, a homiletic version of the *AV*.¹⁶¹ Originally produced in Naples in the mid- to late-ninth century, this iteration of Januarius' legend was copied several times into the thirteenth century. Its preservation suggests that it was read aloud in the city, likely on a feast day. Further evidence of the celebration of Januarius' feast is based on

¹⁵⁶ Riley, *Quotquot Invenire Posset*, 38. For Sossius and Januarius more broadly, see her whole chapter: pp. 33-66.

¹⁵⁷ *Passio et Translatio sanctorum Eutychetis et Actuii auctore Raynerio*, in Nicolo Carminio Falcone, *L'Intera Istoria di San Gennaro della Famiglia* (Napoli: Felice Mosca, 1713), 181-86. For an analysis: Granier, "San Gennaro e compagni," 255-56.

¹⁵⁸ As well as several others, which others have efficiently explored: Vuolo, "La 'Passio'. "; Granier, "San Gennaro e compagni," 264-66.

¹⁵⁹ Oldfield, *Sanctity and Pilgrimage*, 21-51.

¹⁶⁰ Granier, "San Gennaro e compagni," 264.

¹⁶¹ For analyses: Vuolo, "La 'Passio'. "; Granier, "San Gennaro e compagni," 253-56.

a bull promulgated by Pope Clement IV in 1268, shortly after the Angevin conquest of Naples (1266). Lamenting the feast's lack of attendance on account of the grape harvest, the pontiff transferred the date of his feast from 19 September to 8 May so that this patron might receive his proper, communal veneration.¹⁶² As several historians have noted, the decision seems to have amalgamated the *dies natalis* with his translation feast, since the latter was customarily celebrated in the spring, as we will see in Chapter Three.¹⁶³ It has further been suggested that this bull was the result of a petition from then archbishop of Naples, Aiglerio, who we will meet in the following chapter.¹⁶⁴ The reduction of feasts from two to one raises several questions about the popularity of Januarius' cult during this period. Perhaps, as per the pope's remarks, the feast was not widely attended, making it easier to transfer. Without further evidence, we can only speculate on how Januarius' cult functioned in Naples before the mid-thirteenth century.

Conclusions

This brief survey has outlined the key elements of Januarius' cult which emerged across the fifth through thirteenth centuries. Central to his sanctity was his enduring patronage over the city of Naples. On repeated occasions, Januarius is cited as the city's protector and defender, whether acting independently or alongside Agrippinus. His relics were considered miraculous; Neapolitans came to his tomb near the Basilica of San Gennaro to request healing miracles. From at least the fifth century, Januarius also came to embody the authority of the church in Naples and acted as its patron. His close ties to the episcopal office, likewise attested from this early period, is expressed in multiple textual traditions. In *De Obitu Paulini*, Januarius signifies the venerability of the episcopal role; in the *Cronaca di Montecassino*, his image was conflated with that of the Neapolitan bishop, thus underscoring both his patronage over the office as well as his role as the head of the local church.

Such examples demonstrate that across the early and central Middle Ages, St Januarius was recognised as a patron, if not the principal patron, of the church in Naples, its episcopal office, and indeed the city at large. As this thesis will illustrate, these components constituted the essential foundations upon which the revival of his cult in the fourteenth century was constructed. At the same time, this Prologue has highlighted the difficulties in constructing the cult's trajectory during the Norman and Hohenstaufen periods. While still acknowledged as a patronal figure, the marked paucity of devotional and liturgical evidence suggests a decline in the cult's prominence. Nevertheless, Januarius' past lives were not forgotten nor wholly neglected, but preserved through the adaptation of pre-existing hagiographic texts. This period, characterised more by preservation than by innovation, serves as the point of departure for this project.

¹⁶² The bull is now lost. It survives in transcriptions. See: Tutini, *Memorie*, 123–24; Bartholomew Chioccarelli, *Antistitum praeclarissimae Neapolitanae ecclesiae catalogus* (Naples: Francisci Savij, 1643), 172–73.

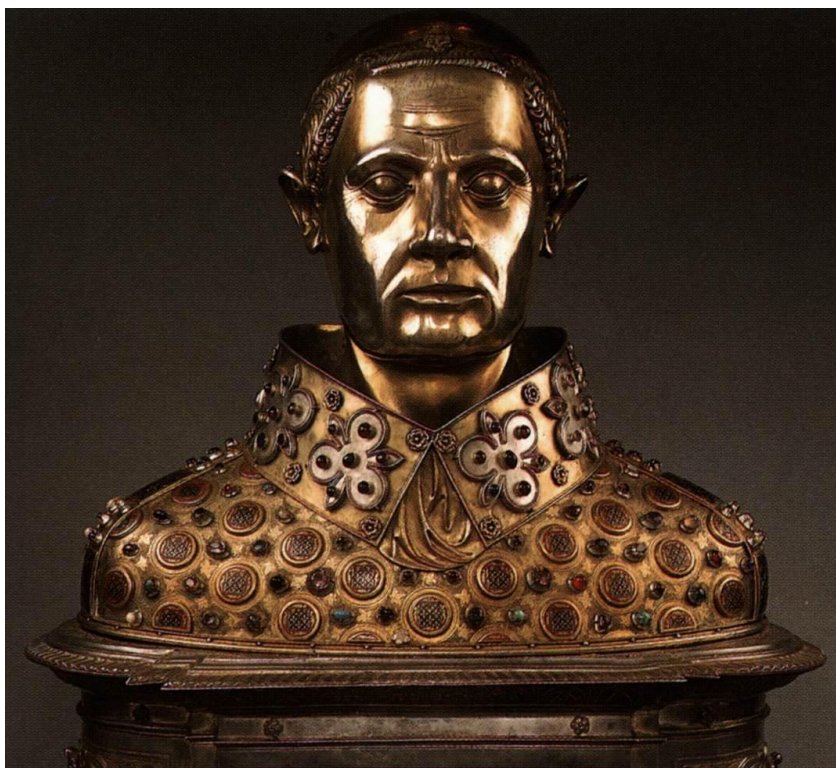
¹⁶³ Lucherini, "Le processione," 14–15; de Ceglia, *The Natural History*, 185.

¹⁶⁴ de Ceglia, *The Natural History*, 185.

Part One: Materialising a Patron Saint

Chapter One: San Gennaro of the Skull

Introduction:



*Image One: Reliquary Bust of San Gennaro, c. 1304*¹⁶⁵

Standing at 31cm tall, the reliquary bust of San Gennaro is a hyper-realistic, highly stylised, representation of Naples' patron saint. With a strict attention to detail, silversmiths chiselled the saint's cheekbones and carved wrinkle lines onto his forehead. His face is solemn, but authoritative; his eyes only look straight ahead. Small curls are meticulously pinned to the sides of his tonsured head. He wears episcopal vestments; his collar and alb are laden with jewels and floral imagery. The coat of arms of the Neapolitan branch of the House of Anjou is rhythmically patterned across the saint's chest and back. The iconography leaves no room for error: this man is a bishop, and an Angevin one at that. Today, the bust is affectionately known in Naples as *faccia gialla* in honour of its yellow tint.¹⁶⁶ Centuries-worth of touching, kissing, and fondling have polished the saint's nose, mouth, cheeks, and forehead. Nevertheless, it maintains its lifelike qualities. One merely waits for it to blink, twitch, or otherwise express signs of life.

In 1304, King Charles II of Anjou commissioned this head reliquary to house Gennaro's remains which are referred to as a skull.¹⁶⁷ The bust has enjoyed scholarly attention from historians

¹⁶⁵ Image: Emil Krén and Daniel Marx, eds. "Reliquary Bust of San Gennaro," The Web Galley of Art, accessed 6 August 2026, https://www.wga.hu/html_m/g/godefroy/gennaro.html.

¹⁶⁶ Paolo Jorio, "Il filo di lana: San Gennaro nel mondo," *Forum Italicum* 52 (2018): 229–56.

¹⁶⁷ Whether or not these relics were referred to as such in 1304 remains unclear. For the purpose of this chapter, I will use the term skull to describe the contents of this reliquary.

and art historians alike, seeking to trace its influences and identify the king's intentions.¹⁶⁸ For example, by situating Gennaro's bust within the long-standing Capetian tradition of head reliquaries, Jill Caskey has proposed that the king meant to recast San Gennaro as a Neapolitan St Denis.¹⁶⁹ Based on the Angevin insignias on the saint's chest, Caskey has further argued that the monarch meant to affiliate the saint with the dynasty, thereby advancing Angevin claims to a divinely sanctioned lineage. Others have suggested that this anthropomorphic representation was commissioned to celebrate the millennium anniversary of the saint's martyrdom.¹⁷⁰ Others still have theorised that it was created in thanksgiving for the safe return of the king's son, Philip.¹⁷¹

While all valid theories, we have yet to account for the liturgical dimension of the bust. In this regard, recent scholarship on body-part reliquaries proves instructive. Over the last three decades, scholars such as Cynthia Hahn have emphasised that such containers were designed for ritual function, rather than mirrors of the corporeal matter encased within.¹⁷² Although the exact nature of the relics housed within Gennaro's reliquary is not our purpose, Hahn's insights into the ritual functions of these containers are especially helpful for this analysis. To this end, this chapter asks the following questions: What liturgical role was the bust intended to fulfil upon its creation? How was it situated within the spatial layout of the cathedral, especially in relation to the other bodies of Neapolitan saints? What might this tell us about the development of San Gennaro's sanctity and the uses for his cult during this period?

These questions are especially pertinent when we consider the immediate context from which Gennaro's bust emerged: the construction of a new cathedral in Naples. Led by the Neapolitan archbishops, in collaboration with Charles II, this project was designed to proclaim the venerability and the antiquity of the local episcopate. While this emphasis upon Naples' bishop-saints was an extension of a previous tradition, it necessitated adaptations to the cathedral's liturgical and devotional programmes. This included, but was not limited to, the redistribution of the relics of Naples' most ancient and principal patrons. During this moment of dynamic spatial and ceremonial reconfiguration, San Gennaro's remains assumed an exceptional form and function, which this chapter is dedicated to exploring.

To do this, this chapter builds upon decades of scholarship relating to King Charles II's architectural patronage and his new cathedral. To refashion Naples into an impressive European capital city, the monarch sponsored several architectural projects, as Caroline Bruzelius has demonstrated.¹⁷³ As she acknowledged, Charles II's strategy not only included architectural

¹⁶⁸ For a bibliography relating to the bust: Giuseppe Maria Fusco, *Dell'argenteo imbusto al primo patrono S. Gennaro* (Napoli: Stamperia del Fibreno, 1861); Antonio Paolucci, Carlo Bertelli, Giorgio Bonsanti, eds. *Restituzioni 2008: tesori d'arte restaurati: quattordicesima edizione* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2008); Caskey, "The Look," 108–19; PierLuigi Leone de Castris, "Il busto-reliquiario di San Gennaro," in *San Gennaro patrono delle arti*, ed. S. Causa (Naples: Arte'm, 2012), 9–17.

¹⁶⁹ Caskey, "The Look."

¹⁷⁰ De Castris, "Il busto-reliquiario," 9–17.

¹⁷¹ Philip I of Taranto was captured during the War of the Sicilian Vespers and imprisoned in Sicily until 1302/03. de Castris, "Il busto-reliquiario," 9–17.

¹⁷² Cynthia Hahn, "The Voices of the Saints: Speaking Reliquaries," *Gesta* 36 (1997): 20–31; Caroline Walker Bynum and Paula Gerson, "Body-Part Reliquaries and Body Parts in the Middle Ages," *ibid.*: 3–7; Cynthia Hahn, *Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400-circa 1204* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2004); Cynthia Hahn, *The Reliquary Effect: Enshrining the Sacred Object* (London: Reaktion Books, 2017).

¹⁷³ Caroline Bruzelius, *The Stones of Naples: Church Building in Angevin Italy, 1266–1343* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

initiatives, but also the patronage of saint's cults, liturgical objects, and mendicant devotions. It is for this reason that she characterises Charles not only as an architectural patron, but as a patron of the "devotional and didactic interests of the faith."¹⁷⁴ Such a framework is essential for interpreting his goals for the cathedral and its heavenly patron. In this light, the reliquary bust not only exemplifies the king's 'devotional' interests, but also his larger ambitions to construct a cathedral, and its related liturgical program, which corresponded to the dignity of his capital city.

Historians have long acknowledged the difficulties in reconstructing the cathedral's original design and aesthetic agenda. Frequent earthquakes and Baroque restoration projects destroyed much of the fourteenth century embellishments.¹⁷⁵ The destruction of the Angevin chancery records has made it extremely difficult to trace the stages of the construction project.¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, by situating the cathedral into wider artistic and architectural trends, historians such as Nicholas Bock and Bruzelius have furthered our understanding of the cathedral's architectural influences.¹⁷⁷ As both have shown, the church's design was not only influenced by French gothic models, but also those localised to southern Italy as well as Rome and the Italian communes. More pertinent for our purposes, however, are the interventions of Naples' archbishops in the building's construction and in its programme of sanctity. For this, I turn to Vinni Lucherini and Maria Alasia Lombardo di Cumia, who, relying on medieval testimonies as well as evidence uncovered during the Baroque restorations, made critical observations regarding the cathedral's early fourteenth century developments.¹⁷⁸

Among these contributions, Lucherini's scholarship is especially critical for this chapter. Here, I am referring to her treatment of the so-called "two-cathedrals" theory. From the eighteenth century until recently, scholars of Neapolitan history assumed the presence of two cathedrals in Naples, adjoined perpendicularly: one dedicated to the Savior, but colloquially referred to as the 'Stefania' in honour of Bishop Stephen II,¹⁷⁹ and another to St Restituta.¹⁸⁰ According to this hypothesis, the Angevin cathedral was built directly on top of Saint Restituta, thus demolishing it completely. The Stefania was then demoted to a basilica, renamed Saint Restituta, and was incorporated into the new cathedral, as it is today. Lucherini has dispelled this idea.¹⁸¹ According to her findings, there was only ever one cathedral in Naples. The first, built in the fourth century, was dedicated to the Savior (or Stefania). The Angevin cathedral, dedicated to the Assumption of

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 202.

¹⁷⁵ For example, Cardinal Giuseppe Spinelli (1754–1763) undertook a massive renovation project during his episcopate. For his efforts: Maria Alasia Lombardo di Cumia, *La topografia artistica del Duomo di Napoli: dalla fondazione angioina alla riforma settecentesca del cardinale Giuseppe Spinelli* (Napoli: Paparo, 2011).

¹⁷⁶ Lucherini is particularly helpful in clarifying the sources we do – and do not – have. See: Lucherini, *La cattedrale*.

¹⁷⁷ Nicolas Bock, "I re, I vescovi e la cattedrale: sepolture e costruzione architettonica," in *Il Duomo di Napoli dal Paleocristiano all'età angioina*, ed. Nicolas Bock and Serena Romano (Naples: Electa Napoli, 2002), 132–47; "Neapolitan Bishops as Patrons of Art: From Anjou to Aragon," *Anuario de estudios medievales* 51 (2021): 135–73.

¹⁷⁸ Lucherini, *La cattedrale*; Cumia, *La topografia artistica*.

¹⁷⁹ As described in: Berto, ed. *The Deeds*, 45–46.

¹⁸⁰ As Lucherini uncovered, this theory was introduced by Niccolò Falcone in the later eighteenth century. It was largely accepted by the historical community - until Lucherini's groundbreaking research: Vinni Lucherini, "Le due cattedrali di Napoli: l'invenzione di una tradizione storiografica," *Prospettiva* 29 (2004): 2–31.

¹⁸¹ The Cathedral of the Savior was informally known as the Stefania or "Stephany," referring to Bishop St Stephen I, who rebuilt the cathedral after it burned down in the early sixth century. The term Stefania appears frequently in the *Deeds of the Neapolitan Bishops*. See: Berto, ed. *The Deeds*, 2, 6, 10, 12, 16, 42, 46.

the Virgin Mary, was built perpendicular to the Stefania and atop the southern half of its nave.¹⁸² The new cathedral incorporated the surviving portion of the Stefania and renamed the space the Basilica of Saint Restituta. As Lucherini has established, the Stefania and the basilica of Saint Restituta were thus the same liturgical space, separated by time. This dissertation adopts Lucherini's hypothesis. Therefore, whenever I reference Naples' cathedral before the fourteenth century, I will use the title 'Stefania.' When speaking of this space after the construction of the Angevin cathedral, it will be known as the Basilica of Saint Restituta. I will address the Angevin cathedral as either the 'new' cathedral or as the Cathedral of the Assumption.

The reconfiguration of the cathedral complex necessitated the production of new liturgical and devotional programmes.¹⁸³ One primary source is particularly illustrative of this process: the *Chronicon Sanctae Mariae de Principio* (*Chronicon*).¹⁸⁴ Written around 1313 by the cathedral chapter, the *Chronicon* is a compilation of liturgical instructions and founding legends relating to the Stefania and, subsequently, the newly renovated Saint Restituta. It especially describes how, upon the completion of the Assumption, the basilica was ceded to the cathedral chapter for their exclusive liturgical use.¹⁸⁵ More importantly for our purposes, the text establishes the cathedral chapter's perceived understanding of their own function and history within this liturgical space, of which they were granted exclusive access, free from episcopal intervention. The chapter also adopted St Restituta as their patroness, a point I will return to towards the end of this chapter.¹⁸⁶ As I will further demonstrate below, the *Chronicon* is especially useful in demonstrating how the history of the cathedral complex was preserved, adapted, and renegotiated in the wake of the Assumption's construction.

To explore the reinvigoration of San Gennaro's cult at this pivotal moment in Naples' religious and ecclesiastical history, it would be helpful to situate the cathedral's construction within its broader context. This chapter therefore opens with a brief survey of the Angevin conquest of Naples, followed by an examination of Charles II's civic and religious initiatives. In section two, it then turns to the cathedral project itself, tracing, where possible, the role of the archbishops in its development. Here, I also question the provenance of San Gennaro's skull relic. In the third section, I investigate the liturgical and ritual uses for head reliquaries during this period. This analysis will allow me to demonstrate the exceptional intentions that Charles II and Archbishop Giacomo da Viterbo had for the saint's remains, and, by extension, for his sanctity. Finally, I conclude with some reflections on the significance of this intervention for the history of this cult.

I. The Angevin Conquest of Naples

¹⁸² The Stefania was built on a north-west axis, whereas the Assumption was east-west. This allowed the Angevin cathedral to incorporate, rather than demolish, the previous cathedral and maintain the historic continuity between the two sites.

¹⁸³ We will continue to see how such programmes were developed into the 1330s in Chapter Three.

¹⁸⁴ The earliest surviving copy of this text dates to 1533. Vinni Lucherini, "Il Chronicon di Santa Maria del Principio (1313 circa) e la messa in scena della liturgia nel cuore della Cattedrale di Napoli," in *Dall'immagine alla Storia. Studi per ricordare Stefania Adamo Muscettola*, ed. Giovanna Greco, Carlo Gasparri, & Raffaella Pierobon Benoit (Pozzuoli: Naus, 2010), 521–49.

¹⁸⁵ For other fourteenth-century sources which similarly describe this dynamic: Lucherini, *La cattedrale*, 223–35.

¹⁸⁶ Liturgical evidence from the eleventh and twelfth centuries refers to the chapter as the Congregation of St Restituta, suggesting that the chapter adopted Restituta as their patroness much earlier than the advent of the Angevin cathedral. Lucherini, "Il Chronicon," 526.

We might begin by briefly surveying the Angevin Conquest of Naples. In 1266, Count Charles I of Anjou defeated King Manfred of Sicily at Benevento and thus inaugurated Angevin rule over the Kingdom of Naples.¹⁸⁷ Charles' conquest was the result of decades of papal scheming to eject the Hohenstaufen from southern Italy. Since the eleventh century, the papacy asserted suzerainty over the region and after 1130 retained its right to grant and withhold its crown. Such claims would incite recurring papal interventions in this region across the later Middle Ages.¹⁸⁸ This right, among others, was challenged especially by Emperor Frederick II and his successors.¹⁸⁹ Thus in 1245, at the Council of Lyons, Pope Innocent IV excommunicated Emperor Frederick II, then King of Sicily, and barred his successors from the throne.¹⁹⁰ To supplant the Hohenstaufen, the popes needed a suitable replacement who would remain obedient to a papal feudal overlord.¹⁹¹ Charles I fit that bill.¹⁹² Equipped with Provençal and Guelf Italian troops, and funded by his brother, King Louis IX of France, the Capetian count thus sailed to Italy to compete with Frederick's son and heir, Manfred. The pair came to blows at Benevento in February 1266, where Manfred died in battle.¹⁹³

The Angevin conquest elevated Naples into the capital of the Kingdom of Sicily, the largest territory in Italy to be ruled by a single government. Upon his arrival, Charles' newly acquired kingdom spanned from Abruzzi and down through the peninsula to the island of Sicily. After the latter was lost in the Sicilian Vespers, Angevin dominion was reduced to the mainland's southern shores and was known as the Kingdom of Naples.¹⁹⁴ By the later thirteenth century, Naples was a

¹⁸⁷ Charles I is the subject of numerous enquiries. For Charles: Jean Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou: Power, Kingship and State-Making in Thirteenth-Century Europe* (London: Longman, 1998); David Abulafia, "Charles of Anjou Reassessed," *Journal of Medieval History* 26 (1) (2000): 93–114; Gian Luca Borghese, *Carlo I d'Angio: Politica, diplomazia e commercio internazionale prima dei Vespri* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2008). For an overview of the Angevin conquest: Giuseppe Galasso, *Il Regno di Napoli: Il Mezzogiorno angioino e aragonese (1266-1494)* (Turin: UTET, 1992).

¹⁸⁸ For the origins and terms of the pope's vassalage: Benedict Wiedemann, *Papal Overlordship and European Princes, 1000-1270* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 95–118; Willem J. Zwolve, *Power and Authority, a Trial of Two Swords: A History of the Union of the Holy Roman Empire and the Kingdom of Sicily (1186-1250)* (The Hague: Eleven, 2023), 21–22.

¹⁸⁹ For the conflict in more detail, see especially part three of: David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). For a more legal treatment: Zwolve, *Power and Authority*.

¹⁹⁰ The emperor's significant tax burden, which the papacy alleged was bankrupting both the church and the people of southern Italy, was also a critical point of contention. Zwolve, *Power and Authority*, 343–44. For subsequent depictions of Frederick as an enemy of the church, see: Graham Loud, "The Case of the Missing Martyrs: Frederick II's War with the Church 1239–1250," *Studies in Church History* 30 (1993): 141–52.

¹⁹¹ The papacy had a difficult time finding a replacement; no one wanted to challenge Frederick nor his successors. Charles was barred from entering the competition by King Louis IX of France until the king changed his mind and funded the operation in 1263. Dunbabin, *Charles I*, 143–47.

¹⁹² Though Charles did not reject his position as the pope's vassal, he came into conflict with the papacy on several occasions during his reign. Dunbabin is particularly enlightening on this: *ibid.*, 140–56.

¹⁹³ For the lead up: Enrico Pispisa, *Il regno di Manfredi. proposte di interpretazione* (Messina: Sicania, 1991); Beverly Berg, "Manfred of Sicily and Urban IV: Negotiations of 1262," *Mediaeval Studies* 55 (1993): 111–36. For the battle (and its memory): Guido Iorio, "La battaglia di Benevento (26 Febbraio 1266) nei cronisti coevi," *Schola Salernitana-Annali* 21 (2016): 9–34.

¹⁹⁴ In 1282, the residents of Palermo revolted against Angevin rule in Sicily. The so-called Sicilian Vespers triggered a war between the Angevins and the Crown of Aragon for control over the island. The conflict spanned two decades. In 1302, Sicily was formally entrusted to the Aragonese as per the Peace of Caltabellotta. See: Steven Runciman, *The Sicilian Vespers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958).

diverse and populous maritime port city and one of the most important metropolises in Europe.¹⁹⁵ To reflect its status as a major European capital and the residence of his court, Charles I began the task of remodelling the city.¹⁹⁶ This included bolstering the city's defences through the construction of new, expanded city walls and several fortresses, such as Castel Sant'Elmo and Castel Nuovo.¹⁹⁷ His court was centred at the latter. Though the monarch made some progress, the majority of his reign was spent putting down rebellions and securing his kingdom.¹⁹⁸ His son was far more successful in his architectural pursuits.

King Charles II reigned from 1285 to 1309.¹⁹⁹ Though marked with its own political struggles, his rule witnessed an ambitious programme of urban renewal in Naples, which included paving the major roads in and out of the city, widening the city's streets, and restoring the aqueduct system. These efforts, among others, clearly demonstrate the monarch's efforts to reconfigure his capital as a major metropolitan hub.²⁰⁰

Throughout his reign, Charles II prioritised the city's sacred topography, funding and commissioning numerous ecclesiastical and monastic buildings. This most prominently included the construction of the Cathedral of the Assumption, but also that of San Pietro Martire, and the enlargement of San Domenico Maggiore, the Dominicans' Neapolitan headquarters, among other projects.²⁰¹ Several of these projects were oriented towards expanding the mendicant orders in Naples, an ambition continued by his son, King Robert.²⁰² His patronage extended beyond architectural pursuits to include liturgical objects and devotional works. Across the kingdom, he commissioned numerous reliquaries, devotional images, and liturgical instruments. To support

¹⁹⁵ Naples had roughly 30,000 inhabitants. Luigi De Rosa, "Naples: A Maritime Port," *The Journal of European Economic History* 31 (3) (2002): 513–29; Catherine Keen, Jane Gilbert, and Ella Williams, "The Italian Angevins: Naples and Beyond, 1266–1343," *Italian Studies* 72 (2) (2017): 2.

¹⁹⁶ According to Giuseppe Galasso, the kingdom underwent a process of feudalisation, French-ification, and nobleisation under the reign of Charles I. Dunbabin and Bruzelius have slightly amended this summary; as per their research, Charles I's Provençal style was mixed with influences from the centre and north of Italy. See: Galasso, *Il Regno di Napoli: Il Mezzogiorno angioino e aragonese (1266-1494)*, 40–45; Dunbabin, *Charles I*, 61–64; Caroline Bruzelius, "Charles I, Charles II, and the Development of an Angevin Style in the Kingdom of Sicily," in *L'État angevin. Pouvoir, culture, et société entre XIII e et XIV e siècle* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1998), 99–114; *The Stones*; Francesco Aceto and Paolo Vitolo, eds., *Architettura e arti figurative di età gotica in Campania* (Napoli: Laveglia e Carlone, 2017).

¹⁹⁷ Francesco Aceto, "Il "castrum novum" angioino di Napoli," in *Chantiers médiévaux*, ed. M. Andaloro and Francesco Aceto (Paris: Zodiaque, 1996), 251–68.

¹⁹⁸ Charles I had great difficulties winning over the Regno. Support for Manfred/the Hohenstaufen ran deep in southern Italy, requiring Charles' repeated attention. For more on these conflicts, see: Luciano Catalioto, *Terre, baroni et città in Sicilia nell'età di Carlo I d'Angiò* (Messina: Intilla, 1995); Dunbabin, *Charles I*, 70–91; Abulafia, "Charles of Anjou Reassessed."

¹⁹⁹ Though Charles II has not garnered nearly as much individual attention as his father, there are a plethora of studies on his patronage. For example: Bruzelius, *The Stones*, esp. 11–46; Janis Elliott and Cordelia Warr, eds. *The Church of Santa Maria Donna Regina. Art, Iconography, and Patronage in Fourteenth-Century Naples* (Burlington: Aldershot, 2004); Sofia Di Sciascio, *Reliquie e reliquiari in Puglia fra IX e XV secolo* (Galatina: Congedo Editore, 2010); Caskey, "The Look," 108–19; Pierluigi Leone de Castris, *Ori, argenti, gemme e smalti della Napoli angioina: 1266-1381* (Naples: Artem, 2014); Pierluigi Leone de Castris, "Da artigiani a funzionari: artisti stipendiati e artisti "familiari" nella Napoli angioina," in *Gli ufficiali e la cosa pubblica nei territori angioini (XIII-XV secolo): verso una cultura politica?*, ed. Thierry Pécout (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2020), 265–77.

²⁰⁰ For a summary of Charles II's civic efforts: Kelly, *The Cronaca*, 31–35.

²⁰¹ For more on his religious patronage: Bruzelius, *The Stones*, 75–133.

²⁰² Ibid., 134–55.

these endeavours, he recruited several French artisans in his court, further shaping the artistic and religious landscape of the Regno.²⁰³

King Charles' intense religious patronage was motivated by several factors. Notwithstanding his own personal devotion, his family's supernatural aspirations played a critical role in his pursuits.²⁰⁴ As widely recognised by previous scholars, the Angevin dynasty, following the Capetian model, strategically patronised religious devotions, and promoted the canonisation of several family members to sacralise their dynastic lineage.²⁰⁵ Charles I, for example, fought rigorously for the sainthood of his brother, King Louis IX while Charles II campaigned for his son, Bishop Louis of Toulouse.²⁰⁶ These hereditary lines of sanctity ultimately imbued the Angevins with a divine authority. Furthermore, the Angevins patronised cults of saints with no familial relation to bolster their proximity to the divine, as exemplified in Charles II's promotion of St Mary Magdalene. The monarch fostered her cult by sponsoring churches in her honour, commissioning reliquaries, and supporting relevant liturgical practices, all working tirelessly to craft her as an Angevin saint.²⁰⁷ Beyond their dynastic ambitions, these monarchs also recognised the utility of saints' cults in securing and legitimising power. The Angevins in Hungary, for example, promoted the cult of St Stephen to anchor their authority in a local sacred tradition.²⁰⁸ As Caskey identified, Charles II adopted a similar strategy in Naples by associating himself with the cult of San Gennaro, as seen in the coat of arms affixed onto the vestments of the saint's bust. This well-founded model clarifies the means through which Charles II often intervened in Naples' devotional landscape. Like other Angevin rulers, he engaged local religious devotions, and imported new ones, not only to consolidate power but also to shape the city's larger civic and religious identity.

At the same time, Charles' ambitions also included the consolidation of monarchical and papal power within Naples. In 1294, he deliberately intervened in the ongoing papal conclave to campaign for the election of Peter Morrone, a hermit with a saintly reputation living in Abruzzo.²⁰⁹ His bid was successful; Morrone was elected Pope Celestine V, and the king convinced him to relocate the papal court to Naples. In this, he achieved only a temporary triumph. In July 1294, Celestine moved into Castel Capuano, not far from the cathedral. Five months later, he abdicated. Beyond Charles' affinity for meddling in papal affairs, this brief episode accentuated the king's

²⁰³ For these objects: Pierluigi Leone de Castris, *Arte di corte nella Napoli angioina da Carlo I a Roberto d'Angio* (Florence: Cantini Scolastica, 1986); Sciascio, *Reliquie e reliquiari in Puglia*; Caskey, "The Look."

²⁰⁴ The history of the Angevin saint-making programmes is a well-trodden path. For two key analyses: André Vauchez, "'Beata Stirps': Sainteté et lignage en occident aux XIII et XIV siècles," in *Famille et parenté dans l'Occident médiéval*, ed. Georges Duby (Rome: École française de Rome 1977), 397–406; Gábor Klaniczay, "La noblesse et le culte des saints dynastiques sous les rois angevins," in *La noblesse dans les territoires angevins à la fin du Moyen Âge*, ed. Noël Coulet and Jean-Michel Matz (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2000), 511–26.

²⁰⁵ For Capetian examples: Sean Field, *Isabelle of France: Capetian Sanctity and Franciscan Identity in the Thirteenth Century* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006); Cecilia Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis (IX) of France: Kingship, Sanctity and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell, 2008).

²⁰⁶ Margaret R. Toynbee, *S. Louis of Toulouse and the Process of Canonisation in the Fourteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1929); Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 227–30.

²⁰⁷ Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*; Sarah Wilkins, "Imaging the Angevin Patron Saint: Mary Magdalen in the Pipino Chapel in Naples," *California Italian Studies* 3 (2012): 1–27.

²⁰⁸ Klaniczay, "La noblesse," 511–26.

²⁰⁹ For Morrone's election and Charles II's interference: Elpidio Valeri, *Papa Celestino V. storia di Pietro del Morrone (1209-1296) che fu papa nel 1294* (Pescara: Caresa Edizioni, 2020); Edith Pásztor, "S. Celestino V: elezione e rinuncia al pontificato. esegesi di una fonte," in *S. Pietro del Morrone, Celestino V nel medioevo monastico*, ed. Walter Capezzali (L'Aquila: Immagini del Medio Evo, 1989), 13–25.

ambitions. In his eyes, the city was not only his capital, but potentially the next see of Peter. It is no coincidence that works on the new cathedral began while Morrone was living in Naples; if this ancient structure was to be worthy of the successor of Peter, it needed serious renovation and a programme of sanctity which reflected the tastes of the Angevin dynasty, as well as the illustrious legacy of the local church. Taken together, Charles II's efforts reveals him as a calculated and purposeful patron, intent on influencing Naples' urban, liturgical, and religious life. This characterisation of the monarch will be essential for understanding the ambitions behind the reliquary bust.

Several of the monarch's aspirations were supported, if not executed, by Naples' archbishops, who served as critical and trusted advisors. From the onset of the Angevin conquest, the Neapolitan episcopate was oriented to uphold Angevin and papal interests. To secure the city's allegiances, Pope Clement IV wasted no time in appointing his own episcopal candidate, namely the Frenchman, Aiglerio (1267-1282).²¹⁰ This exceptional appointment was a strategic one. As the archbishop of the newly established capital city, Aiglerio and his successors were responsible for fashioning the local church into an impressive and authoritative entity.²¹¹ This entailed cleaning up the archdiocese, which had operated without its senior ecclesiastical figure for the last four years. As we saw in the Prologue, part of this process was, evidently, moving Gennaro's *dies natalis* to May. It also required performing a taxing juggling act. For the duration of Angevin rule, these clergymen remained under constant pressure to cater to both papal and royal interests. A successful archbishop was a shrewd negotiator, able to align the aspirations of the monarch, the pontiff, and his archdiocese. We will continue to see how these clergymen participated in such a balancing act across this dissertation.

After Charles II ascended to the throne, the duties of Naples' archbishop expanded to include key positions in the royal administration. Filippo Minutolo (1282-1302), for example, was named Lieutenant of Grand Protonotary and Grand Chancellor of the Kingdom.²¹² Indispensable to the king, Minutolo helped navigate the crisis surrounding Pope Celestine's abdication, supported royal building initiatives, and otherwise advanced broader monarchical ambitions within the city and beyond. His successor, Giacomo da Viterbo (1302-1307) is particularly important for our purposes, as the reliquary bust was commissioned during his episcopate. An Augustinian friar and renowned theologian, da Viterbo was specially elected to the Neapolitan see by Charles II, likely to facilitate the cathedral building project.²¹³ The monarch and the archbishop maintained a friendly and cooperative working relationship; archival evidence attests to their frequent correspondence over funding issues, building materials, and construction timelines.²¹⁴ The resume of Umberto d'Ormont (1308-1320), who saw the cathedral's completion, similarly boasted of influential roles in Charles II's court.²¹⁵ Together, three clergymen testify to the close relationship the monarch established and maintained with his archbishops. In turn, this relationship positioned

²¹⁰ Zigarelli believed the archbishop to be Provençal, but he was more likely Burgundian. Zigarelli, *Biografie dei vescovi*, 59–63; Tommaso Leccisotti, "Aiglerio," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome 1960), 520–21.

²¹¹ Aiglerio also collaborated with the monarch on several church building projects in Naples, notably the church/hospital of Sant'Eligio. See: Emanuela de Feo, *Medioevo restaurato: la chiesa di Sant'Eligio Maggiore a Napoli* (Naples: Federico II University Press, 2023).

²¹² Giuliana Vitale, *Minutolo, Enrico*, in *DBI*, 74 (2010).

²¹³ Antoine Côté and Martin Pickavé, ed. *A Companion to James of Viterbo* (Leiden Brill, 2018).

²¹⁴ Eric L. Saak, "The Life and Works of James of Viterbo," in *A Companion to James of Viterbo*, ed. Antoine Côté and Martin Pickavé (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 28–29.

²¹⁵ Zigarelli, *Biografie dei vescovi*, 63–69.

the king as an essential collaborator during the construction of the cathedral, as we will see further momentarily.

So far, we have addressed Charles II's plans to reconfigure the city of Naples into a prestigious, competitive European capital city. We have also summarised the role of the archbishop during these early Angevin years as a mediator between monarchical, papal, and ecclesiastical interests. This discussion will enable us to situate the reliquary bust within Charles II's broader vision for the cathedral, and subsequently his capital city. We have yet to address, however, the status of San Gennaro's cult at the time of the Angevin conquest. As I emphasised in the Prologue, evidence from the central Middle Ages, however limited and sporadic, suggests that the saint remained one of Naples' patrons during the Norman and Hohenstaufen periods, even if the popularity of the cult had waned. Following Clement IV's bull, San Gennaro recedes from the extant historical record until his reliquary bust was commissioned in 1304. The nearly four-decade hiatus makes it difficult to determine how this cult functioned during the reign of Charles I. Based on Clement's decree, we can cautiously state that Gennaro was recognised as a civic patron during this period, but how this patronage was reflected in liturgical or devotional acts remains unclear. Only with the advent of the reliquary bust does a clearer picture of the saint's cult reemerge. Before turning to the bust, however, we must appreciate the context from which it emerged: the construction of the new Angevin cathedral, to which I now turn.

II. A New Angevin Cathedral

In 1294, works began on the city's new cathedral complex, dedicated to the Virgin of the Assumption.²¹⁶ This structure was meant to replace and expand the previous Cathedral of the Savior, which was originally constructed in the late fifth century and then later rebuilt during the episcopate of Stephen II (c.767-c.800).²¹⁷ Reconstructing the phase of the Assumption's progress remains challenging due to significant gaps in the evidence base. What survives consists primarily of financial correspondence between the monarch and his archbishops. From these exchanges, it is evident that progress was slow and uneven, frequently disrupted by funding issues and interludes between episcopal appointments.²¹⁸ As several others have demonstrated, key aspects of the cathedral's design, planning process, and development stages, remain uncertain.²¹⁹

Nevertheless, we can glean some information from the extant liturgical and chancery records. For example, the liturgical constitutions promulgated in 1317 indicate that the Assumption was available for regular use, suggesting that the project had completed relatively recently.²²⁰ From the latter, Naples' archbishops (Minutolo, da Viterbo, and d'Ormont) emerge as the driving force behind the building's completion, repeatedly petitioning the king to either hold their donors

²¹⁶ Our earliest evidence regarding the project is a financial document dated 16 June 1294. On that date, a Neapolitan citizen sold the land surrounding the Stefania to the archbishop for the construction of a new cathedral. The church's dedication to the Virgin can be dated to 1299. Lucherini, *La cattedrale*, 366–67.

²¹⁷ For a full history of the Stefania: *ibid.*, 61–148.

²¹⁸ Gaps between episcopal appointments left the building site in a vulnerable position. Between the death of Archbishop Minutolo and the appointment of Archbishop Viterbo, for example, the site was ransacked for building materials. *Ibid.*, 205; Bock, "Neapolitan Bishops," 141–55.

²¹⁹ Bruzelius, *The Stones*; Lucherini, *La cattedrale*.

²²⁰ In 1317, Archbishop Umberto d'Ormont promulgated regulations regarding the Divine Office, indicating that the cathedral was in shape enough for the chapter's use. For transcriptions of the relevant documents, see: Lucherini, *La cattedrale*, 369.

accountable or raise further funds.²²¹ While these records demonstrate the monarch's financial commitments, Charles' level of engagement has otherwise been debated. Lucherini, for example, viewed the king's passivity as evidence that his involvement was limited, whereas Bruzelius later demonstrated that his role was consistent with a broader pattern of behind-the-scenes patronage, evident across his building projects.²²² Building on Bruzelius' interpretation, I suggest that Charles II's involvement was more substantial than that of a mere administrator or financier. Acknowledging that documentation is scant, his wider urban ambitions, demonstrated commitment to religious patronage, and close relationship with the archbishops point to a more collaborative role. Working closely with these trusted advisors, it is not difficult to imagine how the monarch helped shape a shared vision for the cathedral, one which articulated the antique, sacred, and apostolic roots of the church in Naples. As this chapter will go on to show, the existence of Gennaro's reliquary bust provides further support for this theory.

The Cathedral of the Assumption was designed to transmit and uphold the antiquity of the Church in Naples and the venerability of the Neapolitan episcopate.²²³ This was a continuation of the messaging already articulated in the Stefania. Thanks to the efforts of several early medieval bishops, the Stefania was an episcopal necropolis. Between the eighth and tenth centuries, Naples' bishops slowly transferred the saintly remains housed in the Catacombs of San Gennaro not only to consolidate their holy efficacy, but also to protect them from ongoing Lombard raids.²²⁴ The Stefania stored the bodies of numerous ancient bishops, many of whom doubled as saints. This included St Agrippinus and St Aspren, for example.²²⁵ The former, as we saw in the prologue, was the sixth bishop of Naples and served as the city's early medieval co-patron alongside San Gennaro. The latter was the first bishop of Naples, having been purportedly baptised by St Peter.²²⁶ The remains of Gennaro's companions, Eutichus and Acutius were also reinterred there.²²⁷ The translations of these four saints to the Stefania is well-documented and substantiated through corroborating medieval evidence.²²⁸ Ultimately, these relics became centrepieces of devotion in the Assumption. All four saints were buried in prominent locations in the cathedral transept; Agrippinus, Eutichus and Acutius were interred within the main altar, while Aspren found a tomb

²²¹ For the financial records: *ibid.*, 202–13.

²²² Bruzelius, *The Stones*; Lucherini, *La cattedrale*, 202–06.

²²³ Bock, "Neapolitan Bishops," 140.

²²⁴ Nicola Cilento, "Il Significato dell' "Translatio" dei Corpi dei Vescovi Napoletani dal Cimitero di S. Gennaro "Extra Moenia" nella Basilica della Stefania," *Campania Sacra* 1 (1970): 1–6; Oldfield, *Sanctity and Pilgrimage*, 21–50; Cumia, *La topografia artistica*, 88–90.

²²⁵ Both bodies were translated by Bishop John IV in the mid-ninth century. Lombardo di Cumia, *La topografia artistica*, 89–90.

²²⁶ Aspren's baptism is recounted in his *vita*, as well as several fourteenth century sources, including the *Chronicon* di Santa Maria del Principio. See: Delehaye, "Hagiographie," 1–33; Granier, "Lieux de mémoire," 6–8.

²²⁷ These remains were translated by Bishop Stephen II in the later eighth century, as first attested in the *Deeds of the Neapolitan Bishops*: Berto, ed. *The Deeds*, 46. The translation is preserved in: *Passio et Translatio sanctorum Eutychetis et Actuii auctore Raynerio*, in *L'Intera Istoria di San Gennaro della Famiglia*, Nicolo Carmino Falcone (Napoli: Felice Mosca, 1713), 181–86.

²²⁸ For a survey of the substantial evidence: Vinni Lucherini, "Tombe di re, vescovi, e santi nella Cattedrale di Napoli: memoria liturgica e memoria profana," in *Medioevo: la chiesa e il palazzo*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle (Milano: Electa, 2007), 679–90.

in a flanking side chapel.²²⁹ This floor plan notably lacks a space for San Gennaro - but this did not exclude him from the cathedral's programme of sanctity.

As mentioned in the introduction, the head reliquary was commissioned in 1304. Its existence carries two important implications. First, that Charles II had access to Gennaro's remains, whether purported or otherwise. Second, that the building project had reached a significant stage: the translation of the saintly remains from the Stefania into the Assumption, or at least concrete plans for their move.²³⁰ Taken together, these points imply that the king was not merely aware of the developing plans for the cathedral's saintly bodies, but likely involved in its conception and execution. This directly challenges previous characterisations of the monarch's role as either passive or purely administrative. At the same time, these implications bring us to a particularly thorny question: where did San Gennaro's relics come from?

While the provenance of Agrippinus, Aspren, Eutichus and Acutius' relics are well-documented, the origins of San Gennaro's skull relic are murky, if not problematic. In previous scholarship, historians have largely assumed that his relics were translated to, and then actively venerated within, the Stefania sometime before 1304. However, as I will demonstrate below, the evidence for this is extremely limited and highly suspect. Instead, I would like to suggest that King Charles II, perhaps in collaboration with Archbishop da Viterbo, staged an *inventio*. As mentioned in the Prologue, Gennaro's relics were reportedly stolen in the ninth century.²³¹ If any relic remained in Naples, it has largely disappeared from the historical record. Between the ninth and fourteenth century, only two sources refer to such remains: the *Acta S Proculi* and the undated sermon known as *De Miraculis S. Januarii*, which I introduced in the Prologue.²³² The former recounts the martyrdoms of San Gennaro and one of his companions, Proculus. It concludes with a note on the subsequent locations of their remains. According to the *Acta*, Proculus' body was venerated in Pozzuoli. While the Neapolitans were meant to have Gennaro's remains, the account laments, the Lombards stole his body and left behind his skull. This text has received little scholarly attention, and its provenance is difficult to determine.²³³ Based on its Lombardian reference, it has been roughly dated to after the ninth century. Its author is unknown. Despite these uncertainties, the *Acta* has been cited in previous historiography as evidence that the skull relic not only remained in Naples but was actively venerated at the Stefania.²³⁴

I find the reliability of this account highly questionable. My suspicions stem from the absence of any corroborating evidence as well as the structure of the narrative. First, this text raises a number of problems regarding the history of Gennaro's Neapolitan cult. If the saint's head had

²²⁹ Bishop St Athanasius was eventually added to this list of relics. In 1378, he was buried in the Chapel of St Paul, left of the main altar, later known as the Galeota family chapel. Aspren was to the right, in the Chapel of St Peter/Tocco family chapel. see: *Vita et translatio S. Athanasii Neapolitani Episcopi (BHL 735 e 737) sec. IX*; Cumia, *La topografia artistica*, 9–13; Bock, "Neapolitan Bishops." For the altar: Francesco Aceto, "l'altare maggiore 'Orsini' e la tribuna del duomo di Napoli," in *L'arredo Liturgico Fra Oriente e Occidente (V-XV secolo) L'arredo liturgico fra Oriente e Occidente (V-XV secolo): Frammenti, opere e contesti*, ed. Fabio Coden (Milan: Cinisello Balsamo, 2021), 454–71.

²³⁰ Bruzelius, *The Stones*, 80.

²³¹ Prologue, p. 27.

²³² Prologue, p. 28.

²³³ Prologue, p. 28.

²³⁴ Mazzocchi, for example, argued that the relic was eventually translated to the Stefania and stored in a reliquary box, which was then housed in an altar niche, near his companion's burial place. He does not cite the source of his information. Alessio Mazzocchi, *De sanctorum Neapolitanae ecclesiae episcoporum cultu dissertatio*, vol. 1 (Naples: Joseph Raymundi, 1753), 305; Lucherini, "Il Chronicon," 534, fn 42; de Ceglia, *The Natural History*, 17.

survived, it would almost certainly have been translated to the Stefania during the early medieval period. As we saw above, Naples' bishops had systematically transferred the bodies of the city's saints there to protect them from theft and destruction. Why, then, is the relocation of Gennaro's skull absent from the evidence base while these other translations, namely those of his companions, are so well documented? Furthermore, if the relic was venerated within the Stefania prior to 1304, such ritual activity has left no trace in the surviving historical record. Second, the reference to a skull in the *Acta* rather conveniently reflects its fourteenth century body-part reliquary. As Hahn has demonstrated, sacred matter was increasingly conflated with whatever part of the body its container characterised.²³⁵ I posit, therefore, that this portion of the *Acta* was inserted into the narrative after Charles II commissioned the bust, and thus reflects a post-fourteenth century understanding of the history of the saint's remains.

The *De Miraculis S. Januarii* sheds little light on the matter. Though the text mentions the presence of the saint's bones in the basilica, it is unclear when it was written or how it was adapted.²³⁶ As Granier has argued, it is possible that this text attests to the active veneration of Gennaro's remains in the basilica after Duke Sico's theft. If this did occur, however, such devotion is noticeably absent from the later evidence.

Apart from the *Acta* and the sermon, Gennaro's Neapolitan relics are otherwise missing from the historical record. We are therefore left with two hypotheses: (1) that no sacred matter remained in Naples after the Lombard theft or (2) that some relics (or alleged relics) remained in the city, the memory of which faded over the centuries. In either case, we must admit the possibility that Charles II or Archbishop da Viterbo, or some combination of both, staged an *inventio* of the skull in the course of the cathedral's building campaign. *Inventiones* were by no means exceptional in the medieval period; construction projects frequently triggered the discovery, or rediscovery, of saintly remains.²³⁷ This was the case, for example, with the relics of St Mark in Venice, which were uncovered in the Basilica of Saint Mark in the eleventh century, after the institutional memory of their location had faded.²³⁸ A similar episode occurred with the remains of St Zenobius in the cathedral in Florence in 1331.²³⁹ In Naples' case, reopening the altars in the Stefania provided ample opportunity to identify - or attribute - an unlabelled bit of bone. We might further surmise that the archbishop, or some other high-ranking ecclesiastical figure, was present when the relic was uncovered. As was the case in Venice and Florence, bishops frequently attended the ceremonial re-opening of altars to validate the finding of sacred matter and to translate the objects into another worthy location. Given these precedents, among others, it is therefore plausible that such an orchestrated procedure was enacted within the Stefania.

The assertion that Gennaro's relics had previously been interred in the Stefania became central to legitimising the historic sanctity of the new cathedral. While the *inventio* provided material evidence of these claims, textual traditions reinforced it. A key example appears in the fourteenth century liturgical text, the *Chronicon Sanctae Mariae de Principio*. As mentioned in the introduction, this text recounts several founding legends relating to the old cathedral. One such legend, regarding a miraculous vision, explicitly situates the Januarian remains within this space.

²³⁵ As Hahn argued in: Hahn, *The Reliquary Effect*.

²³⁶ Prologue, pp. 28-29.

²³⁷ Patrick Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 203-04; Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead do Such Great Things?*, 283-84.

²³⁸ Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 85-88.

²³⁹ Sally J. Cornelison, "Tales of Two Bishop Saints: Zenobius and Antoninus in Florentine Renaissance Art and History," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 38 (2007): 631-32.

As reported in the *Chronicon*, a pious Christian woman once journeyed to the church in the mid-fifth century. There, she kneels before the main altar in the chapel of Santa Maria del Principio. This altar, according to the text, held the bodies (*corpora*) of Gennaro, Eutichus, and Acutius. The latter two then appear to the woman in a vision, playing chess.²⁴⁰ The principal issue with this account is its chronology. The *Chronicon* places the saints' bodies in the Stefania in the mid-fifth century, a period in which all three were well-documented at the Basilica of San Gennaro. As Lucherini admits, the *Chronicon* likely backdated the saints' presence in the Stefania to compete with the Assumption's present claims to their sacred remains. Rather than evidence for the veneration of Gennaro's remains before 1304, as Lucherini has claimed, I contend that this legend was shaped by the discovery of this sacred matter, and the subsequent bust.²⁴¹ Composed after the relics were uncovered, it seems that this legend was designed to underscore the saint's longstanding presence within the cathedral complex. In doing so, this narrative retrospectively justifies the rediscovery of his remains. By establishing their long-standing presence in the altar of the Santa Maria del Principio chapel, the *Chronicon* answers any lingering questions about the relics' provenance. This reference might even reflect a historic reality in which these sacred objects were uncovered from this particular altar space.

This ceremonious *inventio* of these remains marks a pivotal intervention into San Gennaro's cult. After nearly five centuries of absence, the saint's presence had once again materialised in Naples. As seen in the *Chronicon*, his material and, by extension, spiritual affiliation with the ancient cathedral, as well as that of the city's other saintly figures, sanctified and legitimised the authority of the new complex. To further appreciate the implications of this *inventio*, we now turn to an analysis of the head reliquary and its intended uses.

III. The Reliquary Bust

The provenance of the reliquary is well-known. Receipts of payment inform us that three Parisian silversmiths, of the several French artisans invited to the Neapolitan court, were employed by the monarch: Etienne Godefroy, Guillaume de Verdelay and Milet d'Auxerre.²⁴² This container was thus one of several silver objects commissioned by the king during this period. As several historians have noted, Charles had several reliquary examples by which to model his Neapolitan bust. Across the later Middle Ages, French monarchs frequently commissioned bust reliquaries to patronise pre-existing cults or buttress newer forms of sanctity.²⁴³ Those of St Denis, St King Louis

²⁴⁰ The chess board, as Lucherini has established, alluded to the infinite indulgences which Pope Sylvester endowed the Stefania with. Lucherini, "San Gennaro negato," 209.

²⁴¹ See her argument in: *ibid.*

²⁴² These receipts were lost during the Second World War. They survive in transcriptions: Fusco, *Dell'argenteo imbusto*, 13–19.

²⁴³ Barbara Drake Boehm, "Reliquary Busts: 'A Certain Aristocratic Eminence'," in *Set in Stone: The Face in Medieval Sculpture*, ed. Charles Little (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 168–98; Sharon A. Farmer, *Communities of Saint Martin Legend and Ritual in Medieval Tours* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 109–10. For further examples: Barbara Drake Boehm, "Medieval head reliquaries of the massif central" (New York University, 1990). Caskey has further theorised that Charles II commissioned San Gennaro's bust to emulate that of St Denis and, in doing so, craft Gennaro as a Neapolitan St Denis. This, she argues, was part of a broader strategy to craft the new cathedral into an Angevin necropolis, just as Saint-Denis was in Paris. Caskey, "The Look," 128.

IX, and St Martin of Tours are notable examples.²⁴⁴ As we saw earlier, Charles II utilised this reliquary to affiliate the cult with the House of Anjou. The conflation of the saint's image with that of the House of Anjou visually professed Gennaro's support for Angevin rule and thus legitimised the dynasty's presence in Naples. Furthermore, we might conceive of the bust as a lasting monument of the alliance between the Angevin dynasty and the Neapolitan church, which San Gennaro had historically patronised.²⁴⁵

That King Charles II chose San Gennaro to represent his relationship with the church is particularly significant to this chapter. This decision not only reflected Gennaro's historic ties to the church in Naples, but also the king's deliberate intentions, in collaboration with the archbishop, to (1) establish Gennaro as the patron of the Cathedral of the Assumption and (2) critically reshape the liturgical experience of his cult across the city. To do this, I will first begin with some broader points regarding the function of medieval relics and body part reliquaries, with a particular attention to reliquary busts, during this period.

By the later Middle Ages, it was widely believed the entirety of a saintly person could be embodied in the tiniest fragment of corporeal remains.²⁴⁶ Regardless of how dispersed their relics became, a saint was physically and spiritually manifested wherever their remains lay. Though decaying and incomplete, these sacred objects attested to the saint's residence in the heavenly court. After all, it was a saint's proximity to God that endowed them with their ability to intercede for the faithful on earth. Body-part reliquaries made this dual-residency visible. Constructed of expensive metals such as gold or silver, these containers depicted uncorrupted and perfected portions of the human body, thus shrouding the bits of composing flesh and bones they stored within. The features of these containers show no signs of death. In the case of the martyrs, the violence of their executions is conspicuously absent. Instead, these reliquaries depict and manifest heavenly bodies. Precious jewels assist in this portrayal; as these materials caught and refracted the light, the saint himself seemed to radiate splendour of the heavenly court.²⁴⁷

San Gennaro's reliquary was no different. His remains stored within his perfected face and jewelled vestments, free of any hints of martyrdom, confirmed his place in heaven and on earth.

While relics and their containers generally manifested a saint's presence, head reliquaries did so in a unique manner. As the locus of a person's identity, the head was both a form of identification and a display of personhood.²⁴⁸ By provocatively displayed idealised portraits of a saint's face, these reliquary busts thus magnified the sense of presence which relics already provided. Iconographic features such as clothing, methods of martyrdom, or coats of arms accentuated the saint's identity. For example, Gennaro's tonsured head and clerical garb signalled his episcopal status. From the thirteenth century onward, these vessels became especially hyper-realistic to evoke a sense of the saint's movement, if not participation.²⁴⁹ As we saw earlier, Gennaro's bust depicted wrinkle lines on his forehead and around his eyes, as if the saint was in

²⁴⁴ For these busts: Scott Montgomery, "The use and perception of reliquary busts in the late Middle Ages" (Phd Dissertation, Rutgers State University, 1996), 57; Cecilia Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis: Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 73–76; Farmer, *Communities*, 299–300.

²⁴⁵ Prologue, pp. 29–30.

²⁴⁶ Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead do Such Great Things?*, 239–44.

²⁴⁷ Bynum, "Body-Part," 4.

²⁴⁸ Esther Cohen, "The Meaning of the Head in High Medieval Culture," in *Disembodied Heads in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Anita Traninger Barbara Baert, and Catrén Santing (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 59–76.

²⁴⁹ Montgomery, "The use," 115.

the act of blinking, squinting, or otherwise making a facial expression. Such features not only manifested Gennaro's personhood, almost as if he were still living, but also encouraged spectators to interact with the divine. These anthropomorphic depictions collapsed the distance between supplicants and the saint, transforming their abstract patronage into a tangible reality. Patrons were no longer invisible forces but visible and accessible participants in this intercessory exchange. This ultimately strengthened the bonds between a community and its patron, and even incorporated the saint as a member of the civic body.

Reliquary busts served all sorts of liturgical purposes, and it is not within the scope of this chapter to treat them all here.²⁵⁰ For the purposes of this analysis, our discussion will be limited to their uses in procession. Reliquaries of all kinds, but especially busts, were designed to be carried and processed.²⁵¹ Their size often served a logistical advantage; unlike the *châsse* or altar tombs, these objects were easy to manoeuvre either by hand or upon a litter. The bust of St Louis, for example, was annually processed around Paris on the anniversary of the king's death, 25 August.²⁵² The bust of St Martin of Tours was similarly utilised on his various feast days.²⁵³ Besides materialising a particular saint on their feast day and sacralising the city, the purpose of these processions was to increase and facilitate all interactions between the saint and the larger community. The diffusion of a saint's relics out of the church and into the city was critical in establishing their omnipresence throughout the entire community, not solely within their shrine.

Head reliquaries were especially well suited for processions because they operated as narrative devices. The reliquary bust of St Denis, which sat in the royal abbey of Saint-Denis from 1281 through the eighteenth century, exemplifies this function.²⁵⁴ This silver reliquary depicted the saint's head, from the neck upwards, carried by two flanking angels. Like many other head reliquaries, though not all, Denis' bust was intended to evoke the martyr's decapitation. Depicting the saint from the shoulders upward, these vessels emphasised the most identifiable feature of a decollation: the head. The angels are a further reference to Denis' legend; according to his *passio*, St Denis posthumously gathered his own head with the assistance of angels and thereby reunited his own remains.²⁵⁵ In doing so, this reliquary fashioned what Scott Montgomery called a "spatial and temporal matrix" which manifested distinct hagiographic legends in the here and now.²⁵⁶ By visually recalling this legend, the bust not only recounted a hagiographical event, but also acted as a narrative device for its ritualised reenactment on Denis' feast days. To reinforce this story, the ostentation of Denis' relic was accompanied by the reading of his related hagiographic texts. Such readings were commonplace at saints' feasts during the later medieval period. Moreover, the saint's sustained presence in his relics, and by extension his reliquary, allowed St Denis to actively participate in these liturgies. This bust thus gave a face to a real spiritual reality in which St Denis

²⁵⁰ For the many uses of head reliquaries, see: Scott Montgomery, "Securing the Sacred Head: Cephalophory and Relic Claims," in *Disembodied Heads in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Anita Traninger, Barbara Baert, and Catrien Santing (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 77-116; Boehm, "Reliquary Busts," 171-172; Boehm, "Medieval head reliquaries of the massif central," 89-93.

²⁵¹ Montgomery, "The use," 57.

²⁵² Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis*, 73-76.

²⁵³ Farmer, *Communities*, 299-300.

²⁵⁴ The bust was destroyed during the French Revolution. However, several images provide us with an understanding of its design and use. See: Scott Montgomery, "Mittite capud meum... ad matrem meam ut osculetur eum: The Form and Meaning of the Reliquary Bust of Saint Just," *Gesta* 36 (1997): 55-56.

²⁵⁵ For an overview of the legend, and the cult's significance to the Capetian Dynasty: Gabrielle Spiegel, "Cult of St. Denis and Capetian Kingship," *Journal of Medieval History* 1 (1975): 43-69.

²⁵⁶ Montgomery, "Securing the Sacred Head," 80.

ambled in and around Saint-Denis during the ostentation and procession of his remains. As we will see momentarily, and in subsequent chapters, San Gennaro's functioned similarly.

Having surveyed the multifunctionality of reliquary busts, I would like to consider the significance of the bust upon the saint's cult, the cathedral, and the city at large. This reliquary represented the reemergence of Gennaro's relics in Naples after centuries of either absence or silence. Furthermore, as far as we are aware, it was likely the first public display of his holy remains. At the very least, it would have been displayed on the saint's feast day which, if Clement's prescriptions were still observed, took place on 8 May.²⁵⁷ This radically transformed how both clerical and lay bodies interacted with the saint. Whereas the Neapolitan community historically liaised with their patron through his interred remains (at least until their theft), images, and hagiographic texts, the bust inaugurated a new form of veneration: face to face interactions. Through a hyper-realistic portrayal of his face, Gennaro's bust harnessed his physical and spiritual presence. Like other head reliquaries, it assured viewers that the saint had "seen them" and, by extension, heard their prayers.²⁵⁸

The mobility of Gennaro's relics thus dramatically increased interactions between the saint and his devotees, especially by those who were not members of the cathedral clergy. Although this reliquary was stored within the cathedral for most of the year, during the procession of his relics, Gennaro's presence was extended from the church and into the city. The saint could now wander through the city streets, passing by shops and individual homes, offering blessings along the way and cultivating a sense of community. The anthropomorphic nature of the reliquary further exaggerated this sentiment. Upon the litter, the saint's upper body would jostle and sway, as if the heavenly patron himself participated in the liturgical parade. This ultimately transformed his feast into a communal and widely attended celebration, one which Clement IV had desired in his 1268 bull.²⁵⁹ As we will see further in Part Two, the procession of Gennaro's relic indeed became one of the most important dates on Naples' liturgical calendar and, like the bust of St Denis, this reliquary was also utilised as a narrative device in the ritualised recreation of Gennaro's death, burial, and translation.

The liturgical function of San Gennaro's head reliquary demonstrates an intentional effort on behalf of the Angevin king, if not the archbishop, to craft a civic procession and feast in celebration of San Gennaro's patronage, and thereby make a critical intervention into Naples' liturgical life. As I have established, Charles' head reliquary fulfilled many of the common functions of similar busts found in this period, especially those the king was intimately acquainted with, such as that of St Denis.²⁶⁰ Given the monarch's familiarity with such reliquaries, it is more likely that Charles intended to commission a liturgical object which aligned with the archbishop's vision for the new cathedral's liturgical and devotional programmes. The French milieu in which Charles II moved already demonstrated the role of reliquary busts in city-wide processions and their capacity to facilitate heightened interactions between the saint and its devotees. His decision, therefore, should not be reduced to an act of furnishing. Rather, we ought to conceive of the bust as a calculated intervention into Naples' ritual life. By commissioning the bust and ensuring the mobility of

²⁵⁷ As we will see in Chapter Three, Gennaro's feast was returned to its original date - 19 September - by 1337. It is unclear exactly when, or why, this occurred.

²⁵⁸ Montgomery, "The use," 79.

²⁵⁹ Prologue, p. 31.

²⁶⁰ King Charles II was almost certainly familiar with St Denis' bust, making this comparison critical for our analysis. The monarch had stayed in Paris and at St Denis a handful of times between the 1280s and 90s. Bruzelius, *The Stones*, 77.

Gennaro's relics, the king extended the saint's presence beyond the confines of the cathedral and cultivated a more communal form of devotion. Moreover, given the example of St Denis, the monarch was likely aware of the narrative potential of such objects in the ritualised reenactments of hagiographic legends. Gennaro's reliquary, therefore, could play a dynamic role in the memorialisation of the saint's execution.

Given its impact upon Naples' religious life, it is highly unlikely that the monarch commissioned such an object without any input from Archbishop da Viterbo. Though without further evidence, we cannot know to what extent the cleric was involved in its creation, I suspect that this bust was the product of a collaboration between the two authorities, if not other senior ecclesiastical members, as they mapped out the saintly burial plots in the cathedral and reconfigured the city's liturgical life.

The decision to commit Gennaro's relics to a reliquary, rather than inter them in an altar, demonstrates the plans that the king and the archbishop had for San Gennaro's cult were exceptional amongst the relics of Neapolitan saints housed in the cathedral. As I previously mentioned, the relics of the saints previously interred in the Stefania were unilaterally translated to the Assumption and buried within several altars. Gennaro's remains were exempt from this programme. Whereas his fellow Neapolitan patrons lay immobile and unseen within stone tombs, San Gennaro was granted a unique dimension of visibility and mobility. These qualities, combined with the bust's exceptionally public-facing ritual function, denotes San Gennaro's status as the patron of the Cathedral of the Assumption. By giving him a public face, the reliquary transformed the saint into an emblem of the new cathedral. By extension, the bust also revitalised the saint's patronage over the local church, which, as we saw in the Prologue, was a long-standing title.²⁶¹ As we will see further in the next chapter, San Gennaro's defence of the church manifested during acute moments of ecclesiastical crisis.

Gennaro's appointment as patron conformed to a broader pattern of cathedral – and civic – patronage in central and northern Italy during this period. During the fourteenth century, the patrons of cathedrals in these territories were, with some exceptions, bishop-saints with ancient ties to the local church.²⁶² In most cases, these saints were the ancient bishops of their respective see. Though these bishops were designated as cathedral patron, the buildings themselves were named for the Virgin Mary. The cathedral in Modena exemplifies this arrangement. While dedicated to the Assumption of Mary, the ancient Modenese bishop Geminianus served as its principal patron.²⁶³ Comparable models can be found in Florence and Milan, where St Zenobius and St Ambrose shared their respective patronage with Marian dedications. San Gennaro's patronage over the Neapolitan cathedral, named for the Virgin of the Assumption, thus conforms to this established pattern. In this respect, Naples' cathedral thus demonstrates the influence of central and northern Italy upon its programme of sanctity. As in Modena, Florence, and Milan, among others, Charles II selected a bishop-saint with longstanding ties to Naples to share the patronage of his new cathedral alongside the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, these models suggest that the king elected the saint as the city's civic patron. As we will see in Part Two, these cathedral

²⁶¹ Prologue, pp. 29-30.

²⁶² Webb, *Patrons*, 6–7.

²⁶³ For other examples: St Ambrose in the Cathedral of the Nativity of Mary in Milan; St Zenobius in the Cathedral of Mary of the Flowers in Florence. Though the cathedrals of southern Italy do not unilaterally conform to this model, we could include: St Barbatus in the Cathedral of the Assumption in Benevento; St Modestinus in the Cathedral of the Assumption in Avellino.

patrons often doubled as civic protectors during this period, and their feasts served as communal, shared celebrations.

While we can situate his election within this broader model, the choice of San Gennaro over that of his fellow cathedral saints is puzzling. This martyr was never a bishop of Naples; if the Assumption was meant to uphold the venerability of the Neapolitan episcopate, St Aspren, St Agrippinus or St Athanasius were all equally appropriate candidates. Instead, I posit that Gennaro's election reflected his historic intercession for the Neapolitan church and his special patronage over the episcopal office. Furthermore, this decision could suggest that, despite the diminishing evidence, the cult had not waned over the central Middle Ages but instead remained an integral civic devotion, one which compelled the saint's appointment. In any case, the reliquary bust confirms that it is Gennaro, above the rest, who was specially tasked with interceding on behalf of the local church.

San Gennaro's position within the new cathedral complex is perhaps best portrayed in a mosaic constructed in the apse of the chapel of Santa Maria del Principio [See Image Two].²⁶⁴ The image depicts the enthroned Virgin Mary, holding the Christ child, flanked by San Gennaro and St Restituta. Before going any further, it is necessary to introduce the latter. Like Gennaro, Restituta is a mysterious figure. According to a tenth century *vita* written by Peter the Deacon (of Naples), she was born in the later third century in Carthage.²⁶⁵ On account of her Christian faith, Restituta was arrested and then survived several attempts on her life. After being beaten, tossed into the sea, and nailed to a wooden board, she ultimately was burned to death on orders of the local governor in 284. The virgin's remains were then placed on a boat which, by the help of an angel, landed on Ischia. By the mid-ninth, her relics had been translated to the cathedral in Naples and interred in a side altar dedicated to her name.²⁶⁶

According to an inscription at the base of the mosaic, it was constructed in 1313. This piece has been the subject of a handful of artistic investigations, which have emphasised its use of early Christian designs to highlight the basilica's antiquity.²⁶⁷ While a valid reading, we have yet to conceive of this image as the visual articulation of Gennaro and Restituta's perceived relationship as well as the cathedral complex's newfound spatial integration. I begin with the former.

First, I propose that this mosaic presents Gennaro and Restituta as each other's gender-foil.²⁶⁸ The pair share many similarities, beginning with their legends. Both were arrested on

²⁶⁴ Lucherini argued that this image was meant to stake a spatial claim to Gennaro's cult which was once centred in Saint Restituta but had been removed, along with his relics, to the cathedral sacristy. Her theory is especially viable if the relics were in fact uncovered in the chapel's altar. Lucherini, "Il Chronicon," 521–49; "San Gennaro negato," 209.

²⁶⁵ For the legend and the *vita*: Vinni Lucherini, "Santa Restituta venuta dall'Africa. L'utilizzazione canonica di un mito altomedievale nella Napoli angioina," in *I santi venuti dal mare: atti del V Convegno internazionale di studi*, ed. Maria Stella Calò Mariani (Mario Adda: Bari, 2009), 77–100; Edoardo D'Angelo, "Il viaggio come martirio: santa Restituta tra Ischia e Napoli," *Kritik. Rivista di letteratura e critica cultura*, 2 (2024): 37–42.

²⁶⁶ The circumstances surrounding her translation remain obscure. See again: Lucherini, "Santa Restituta."

²⁶⁷ For more on the mosaic: Claudia d'Alberto, "Arte come strumento di propaganda: il mosaico di Santa Maria del Principio nel duomo di Napoli," *Arte Medievale* 7 (2008): 105–23; Vinni Lucherini, "1313–1320: il cosiddetto Lello da Orvieto, mosaicista e pittore, a Napoli, tra committenza episcopale e committenza canonica," in *El Trecento en obres. Art de Catalunya i art d'Europa al segle XIV*, ed. R. Alcoy (Barcelona: University of Barcelona, 2009), 185–215.

²⁶⁸ For a selected bibliography on saints and gender: Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, *Forgetful of their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500–1100* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Caroline Walker Bynum,

account of their faith, survived several attempts on their lives, and were ultimately victims of the Diocletian persecutions. Neither originated from Naples but both were readily adopted by the city. Both emerge from obscurity; almost nothing is known of either saint prior to their arrest. With the advent of the Angevin cathedral, both cults were now anchored to this complex by the presence of their remains.

The iconographical imagery employed in the mosaic, however, presents each figure according to their sex. Dressed in clerical vestments and holding a crosier, Gennaro's garb refers to a role exclusively limited to men: the episcopate, or more generally the ordained clergy. Alternatively, Restituta is dressed as a female monastic and wears a floral crown, a common marker of martyrdom specifically tailored to the virgin (female) martyrs.²⁶⁹ The books in each saint's hands further emphasises their roles. Gennaro, for example, holds a passage from Sirach: "Blessed is the man found without blemish."²⁷⁰ By the later Middle Ages, this quote was commonly sung as an antiphon during festive masses dedicated to male martyrs.²⁷¹ Alternatively, Restituta's reads: "Come, bride of Christ, receive the crown,"²⁷² in reference to the antiphon employed on the feasts of female martyrs, often referred to as Virgin Martyrs.²⁷³ Such depictions reinforce customary saintly archetypes: Gennaro, the martyred bishop and Restituta, the Virgin Martyr.²⁷⁴ Together, they represent two idealised spiritual paths for late medieval men and women. Gennaro's role points to a life of chastity, ordination, and service to the Church. Depicted as a female monastic, Restituta emulates a life of virginity, poverty and contemplation.

At the very least, the choice to raise Gennaro and Restituta as the patrons of the new cathedral and basilica, respectively, attests to Naples' sustained fascination with the ancient Christian martyrs and their own historical past. Based on their iconographic portrayals, it is evidence that the pair were understood as each other's gendered-counterpart, two sides of the same coin.

At the same time, this mosaic vividly depicts the spatial integration of the Angevin cathedral. In this artwork, the patroness of the basilica (Restituta) and the patron of the cathedral (Gennaro) are positioned in deferential proximity to the Virgin, who holds the central position. The Virgin's elevated significance, demonstrated by her place on the throne, signals her role as the patroness of the entire complex. Restituta and Gennaro thus come together at the foot of her throne,

Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters, ed. Catherine M. Mooney (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); John Kitchen, *Saints' Lives and the Rhetoric of Gender: Male and Female in Merovingian Hagiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

²⁶⁹ Stanley E. Weed, "Venerating the Virgin Martyrs: The Cult of the 'Virgines Capitaes' in Art, Literature, and Popular Piety," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 41 (4) (2010): 1065–91.

²⁷⁰ Sirach 31:8. "Beatus vir qui inventus est sine macula." See Image Two.

²⁷¹ Rhianydd Hallas, "Shared Sounds: Using Borrowed Melodies to Create Shared Contexts in Late Medieval Saints' Offices," *Religions* 16 (12) (2025): 1–17.

²⁷² "Veni, sponsa XPI (Christi), accipe coronam." See Image Two.

²⁷³ It was also utilised during consecration ceremonies for female religious. For its use in both contexts: James Borders, "Gender, Performativity, and Allusion in Medieval Services for the Consecration of Virgins" in *The Oxford Handbook of the New Cultural History of Music*, ed. Jane F. Fulcher (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 16–38; Elena Khalaf, "Veni sponsa Christi, accipe coronam": ipotesi sull'ubicazione originaria, sulla funzione e sulla committenza del Polittico di Santa Chiara di Paolo Veneziano," *Arte Veneta* 80 (2023): 9–33.

²⁷⁴ For bishop archetypes: Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 257–260; John Ott and Trpimir Vedriš, eds., *Saintly Bishops and Bishops' Saints*, (Zagreb: Hagiotheca Humaniora, 2012). For Virgins: André Vauchez, "Between Virginity and Spiritual Espousals: Models of Feminine Sainthood in the Christian West in the Middle Ages," *The Medieval History Journal* 2 (2) (1999): 349 – 359.

representing the union of these two ecclesiastical spaces under the dedication of the Assumption. Concurrently, we might also consider that the two saints represented two distinct ecclesiastical bodies. Restituta embodied the cathedral chapter, which adopted her as its patroness and was known as the Congregation of St Restituta, while Gennaro's vestments aligned him with the Neapolitan episcopal office. In this reading, the mosaic reflects the recently negotiated integration of the basilica and cathedral spaces as well as the reconciliation of the chapter's and archbishop's authority under the newly consolidated Angevin complex.

Most importantly for our purposes, this image visually confirms the election of San Gennaro as the patron of Charles II's cathedral. This decision was not made in isolation, but instead in tandem with the elevation of Restituta as a patroness over the basilica. Together, the two martyrs were to usher in the use of these new spaces and anchor the Angevin project in a long-gone, but vividly memorialised, age of Christian martyrdom.



*Image Two: Virgin and Child Enthroned between San Gennaro and St Restituta, Chapel of Santa Maria del Principio, Basilica of Saint Restituta, Naples.*²⁷⁵

Conclusions

The reliquary bust of San Gennaro represents the strategic efforts of King Charles II and Archbishop Giacomo da Viterbo to articulate a new liturgical and devotional programme that suited the newly constructed Cathedral of the Assumption. As this chapter has argued, this critical intervention into San Gennaro's cult ultimately points towards the saint's elevation as patron of the new Angevin cathedral and as the city's civic patron. This development formed a part of a wider strategy to reconfigure Naples' cathedral worthy of a major European capital city. Central to this process was the rededication of the cathedral complex to the Virgin Mary, in line with the

²⁷⁵ Photo by Clare Whitton, September 2023.

prevailing practice in late medieval northern Italy. San Gennaro was thus to share civic honours with the Virgin, as did several other patrons of Italian cathedrals during this period. Gennaro's election thus reflects the concerted efforts of both monarch and archbishop to align the cathedral's institutional and symbolic identity with broader contemporary trends. Moreover, the election made San Gennaro's feast and his relic the centre of liturgical activity within the Assumption. As we will continue to see in this thesis, the Januarian feasts dominated the cathedral's liturgical calendar, and his cult increasingly consumed the chapter's devotional life.

Drawing upon established French models for head reliquaries, we have seen how Gennaro's bust was not only intended as a static object for veneration, but as the protagonist in a civic procession which extended the saint's physical presence from the cathedral into the city streets. As we will see in the next chapter, this sense of presence was dramatically augmented with the introduction of Gennaro's blood relic towards the latter half of the century. At the same time, the bust could be mobilised as a performative instrument in the recreation of hagiographical legends in ritual contexts, as we will see poignantly in Chapter Three. Yet, when considering the function of the bust, we cannot forget its critical function in the reassertion and renewal of San Gennaro's patronage over the city of Naples. Charles II's familiarity with French head reliquaries underscores the intentionality behind his commission. Such liturgical awareness suggests that, contrary to previous characterisations, the monarch was not a passive or distant patron but an active collaborator, who engaged with the cathedral's furnishings and a broader liturgical vision for the new space. Ultimately, the consequences of Charles II's bust resonated through the later Middle Ages. San Gennaro's specific patronage over the cathedral, and by extension the church in Naples, emerged as one of the most critical components of his cult.

Chapter Two: San Gennaro of the Western Schism

Introduction:



Image Three: Reliquary Temple/Tabernacle of San Gennaro's Blood²⁷⁶

Seated in majesty upon a golden platform and beneath a gothic arch, a small figurine of San Gennaro reaches out to bless his people [See Image Three]. This tiny bishop, equipped with a mitre and crosier, is nestled within the decorative trefoils and flanking traceries, which clearly evoke the gothic design of the Cathedral of the Assumption. Exemplifying the highly localised, 'micro-architectural' trends found in late medieval reliquaries, this miniaturised cathedral visually

²⁷⁶ Image: Carlo Bertelli, ed. "Tabernacolo o Tempietto-Reliquiario Del Sangue Di San Gennaro," *Restituzioni*, 25 March 2021. <https://restituzioni.com/opere/tabernacolo-o-tempietto-reliquiario-del-sangue-di-san-gennaro/?referrer=1270>.

declares that the saint himself has taken up residence within the Assumption.²⁷⁷ Four pinnacles, complete with crockets, rise above the temple, drawing our attention upwards, towards the focus of this reliquary: two small vials of blood.

The precise origins of this tabernacle are uncertain; no evidence of its original commissioner or designers survives. We are only left to imagine the circumstances of its inception. The reliquary has been amended several times in the last five hundred years. The centrepiece, the temple and bishop, has been roughly dated to the second half of the fourteenth century. The smaller gothic temple was added in the fifteenth century; the base in 1643; and the floral halo in 1676. While the exact provenance of this reliquary remains uncertain, its function is well-known: to display San Gennaro's miraculous blood. Today, the blood sits within the halo, encased in its glass *teca* (17th c.).²⁷⁸ Situating the saints' blood atop of this architectural model not only spatially anchors the relic to the cathedral, but also denotes the church's sense of ownership over this sacred object. Hoisting the holy blood far above the crowds, this reliquary temple ensures the visibility of the relic and its thaumaturgical abilities. Here, San Gennaro's blood does not remain congealed. Instead, it bubbles, melts, and liquifies.

In this chapter, we explore the multitude of meanings and interpretations attached to San Gennaro's miraculous blood during the liquefaction of 1389, its earliest known occurrence. As we will see further below, previous scholarship has interpreted this liquefaction as a symbol of divine approval for the ongoing Angevin reconquest of Naples.²⁷⁹ While this interpretation has its merits, it makes several assumptions relating to the miracle's function. This reading not only transposes an early modern understanding of the liquefaction onto this event, but it also assumes that the miracle was only capable of evoking a singular message.²⁸⁰ Additionally, it casts the city of Naples as a homogenous group and neglects to account for the city's intense political and ecclesiastical fragmentation which informed its interpretation. Finally, this reductive approach does not bear in mind the oddity of the situation. In 1389, the miraculous blood of San Gennaro was exceptional amongst relics of saints' blood in late medieval Europe.²⁸¹ Without any models of liquefying saintly blood to compare the liquefaction to, how did Naples know that Gennaro was pleased? What was it about liquefying blood that could indicate divine approval - or disapproval?

Although a great deal of ink has been spilled on the blood of San Gennaro, these issues have received little attention. This is not to say previous scholarship has avoided the liquefaction altogether. On the contrary, the multiple meanings ascribed to the relic in its post-sixteenth century

²⁷⁷ Hahn, *The Reliquary Effect*, 91–93.

²⁷⁸ It is difficult to say how the relic was displayed during the medieval period. It would need to be fastened to the top of the structure, necessitating a receptacle similar to the modern *teca*. Unfortunately, none of the *teca*'s predecessors survive. For a detailed description of the *teca* and ampoules, see: Helen Hills, "Beyond Mere Containment: The Neapolitan Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro and the Matter of Materials," *California Studies* 3 (2012): 1–21.

²⁷⁹ The primary example being: Benito Iezzi, "Il miracolo del 1389," in *Il Miracolo di San Gennaro visto dai viaggiatori stranieri tra il Seicento e L'Ottocento*, ed. Franco Strazzullo (Napoli: Arte Tipografica, 1989), 3–25.

²⁸⁰ For later interpretations of the blood: de Ceglia, "Thinking with the saint,"; "A Liquid Miracle."

²⁸¹ Though the *Libellus Precum* (c. 4th century) speaks of the blood of St Rufinus of Capua, there is no evidence that this relic survived the late antique period. See: Delehay, "Hagiographie," 1–33; Carlo Ebanista, "Il culto del sangue dei martiri fra medioevo ed età moderna: il caso di Cimitile," *Reti Medievali Rivista* 23 (2022), 2. During the early modern period, several vials of liquefying saintly blood were recorded in Naples, including that of St John the Baptist, St Pantaleon, and St Patricia. Nevertheless, evidence of Gennaro's liquefaction predates these miracles by at least a century. See: Amitrano and Alfano, *Notizie*; Assunta Ponticelli, *Il sangue che bolle: Culti di sangue a Napoli: indagine sulle reliquie perdute e dimenticate* (Perugia: Gramma, 2012).

context has garnered much scholarly attention.²⁸² Francesco Paolo de Ceglia, Charlotte Nichols, and Celine Dauverd's work serves as critical examples.²⁸³ Though de Ceglia's research emphasises the Baroque and Enlightenment periods, his conception of the miracle as a complex, multi-dimensional event, whose interpretation was contingent upon its immediate circumstances, serves as the foundation for my own treatment. Nevertheless, the scholarly community has yet to address the liquefaction's place within the Western Schism and the late fourteenth century cult of blood relics, an omission this chapter seeks to address. To reconstruct the wider devotional and cultural milieu from which the liquefaction emerged, this chapter thus incorporates a wealth of scholarship relating to medieval blood devotions.²⁸⁴ This especially includes investigations into the cult of the Holy Blood of Christ.²⁸⁵ The work of Carolyn Walker Bynum, Nicholas Vincent and Andrew Brown, not only provides us with a blood-frenzied backdrop but also several interpretations of Christ's blood with which we might compare to Gennaro's.²⁸⁶ Additional studies on the theological and philosophical connotations of blood, including eucharistic miracles, assists - and complicates - our understanding of medieval blood miracles.²⁸⁷ Since this chapter could not possibly recount all possible conceptions of medieval blood, it focuses especially on how such relics embodied a saints' physical presence and facilitated their powerful intercession. In this way, this chapter builds off of the previous chapter. In Chapter One, we considered how the reliquary bust marked San Gennaro's patronage over the Angevin Cathedral of the Assumption and evoked his physical presence in the early fourteenth century. This chapter extends this analysis by demonstrating how the liquefaction intensified Gennaro's perceived intercessory powers and the immediacy of his presence in the later fourteenth century.

²⁸² Lucia Malafronte and Carmine Maturo, *Urbs sanguinum: Itinerario alla ricerca di prodigi di sangue a Napoli* (Naples: Intra Moenia, 2008); Ponticelli, *Il sangue*; Luigi Maria Lombardi Satriani, "Il sangue di Napoli: Il linguaggio del sangue nelle culture tradizionali," *Forum Italicum* 52 (2018): 257–65; Hills, *The Matter of Miracles*; Ebanista, "Il culto del sangue," 201–36.

²⁸³ de Ceglia, "A Liquid Miracle," 49–65; de Ceglia, *The Natural History*; Charlotte Nichols, "Plague and Politics in Early Modern Naples: The Relics of San Gennaro," in *Sickness and in Health: Disease as Metaphor in Art and Popular Wisdom*, ed. Laurinda Dixon (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 23–44; Dauverd, *Church and State in Spanish Italy*, 103–46.

²⁸⁴ The literature on medieval blood is vast. For a selected bibliography: Francesco Vattioni, ed., *Sangue e Antropologia Riti e Culto*, (Rome: Pia Unione Preziosissimo Sangue, 1987); Mark Daniel Holtz, "Cults of the Precious Blood in the Medieval Latin West" (PhD Dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1997); Bettina Bildhauer, *Medieval Blood* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006); Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Bonnie Johnson and Eleanor Decamp, ed. *Blood Matters: Studies in European Literature and Thought, 1400–1700* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

²⁸⁵ Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Blood of Christ in the Later Middle Ages," *Church History* 71 (2002): 685–714; "Seeing and Seeing Beyond: The Mass of St. Gregory in the Fifteenth Century," in *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theology in the Middle Ages*, ed. Bouché and Hamburger (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 208–40; *Wonderful Blood*.

²⁸⁶ Nicholas Vincent, *The Holy Blood: King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Brown, *Civic*.

²⁸⁷ Bettina Bildhauer, "Medieval European Conceptions of Blood: Truth and Human Integrity," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (2013): 57–76; Eugene F. Rogers, *Blood Theology: Seeing Red in Body and God-Talk* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021). For eucharistic blood: J.C. Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist: A Process of Mutual Interaction* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Marilyn Adams, *Some Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist: Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Duns Scotus, and William Ockham* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2012).

Furthermore, the ever-growing list of uses for holy blood during this period indicates the difficulties of communicating through blood miracles. Though San Gennaro's relic could liquefy, it could not speak. This chapter is dedicated, therefore, to identifying the people and circumstances which spoke on the blood's behalf, paying special attention to the stakeholders who mobilised the relic with their particular ambitions in mind. Admitting that the limited evidence base prioritises the vantagepoint of Naples' political and ecclesiastical elite, I attempt to account for the city's non-noble classes, where sources allow. Ultimately, this chapter seeks to challenge our current, one-dimensional reading of the 1389 liquefaction by producing a series of overlapping and, at times, competing interpretations of the miracle.

To do this, this chapter relies heavily on the *Chronicon Siculum (Siculum)*.²⁸⁸ The *Siculum* is an anonymous history of southern Italy spanning the fourth century to 1396. It exists as a singular manuscript in the Vatican Apostolic Library where it was uncovered by Giuseppe de Blasiis in the 1880s.²⁸⁹ De Blasiis dated the text to roughly 1396.²⁹⁰ His suggestion is widely accepted. Until de Blasiis published an edition of the *Siculum* in 1887, the text remained unknown. It was never previously published nor is it referenced in any prior history of Naples. As Samantha Kelly and Robert Musto have identified, the text seems to be the work of a wealthy Neapolitan local historian with a keen interest in the rulers and aristocracy of Naples.²⁹¹ He likely hailed from either the Nido or Capuana *seggi*, that is, political and administrative organisations led by members of the city's noble classes which were organised along the boundaries of local neighbourhoods.²⁹² Based on this author's education level, he was likely a member of the aristocratic Capuana or Nido families. Perhaps most importantly for our purposes, he was also an avid Angevin supporter. The significance of his allegiances will become clearer below. Beyond its depiction of the liquefaction, the *Siculum* is also a critical resource into the lived experience of the schism and the Angevin-Durazzo conflict in Naples and will accordingly underpin much of the analysis which follows. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the *Siculum* remains the sole testimony to the 1389 liquefaction. Our understanding of this event is therefore mediated through its anonymous author, whose biases and political agendas shaped his narrative. Where possible, this chapter strives to distinguish between the author's rhetorical objectives from the historical event and consider alternative readings of the blood which may complicate the author's presentation.

This chapter will thus be divided into three parts. The first will set our scene: Naples' civil war and the outbreak of the Western Schism. Identifying the city's fragmented allegiances during this period will prove critical for the interpretation sections which follow. The second part explores the multi-faceted perceptions of, and uses for, holy blood during the late medieval period. These relic models will thus allow me to offer several interpretations of Gennaro's blood in the third and final part. Before beginning our analysis, it would be helpful to define the limitations of this chapter and my terms. This chapter is not a quest for the blood's origins, but it is informed by the problems its abrupt introduction presents. San Gennaro's blood relic seems to appear out of thin air. The *Siculum* is our earliest evidence of its existence, and the text does not account for its background.

²⁸⁸ de Blasiis, *Cronicon*.

²⁸⁹ The *Siculum* was found by de Blasiis in a selection of late medieval historical documents. Kelly has suggested that the anonymous author was compiling an archive for his own research or even for historical preservation. The *Siculum* remained in private collections until it was donated to the Vatican Library. For more on the manuscript tradition, see: Kelly, *The Cronaca*, 89–91.

²⁹⁰ de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, ix–x.

²⁹¹ Kelly, *The Cronaca*, 21.

²⁹² We will hear more about the formation of the *seggi* in Chapter Three, pp. 90–91.

Though the relic's provenance remains highly speculative, Januarian historians largely agree that it emerged in the latter half of the fourteenth century.²⁹³ The relic's obscure historical background curtails my ability to parse its meanings within a late fourteenth century context. Furthermore, there is the issue of the object itself. Today, Gennaro's blood exists in two glass ampoules [See Image Four]. These vials have not been subjected to any scientific investigations nor have they been reliably dated. Historical references to these containers - and their number - are inconsistent. Sources utilise the terms 'vial' and 'ampoule' interchangeably, as will I throughout this analysis. The relic is also referred to in the singular and the plural.²⁹⁴ For the sake of clarity, I will refer to the blood in the singular.



Image Four: Two ampoules of San Gennaro's blood in the teca (late 17th c.)²⁹⁵

I: A Schism and a Civil war

The Western Schism began with the election of anti-Pope Clement VII in September of 1378. Only four months earlier, the College of Cardinals had tapped Bartolomeo Prignano, Pope

²⁹³ The blood is absent from the *Cronaca di Partenope*, written in 1350, suggesting that the relic emerged between the *Cronaca* (1350) and the *Siculum* (1389). While the liquefaction appears in various written accounts after 1389, explanations for its origins do not appear until the mid-sixteenth century. Relying on well-established tropes found in the legends of the early Christian martyrs, and building on Fra Bernardino's account (See Chapter Six), these sources recount how an elderly woman mopped up the saint's blood after his beheading. For those legends: Pietro De Stefano, *Descrittione dei luoghi sacri della città di Napoli* (Naples: Raymond Amato, 1560), 9; Romeo, *Septem*, 51–52; Tutini, *Memorie*, 54.

²⁹⁴ For example, in the *Siculum*, the blood is referenced in the singular. Later, in 1468, a Neapolitan humanist (Lupo de Spejo) referred to it in the plural: Antonio Vuolo, "Tre Manoscritti agiografici poco noti della Biblioteca nazionale di Napoli," *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'università di Napoli* 28 (1985/86): 121–23.

²⁹⁵ Image: "Blood of Naples Saint Fails to Liquefy in What Some See as Bad Omen," *Reuters*, 16 December 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/lifestyle/blood-of-naples-saint-fails-to-liquefy-in-what-some-see-as-bad-omen-idUSKBN28Q2UX/>

Urban VI, as Peter's successor. Historians have identified various reasons for the subsequent split: Urban VI's difficult character, the curia's return to Rome from Avignon, tensions between Italian and French cardinals, amongst others.²⁹⁶ While the immediate trigger for the schism is not our purpose here, its consequences – namely the proceeding crises in ecclesiastical governance and the economy of salvation – are.²⁹⁷ The Western Schism created dual papal courts, Urban's in Rome and Clement's in Avignon, and thus dual church hierarchies. As each pope vied for control and clergymen fractured between papal allegiances, cities across Europe saw the duplication of ecclesiastical offices, especially episcopates. Cities and dioceses suddenly had two of everything: popes, archbishops, and, in effect, churches.

Naples was not exempt from this dilemma. In the first decade of the schism, both popes elected their own archbishops in rapid-fire succession [See Chart One]. Though appointments often overlapped, archbishops frequently fled the city as it changed political hands. This repetitive cycle began immediately after Clement's election in 1378.²⁹⁸ While it would be too tedious to list all of Naples' vacillating episcopal appointments here, I would like to make note of the situation at the time of the liquefaction. In August of 1389, a Clementine archbishop sat on Naples' episcopal throne. Upon Louis II's capture of Naples, Urban's archbishop, Niccolò Zanasio, fled the city. Clement tapped the Franciscan Guglielmo Guindazzo, then the head of the Hospital of the Annunziata, to oversee the archdiocese. Guindazzo's appointment was advantageous to the antipope. Guindazzo was Neapolitan by birth and a member of the Capuana *seggio*.²⁹⁹ His affiliations with the Capuana and the Franciscan order, as well as his extensive experience in administrative leadership, positioned him to sway the city's obedience towards Avignon. We will hear more about Guindazzo's episcopal position towards the end of this chapter. Like elsewhere in Europe, the inconsistency in ecclesiastical governance created an intense power vacuum and effectively created two churches in Naples: one Urbanist, and one Clementine.

The duplication of popes had also prompted a sacramental - and subsequently spiritual - catastrophe.³⁰⁰ By questioning the identity of the true pope, the schism had disrupted the line of apostolic succession which threatened the validity of the sacraments. Liturgies celebrated by clergy who supported the 'wrong' pope were deemed illicit and could threaten one's salvation. Intense anxieties regarding this sacramental disunity circulated Europe during the 1380s and 90s, as showcased in the writings of popular mystics.³⁰¹ In search of licit liturgies, communities began

²⁹⁶ For more on the outbreak of the schism: Joelle Rollo-Koster and Thomas M Izbicki, ed. *A Companion to the Great Western Schism (1378-1417)* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Philippe Genequand, *Une Politique Pontificale en Temps de Crise* (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2013); Joëlle Rollo-Koster, *The Great Western Schism, 1378–1417: Performing Legitimacy, Performing Unity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

²⁹⁷ For a succinct breakdown of European allegiances, and specifically the financial consequences, see again: Genequand, *Une Politique*.

²⁹⁸ After Archbishop Bernard de Rodes defected from the Urbanist camp, the people of Naples sacked his episcopal palace. De Rodes escaped and Urban replaced him with Ludovico Bozzuto. Bozzuto eventually fled after Queen Joanna's soldiers destroyed all his possessions in Naples. de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 42-43; Ingeborg Walter, *de Rodes*, *Bernard* in *DBI*, IX (1967); Ingeborg Walter, *Bozzuto*, *Ludovico* in *DBI*, XIII (1971).

²⁹⁹ Salvatore Marino, "Un Patrimonio Storico a Rischio: L'Archivio dell'Annunziata di Napoli," in *L'Archivio dell'Annunziata di Napoli*, ed. Salvatore Marino (Pisa: Pacini, 2019), 195–97.

³⁰⁰ For the Schism's spiritual crisis, see: David Zachariah Flanagan, "Extra Ecclesiam Salus Non est - Sed Quae Ecclesia? Ecclesiology and Authority in the Late Middle Ages," in *A Companion to the Great Western Schism (1378-1417)*, ed. Joelle Rollo-Koster and Thomas M Izbicki (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 333–74.

³⁰¹ Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints, and Visionaries of the Great Schism, 1378-1417* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2006).

traveling to attend mass in cities with validly ordained clergy.³⁰² Attempting to quell the other's liturgies, Urban and Clement often banned public religious services in locations under their respective control. This was the case in Naples, for example. In early 1386, Urban prohibited the Neapolitan clergy from saying mass publicly.³⁰³ As we will see towards the end of his chapter, Urban's prescription was reversed on 19 September, the patronal feast of San Gennaro.

While the Neapolitan experience of the Western Schism paralleled broader European developments, it also produced uniquely destabilising consequences in the form of an outright civil war. Almost immediately upon his election, Queen Joanna I of Naples offered her support to the antipope, Clement. As in the words of Elizabeth Casteen, Joanna's decision was "nothing short of catastrophic."³⁰⁴ In backing Clement, the queen plunged her realms into a civil war, encouraged rival claimants to challenge her position, and enabled her own demise. Pope Urban excommunicated the Neapolitan sovereign and championed one of Joanna's rivals to overthrow her: Charles III of Durazzo, Joanna's second cousin.³⁰⁵ Financed by the Roman pope and the Angevins in Hungary, Charles invaded the Regno in 1380. He captured Naples on 16 July 1381. Joanna surrendered and was then assassinated one year later.³⁰⁶

Charles of Durazzo's conquest was only the beginning of a protracted civil war. Between 1382 and 1384, Joanna's adopted heir, Louis I of Anjou, waged war with Charles throughout southern Italy.³⁰⁷ Louis I was ultimately unsuccessful in his efforts to dislodge the Durazzo from Naples. After Charles and Louis I died, the crisis was passed down to yet another generation. Both men were succeeded by their sons, Ladislaus of Durazzo³⁰⁸ and Louis II of Anjou³⁰⁹, respectively. In 1388, Louis II began his campaign for the Neapolitan capital. After the city changed hands several times, his Angevin forces finally retook Naples in April of 1389. Though the Durazzo camp retreated, the throne remained in a precarious position.³¹⁰ Louis II could not finance a complete reconquest of the Regno; he desperately needed external support to conclude this almost decade-long conflict. Further compounding issues was the state of his capital city. At that time, Naples was a hotbed of famine, riots, and political violence. The city suffered immensely over the past

³⁰² This was the case in Bruges, for example. Flanagan, "Extra Ecclesiam," 334.

³⁰³ de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 65.

³⁰⁴ Elizabeth Casteen, *From She-Wolf to Martyr: The Reign and Disputed Reputation of Johanna I of Naples* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 197.

³⁰⁵ Charles III was the grandson of John of Gravina, Duke of Durazzo, the youngest son of King Charles II of Anjou. John founded the Durazzo cadet branch of the House of Anjou. Charles' invasion was the latest in a string of succession crises which marked Joanna's reign. From the inception of her queenship, numerous rival claimants, including nine male cousins, emerged to contest her place. Though the queen enjoyed relative peace in the 1370s, the schism reagitated the issue with a vengeance. For the various contests to Joanna's authority: Elizabeth Casteen, "Sex and Politics in Naples: The Regnant Queenship of Johanna I," *Journal of the Historical Society* 11 (2011): 183–210; Davide Passerini, "Gli Angiò-Durazzo: la rappresentazione del potere" (PhD Dissertation, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, 2020), 40–43; Kristjan Toomaspoeg, "Giovanna I d'Angiò, regina di Sicilia: stato della ricerca e prospettive di una nuova biografia," *Quaderno di Polygraphia* 8 (2024): 113–29.

³⁰⁶ de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 49; É.-G. Léonard, "La captivité et la mort de Jeanne Ière de Naples," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 41 (1924): 42–77.

³⁰⁷ Passerini, "Gli Angiò-Durazzo," 43–50.

³⁰⁸ For Ladislaus: Andreas Kiesewetter, *Ladislaus d'Angiò Durazzo, re di Sicilia* in *DBI* (LXIX), 39–50.

³⁰⁹ Both Ladislaus and Louis II were children when their fathers died. Their mothers acted as regents until they came of age. Ladislaus' mother, Margaret of Durazzo, will be particularly important later in this chapter. For an overview of her reign: Passerini, "Gli Angiò-Durazzo," 52–60.

³¹⁰ Genequand, *Une Politique*, 352.

decade.³¹¹ The recurring sieges barraged the city's defences and cost hundreds of lives. The political instability created a power vacuum, sparking internal conflict between the Neapolitan aristocratic families, also referred to as *seggi* here, as they wrestled for control. Violent riots broke out in the streets. A city-wide famine augmented the chaos; as stated in the *Siculum*, “neither grain nor other corn nor other foodstuffs” could be found in Naples, so much so that “everyone was as if dying of hunger.”³¹² Gennaro's relic seems to best capture the zeitgeist of the decade: bloody and uncontrolled.

Mid-August 1389 marked an almost miraculous shift in Naples' fortunes. On the 16th, a ship arrived with provisions for the starving city (specifically salted meats)³¹³ along with two French messengers. The *Siculum* implies that their arrival was cause for great celebration; the city was lit with lanterns and the messengers excited the people of Naples with “much great news.”³¹⁴ On 17 August, the blood of San Gennaro liquified, an event we will return to shortly. On the same day, there was a procession to the Church of Santa Chiara where the French messengers presented a letter from King Charles VI of France, Louis II's elder cousin. In the letter, the French monarch pledged his unequivocal military and financial support of his cousin's conquest of the Regno and thus attempted to conclude the civil war.³¹⁵

Before turning to the liquefaction and its interpretations, it is necessary to summarise the complex web of political and papal allegiances which fractured the city during this period [See Chart One]. As I mentioned earlier, Queen Joanna backed the anti-pope, Clement. Her Angevin successors similarly maintained the Avignon obedience. Though Urban VI was himself a Neapolitan, and was surrounded by a Neapolitan curia, he did not enjoy unilateral obedience from the city of his birth.³¹⁶ Naples' secular clergy, for example, largely professed Clementine allegiances.³¹⁷ However, Urban did enjoy widespread support from Naples' urban populace, who frequently protested any form of Clementine supremacy. For example, when Clement arrived in Naples shortly after his election in 1378, riots forced him to flee to Avignon.³¹⁸ Urban was also supported, often begrudgingly, by the Durazzo. The major exception to this rule was Queen Margaret, Ladislaus' mother and regent, as we will see further below. The allegiances of Naples' nobility are more difficult to determine; they were largely dependent upon the civil war and changed frequently. Their loyalties have thus been characterised as “to Naples.”³¹⁹ To make matters more complicated, papal endorsements did not always equate to political loyalties. For example,

³¹¹ Such violence is described in the *Siculum* and in the later 15th century *Diurnali* of the Duke of Monteleone. For example: de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 69; *Diurnali detti del duca di Monteleone*, ed. Nunzio F. Faraglia (Napoli: Tipografia Francesco Gianni & Figli, 1895), 35-36.

³¹² “...quod non inveniabatur granum nec aliquod fraumentum nec aliqua derrata... omnes quasi fame moriebatur.” de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 84.

³¹³ “carnibus salitis,” Ibid., 85.

³¹⁴ “Maxime luminarie.” Possibly fireworks. “Multis bonis novis.” Ibid., 85.

³¹⁵ Ultimately, Louis was crowned King of Naples by antipope Clement in Avignon and began slowly retaking the Regno. The Angevins remained in contested control of the kingdom until 1399, when it was once again lost to Ladislaus of Durazzo.

³¹⁶ For more on Urban's Neapolitan curia, see: Stefan Weib, “Luxury and Extravagance at the Papal Court in Avignon and the Outbreak of the Great Western Schism,” in *A Companion to the Great Western Schism (1378-1417)*, ed. Joelle Rollo-Koster and Thomas M Izbicki (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 67-88. For an overview of Urban's approach to schismatic Naples: Salvatore Fodale, *La politica napoletana di Urbano VI* (Roma: Caltanissetta, 1973).

³¹⁷ Genequand, *Une Politique*, 352.

³¹⁸ de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 36.

³¹⁹ Genequand, *Une Politique*, 352.

the people of Naples simultaneously endorsed an Urbanist papacy and an Angevin king.³²⁰ As this brief summary demonstrates, Naples' political and papal allegiances were complicated, often contradictory, and not always static. We might consider Naples' highly fragmented, ever-evolving political landscape like a kaleidoscope: revealing a new web of corroborative and competing interests with each new turn. This makes our task, interpreting the liquefaction, especially difficult.

Having outlined Naples' political circumstances, we can finally direct our attention to San Gennaro's blood. The relevant passage from the *Siculum* is as follows:

“...and following on the 17th day [of August], there was a great procession on behalf of the miracle, which revealed our Lord Jesus Christ, concerning the blood of Blessed Januarius, which was black in colour, and then was liquified as if it was of the body of blessed Januarius on that day itself...”³²¹

Our anonymous author informs us that Gennaro's blood is capable of transforming both its colour and its physical state. Before liquefying, the relic is "black in colour," and presumably hardened. Moreover, this melted relic was living blood, as if taken from Gennaro's that very day. This point is especially critical to our interpretations of the miracle, as we will see below. Our anonymous author presents the liquefaction as a spontaneous, uncontrollable event.³²² It has no trigger; it occurs on its own accord. Like most medieval miracles, its bewildering abilities are attributed to "our Lord Jesus Christ."³²³ The author generally presents this event as a joyous affair. Furthermore, the brevity of this passage suggests that this was not the first liquefaction.³²⁴ The author takes the liquefaction for granted, assuming that his audience is already aware of its possibility. Yet, his vivid description of the blood's transformation suggests that this was a rare event, worthy of awe and veneration. The *Siculum* tells us little else about this sacred relic.

Given the author's fixation on the miracle, we can surmise that this was not the relic's first appearance in the city. Based on later evidence, the blood was likely stored within the cathedral sacristy, then located in one of the church's towers, at this time.³²⁵ Whether or not the reliquary tabernacle was employed in the liturgical procession is unclear. As I mentioned in the introduction, we cannot be sure of the date of its creation. Having surveyed what we know of Gennaro's blood, we can now address the matter of interpretation. In the following investigation, I will survey the forms and functions of other blood relics circulating in late medieval Europe. These models will thus allow us to hypothesise how the liquefaction of 1389 was understood by the city's inhabitants.

³²⁰ This contradictory set of allegiances materialised poignantly in 1387; when the Angevins retook Naples that year, Neapolitans hung the flags of Louis II of Anjou and Pope Urban VI, though the pair were still sworn enemies. *Ibid.*, 351.

³²¹ “...et sequenti die XVII facta fuit maxima procexio propter miraculum quod ostendit dominus noster Ihesus Xps de sanguine beati Ianuarii quod erat in pulla, et tunc erat liquefactum tanquam si eo die esisset de corpore beati Ianuari...” de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 85. Note the spelling of *ostendit*, used to mean *ostendit*. Translation my own.

³²² de Ceglia, "A Liquid Miracle," 49–56.

³²³ Michael Goodich, *Miracles and Wonders: The Development of the Concept of Miracle, 1150-1350* (London: Routledge, 2017), 8–28.

³²⁴ Whether or not the liquefaction of 1389 was the first continues to vex historians. De Ceglia argues, for example, that the first liquefaction occurred sometimes in the 1380s and was thus a newer phenomenon in 1389. See: de Ceglia, *The Natural History*, 18–21.

³²⁵ This is attested in a cathedral inventory from 1390: Ugo Dovere, "Il piu antico documento Pontificio dell'Archivio Storico Diocesano di Napoli," *Campania Sacra* 25 (1) (1994), 3–24; G. Muller, *L'Archivio Capitolare di Napoli: Inventari e regesti, vol. II* (Napoli: Archivio Capitolare di Napoli, 1996), 280–82.

II: Bloody Context

II.I Saints' Blood:

Blood relics constituted one of the rarer varieties of sacred matter found in late medieval Europe. As indicated by the increased production of reliquary tabernacles and body-part reliquaries, bones remained commonplace.³²⁶ In the wake of the Crusades, objects from the Holy Land and Constantinople, including natural materials and Biblical items, were also widely venerated.³²⁷ Regardless of their quantity, several blood cults, especially those of the martyrs, enjoyed popular success. The earliest written reference to a blood relic appears in 386 when St Ambrose of Milan unearthed the blood of martyrs Gervasio and Protasio.³²⁸ Later in the twelfth century, vessels carrying the blood of St Maurice and his Theban legion were similarly uncovered at the cathedrals of Angers and Tours.³²⁹ According to late medieval legends, the relics were purportedly collected by St Martin of Tours and dispersed amongst Martinian sites. Other bloods were collected directly from the source, as demonstrated by those of St Francis of Assisi. Tiny ampoules of his stigmatic blood, reportedly gathered directly from his Christ-like wounds, were preserved in several Italian towns from the thirteenth century onward.³³⁰

Perhaps the most famous medieval saint's blood was that of St Thomas Becket.³³¹ After his beheading in 1170, pilgrims flocked to Canterbury Cathedral to purchase "Becket Water", that is, tin ampoules filled with a combination of the saint's blood and water.³³² This blood cult was exceedingly popular. Unlike our previous examples, the concoction produced a perpetually fluid relic, seemingly in endless supply. The relic's liquidity facilitated its widespread distribution.³³³ Ampoules from Canterbury have been found across Europe, including southern Italy.³³⁴ Not all

³²⁶ For example: Bynum, "Body-Part," 3–7; Beth Williamson, *Reliquary Tabernacles in Fourteenth-Century Italy: Image, Relic and Material Culture* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2020).

³²⁷ Neta Bodner, Renana Bartal, and Bianca Kühnel, eds., *Natural Materials of the Holy Land and the Visual Translation of Place, 500-1500* (New York: Routledge, 2017); Cynthia Hahn, *Passion Relics and the Medieval Imagination: Art, Architecture, and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020); Anna Benvenuti Papi, "Reliquie e identità cittadina. Il ruolo delle memorie d'oltremare nella costruzione del prestigio civico," in *Miracolo! emozione, spettacolo e potere nella storia dei secoli XIII-XVII*, ed. Laura Andreani and Agostino Paravinci Bagliani (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2019), 101-118.

³²⁸ Ann Marie Yasin, "Sight Lines of Sanctity at Late Antique Martyria," in *Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual, and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium*, ed. Bonna D. Wescoat and Robert G. Ousterhout (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 248–80; Alžbeta Ž. Filipová, "The Circulation of Blood, Clay, and Ideas: The Distribution of Milanese Relics in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries," *Convivium* 1 (2014): 64–75.

³²⁹ The legend of this *inventio* emerged during the twelfth century. Farmer has demonstrated how this legend served the Cathedral of Tours, then buttressing their Martinian connections. See: Farmer, *Communities*, 232–35.

³³⁰ Carla Salvati, "The Relics of the Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi" (PhD Dissertation, Concordia University, 2005), 65–103.

³³¹ We could also include the blood of St Oswald which was similarly mixed with water and consumed. See: A. Thacker, "Membra disjecta: the division of the body and the diffusion of the cult," in *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European saint*, ed. Clare Stancliffe and Eric Cambridge (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1995), 97-127.

³³² Alyce A. Jordan, "The "Water of Thomas Becket": Water as Medium, Metaphor, and Relic," in *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing and Hygiene from Antiquity through the Renaissance*, ed. Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 479–500; Kay Brainerd Slocum, *The Cult of Thomas Becket: History and Historiography through Eight Centuries* (London: Routledge, 2018).

³³³ Jordan has compared this to the distribution (and consumption) of communion. See: Jordan, "The "Water of Thomas Becket", " 485.

³³⁴ Becket's cult was especially popular in Sicily, Puglia, and Aquila. For the cult of Thomas Becket in southern Italy, see: Sandro Piussi, "Il culto di Thomas Becket ad Aquileia, Venezia e Zara," *Antichità Altoadriatiche* 26

saint's blood was restricted to glass, crystal or ceramic containers, however. Blood-stained objects, including clothing and other items from execution sites, also attested to the suffering of the saints.³³⁵ The linens of St Cecilia³³⁶ and the shirt of King St Edmund³³⁷ are only a few examples. We might also consider the proliferation of cloths stained with Francis' stigmatic blood during the late medieval period.³³⁸ Taken together, these relics represent a modest but prevalent assortment of saintly blood circulating Western Europe at the time of San Gennaro's first liquefaction. It is also worth noting here that, as far as the evidence suggests, the city of Naples did not house any saint's blood other than Gennaro's during the fourteenth century.

Despite their differences in origin, these blood relics shared several characteristics. Like other corporeal remains, these objects were displayed for public veneration, kissed and touched as a sign of devotion, processed during religious feasts, and formed the basis of civic cults.³³⁹ Excepting contact relics, they were often encased in small glass or crystal vials and ampoules. Until the late fourteenth century, these containers bore immutable, coagulated blood. Only on rare occasions, if ever, were they opened to propagate additional relics. They otherwise remained tightly sealed and were considered rare, irreplaceable artifacts. At the very least, these precedents suggest that Naples' blood was venerated in manners similar to these. We might also theorise that, like the blood in Tours, Gennaro's relic was unearthed in a surprising discovery.

Historians have long acknowledged the manifold function and meanings of saint's blood; I will limit our analysis to only a few relevant points here.³⁴⁰ Blood relics, like other kinds of corporeal remains, were channels between humans and the divine. As we saw in the previous chapter, corporeal remains evoked a saint's presence on earth while simultaneously admitting their residence in the heavenly court. However, blood was capable of acutely manifesting a saint's personhood. Building off of the Old and New Testaments, blood was understood as "the seat of life," tied especially to a person's soul, by the later Middle Ages.³⁴¹ Subsequently, encountering a saint's blood was to interact with their innermost essence.³⁴² We can therefore understand San Gennaro's relic as the manifestation of the saint's vitality here on earth. As mementos from their

(1985): 381–400; Maria Luisa Bottazzi, "Tomaso Becket nella basilica di Aquileia: celebrazione o propaganda?," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 123 (2011): 561–76; Veronika Decker and Costanza L. Cipollaro, "Shaping a Saint's Identity: The Imagery of Thomas Becket in Medieval Italy," in *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology at Canterbury*, ed. A. Bovey (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2013), 116–38.

³³⁵ For contact relics in the age of the Christian martyrs (and their memory): Umberto Fasola, "Il culto del sangue dei martiri nella chiesa primitiva," in *Sangue e antropologia nella letteratura cristiana*, ed. Francesco Vattioni (Rome: Pia Unione Preziosissimo Sangue, 1983), 1473–1489.

³³⁶ Gritje Hartmann, "Paschal I and Saint Cecilia: The Story of the Translation of Her Relics in the Liber Pontificalis," in *Relics Identity and Memory in Medieval Europe*, ed. Gritje Hartmann Marika Rasanen, and Earl Jeffrey Richards (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 55.

³³⁷ Rebecca Browett, "Touching the Holy: The Rise of Contact Relics in Medieval England," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 68 (2017): 493–509.

³³⁸ Salvati, "The Relics of the Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi.," Elisabeth Antoine-Konig, "New Dating of the Limoges Reliquaries of the Stigmatization of St Francis," in *Matter of Faith: An Interdisciplinary Study of Relics and Relic Veneration in the Medieval Period*, ed. James Robinson and Lloyd de Beer (London: The British Museum Press, 2014), 84–91.

³³⁹ Farmer, *Communities*, 234.

³⁴⁰ See fn 284, fn 285.

³⁴¹ Stephen Lacey, "Late Medieval Eucharistic Theology," in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Middle Ages*, ed. Gary Macy Ian Christopher Levy, & Kristen Van Ausdall (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 499–539.

³⁴² Bildhauer, *Medieval Blood*; Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*.

executions, the blood of the martyrs also testified to the brutalities of martyrdom.³⁴³ Now calcified and darkened, this sacred matter was once bright red and flowing from a saint's wounds. These relics thus boast of the saint's sacrifice. Yet, as much as this spilled blood attested to a violent bloodshed, it equally evoked the glories of the saint's eternal reward. By willingly sacrificing themselves on behalf of Christ, these martyrs purchased for themselves admittance into the heavenly court.³⁴⁴

These objects also communicated distinct messages relevant to individual cults. Those of St Maurice, for example, preserved the legacy of their compiler, St Martin of Tours, as much as the martyr's sacrifice. Becket Water, on the other hand, symbolised the church's struggle for liberation from its oppressors. Immediately after Becket's death, this oppressor was cast as King Henry II; as Becket's cult spread, this notion expanded to secular authorities more generally.³⁴⁵ Consequently, to carry Becket's blood, even if diluted, was to carry a tangible reminder that the church's freedom was paid for and maintained through the blood of the martyrs. As we will see further below, San Gennaro's blood was similarly capable of attesting to the autonomy of the local church in the face of an oppressor.

While San Gennaro's relic emerged from a modest but prevalent assortment of blood relics, it was exceptional in its ability to liquefy. As far as I am aware, there is no evidence that a saintly blood relic liquified prior to that of Gennaro's. Evidence for the liquefaction of St Francis' blood, for example, date to the fifteenth century.³⁴⁶ In Naples, other blood miracles do not appear in the written record until the sixteenth century.³⁴⁷ While Becket Water might have foreshadowed the liquidity of Gennaro's relic, the latter was unique in its ability to vacillate between two stages of matter. These transmutative abilities also draws our attention to a much broader distinction between his blood and that of these other saints: Gennaro's blood was understood as living.³⁴⁸ Red and flowing, Gennaro's relic showed signs of life, unlike the congealed and darkened relics of his heavenly compatriots. This is attested in the *Siculum*; our anonymous author writes that the blood was "as if it was of the body of blessed Januarius on that day itself."³⁴⁹ The introduction of San Gennaro's blood, and subsequently its liquefaction, marked a critical turning point in the history of the cult of relics. Seemingly for the first time, a saint's blood expressed an ability to reanimate itself. In this manner, Gennaro's blood is far more akin to the blood relics of Christ during this period. For this reason, I would like to turn our attention to the cult of the Holy Blood.

II.II. Christ's Blood:

³⁴³ Excepting St Francis. In this case, the blood referred to the saint's suffering *and* that of Christ, which Francis partook in by virtue of his mystical stigmata. Salvati, "The Relics of the Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi," 95–103.

³⁴⁴ Caroline Walker Bynum, "Violent Imagery in Late Medieval Piety," *Bulletin of the GHI Washington* 30 (2002): 15–16.

³⁴⁵ Anne J. Duggan, "Becket Is Dead! Long Live St Thomas," in *The Cult of St Thomas Becket in the Plantagenet World, c. 1170–c. 1220*, ed. Marie-Pierre Gelin and Paul Webster (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), 25–52.

³⁴⁶ Salvati describes two liquefying bloods of St Francis in Castelveccchio Subequo and Rome, respectively. The earliest evidence for these liquefactions appears in the mid-fifteenth century. Salvati, "The Relics of the Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi," 64–99. For a comparison of Francis' and Gennaro's liquefactions: Gustavo Parisciani, "Il sangue di San Francesco come quello di San Gennaro?," *San Francesco Patrono d'Italia* 62 (1982).

³⁴⁷ See fn 281.

³⁴⁸ De Ceglia's exploration of Gennaro's living blood is especially helpful here. See: de Ceglia, *The Natural History*, 8–31.

³⁴⁹ "...tanquam si eo die esisset de corpore beati Ianuari..." de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 85.

The blood relics of Christ were a far more popular form of devotion in late medieval Europe. From the twelfth century to sixteenth centuries, the continent witnessed a so-called "blood frenzy."³⁵⁰ As Carolyn Walker Bynum has demonstrated, this manifested in artistic and liturgical devotions centred on Christ's tortured body, his blood, and the instruments of his passion.³⁵¹ However, this also included the increased popularity of the cult of the blood of Christ. Relics of Christ's blood emerged all over Western Europe, with claims of originating from the crucifixion, bleeding images, and eucharistic miracles.³⁵² Those from the crucifixion are especially pertinent to this investigation, as they were most often contained in small vials or ampoules, like Gennaro's.³⁵³ Transferred from the Holy Land and Constantinople during the Crusades, these objects landed in several major European metropolises.³⁵⁴ In 1148, for example, Bruges received a small crystal vial of blood.³⁵⁵ As it is especially relevant to our analysis, I will return to the Holy Blood of Bruges momentarily. Venice and Westminster's Holy Bloods also serve as notable examples.³⁵⁶ Relics of crucifixion blood continued to proliferate in the fourteenth century; by 1389, Holy Blood relics were present in Venice, Rome, Mantua, and Siena, among other Italian cities.³⁵⁷ As we will see further momentarily, these bloods often became the subject of civic feast days and were annually processed in their respective cities. Although Naples was not exempt from blood-related devotions, such as artistic depictions of the suffering Christ, there is no evidence that the city possessed a relic of the Holy Blood during this period.³⁵⁸

While Gennaro's relic resembled that of Christ's in form, it also did so in function. As Bynum and Miri Rubin have shown, relics of Christ's blood as well as Eucharistic hosts began to bleed in the later Middle Ages.³⁵⁹ This occurred most famously in Orvieto where, in 1263, a doubting priest discovered a host bleeding profusely. The event ultimately led to the establishment of the Feast of Corpus Domini. In 1303, the Holy Blood of Bruges liquefied within its crystal vial, an example which I will return to below. Later in 1383, a new Holy Blood cult was inaugurated in

³⁵⁰ Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 150.

³⁵¹ For the arma Christi: Bynum, "Seeing."; Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown, ed. *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture: With a Critical Edition of "O Vernicle"* (London: Routledge, 2016).

³⁵² The debate as to whether the bleeding host constituted a relic goes beyond the scope of this dissertation. As these objects were venerated like relics during this period, I have decided to group them into the larger assortment of Christ's bloods which bleed. For the debates: See: Bynum, "Violent Imagery in Late Medieval Piety," 3–36; "The Blood of Christ."; Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

³⁵³ The Holy Blood was often, though not always, contained in vials of crystal. For the significance of crystal: Cynthia Hahn, "Reliquaries and the Boundaries of Vision: Relics, Crystals, Mirrors, and the 'Vision Effect'," in *Medieval Art at the Intersection of Visuality and Material Culture*, ed. Raphaële Preisinger (Brussels: Brepols, 2021), 181–209.

³⁵⁴ Holtz, "Cults of the Precious Blood in the Medieval Latin West," 1–54.

³⁵⁵ Count Thierry d'Alsace reportedly carried the vial to Bruges upon his return from the second crusade. Brown, *Civic*, 8.

³⁵⁶ The Holy Blood arrived in Venice in 1204 and Westminster in 1247. David M. Perry, *Sacred Plunder: Venice and the Aftermath of the Fourth Crusade* (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2015), 36; Vincent, *The Holy Blood*, 7–19.

³⁵⁷ Siena's blood relic was purchased within a larger horde of relics in 1359: Wolfgang Loseries, "Presentation of Relics in Late Medieval Siena: the Cappella delle Reliquie in Siena Cathedral," in *Matter of Faith: an Interdisciplinary Study of Relics and Relic Veneration in the Medieval Period*, ed. L. De Beer, J. Robinson, & A. Harnden (London: British Museum Press, 2014), 56–65.

³⁵⁸ Roberto Oderisi's *Man of Sorrows* serves as a good example of Neapolitan devotions to the suffering Christ. Cordelia Warr and Janis Elliott, "Introduction: Reassessing Naples 1266–1713," *Art History* 31 (2008): 423–37.

³⁵⁹ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*; Bynum, "The Blood of Christ."; "Seeing."

Wilsnack, Germany after three bleeding hosts were found in a burned-down church.³⁶⁰ Cities with bleeding relics often became major pilgrimage sites, as was the case in Orvieto, Bruges, and Wilsnack.³⁶¹ These brief examples not only demonstrate the popularity of the cult of the Holy Blood, but also the propensity for such relics to bleed.

Previous scholars have expounded upon the many, often paradoxical, understandings of Christ's blood during this period and it is not our purpose to outline them all here. Instead, I will emphasise those which are most pertinent to our investigation. As de Ceglia has demonstrated, one could draw several comparisons between the blood of Christ and that of San Gennaro.³⁶² For example, both involve the transformation of one physical substance to another. In Christ's eucharistic blood, wine becomes blood. In Gennaro's case, dead blood becomes living blood. Furthermore, as Bynum has demonstrated, Christ's blood was most often depicted as actively being shed.³⁶³ It was never stale or old, but always fresh and living. This emphasised the salvific nature of Christ's sacrifice. If we continue our comparison to Christ's blood, we can thus theorise that Gennaro's blood was not simply living, but it was being actively poured out. The act of shedding his blood clearly referenced the saint's martyrdom. Relatedly, if Christ's living blood drew his crucifixion into the present day, then Gennaro's liquefaction channelled the moment of his beheading.

The transcendence of temporal boundaries was especially critical for Naples' relationship with their patron. Although acts of martyrdom often established a saint's patronage over a particular place, this saint was beheaded in Pozzuoli – not Naples. Traditionally, it was instead his translation that linked the martyr to the city. The advent of this actively shed blood, however, relocated the moment of Gennaro's decapitation to the city. In effect, this directly connected the saint's intercessory power to Naples. Furthermore, this relic drew the bishop's death into the present day, thereby renewing the patronal contract whenever his blood was re-shed. Thus, the introduction of San Gennaro's blood radically transformed how the city of Naples interacted with their patron. While the bust had introduced his personhood to his devotees, the blood evoked viscerally his physical presence. Moreover, the liquefaction invited contemporary devotees to travel through time and space, and be present at the saint's beheading.

II.III. The Holy Blood of Bruges

Thus far, I have surveyed the extant blood relics, of both the saints and of Christ, which were circulating Europe by the fourteenth century and elucidated upon their interpretations. However, one particular relic requires further attention: the Holy Blood of Bruges. This small vial of Christ's crucifixion blood is the most analogous medieval blood to that of San Gennaro. Comparing the interpretation of its liquefaction, therefore, is instrumental to our investigation. As I previously mentioned, a relic of the Holy Blood arrived in Bruges in 1148. Its contents were purportedly gathered from Christ's bleeding side whilst on the cross. In most ways, Bruges' relic is representative of crucifixion bloods. Like the others, Bruges' relic was held in a small crystal vial which was then later encased in a glass reliquary [See Image Five]. It was venerated through

³⁶⁰ Bynum, "The Blood of Christ," 693–94.

³⁶¹ Kristen Van Ausdall, "Doubt and Authority in the Host-Miracle Shrines of Orvieto and Wilsnack," in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles*, ed. Sarah Blick and Rita Tekippe (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 513–38.

³⁶² For de Ceglia's comparison and interpretations of the blood, see: de Ceglia, *The Natural History*, 8–41.

³⁶³ Bynum, "Violent Imagery in Late Medieval Piety," 3–36.

touch, such as kissing, or by sight, during its ostentation. To celebrate its acquisition, Bruges established a major civic holiday. Since 1291, the city celebrated the Feast of the Holy Blood annually in early May.³⁶⁴ This involved a large, ambulatory procession of the relic alongside the city's clerical bodies, civic authorities, and lay confraternities.³⁶⁵ Bruges' feast was a communal affair; businesses were required to close and the community was encouraged to participate in organised games and competitions.³⁶⁶ By the end of the thirteenth century, the relic had evolved into the symbol of Bruges' civic identity.

Yet, Bruges' relic was an outlier from Europe's collection of crucifixion bloods. Unlike the rest, it could liquefy. The Holy Blood first demonstrated its miraculous abilities in 1303. From then until 1325, the miracle occurred regularly on Friday afternoons, aligning with the time of Christ's crucifixion. It was said to have "liquified and dripped" within its vial.³⁶⁷ Bruges' liquefaction ultimately caught papal attention; in 1310, Pope Clement V offered an indulgence to anyone who venerated the blood within two weeks of the feast.³⁶⁸ In 1388, it was translated into a glass-tube reliquary at which point, the blood liquified. It has not liquefied since.



*Image Five: The Holy Blood of Bruges within its glass reliquary (c.1388)*³⁶⁹

We could ascribe Bruges' blood with one of the many interpretations of holy blood I outlined above. However, there are two more interpretations, not yet mentioned, which are especially relevant to this chapter: sacramental legitimacy and papal endorsement. The liquefaction of 1388 took place in a deeply divided Diocese of Tournai. Like in Naples, the lay people of Tournai generally supported Urban whilst the clergy and civic authorities pledged their

³⁶⁴ The exact date depends on Easter.

³⁶⁵ For the procession: Thomas Boogaart, "Our Saviour's Blood: Procession and Community in Late Medieval Bruges," in *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüskens (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 69-116; Brown, *Civic*, 37-72.

³⁶⁶ Westminster's relic, for example, was similarly paraded on its feast. Vincent, *The Holy Blood*, 3-4, 155.

³⁶⁷ "liquescit guttatimque," *Regestum Clementis Papae V*, vol. 5 (Rome: Typographia Vaticana, 1888), 310.

³⁶⁸ For the complete bull: *ibid.*, 310-11.

³⁶⁹ Image: "Basiliek van Het Heilig Bloed (Basilica of the Holy Blood)," *Visit Bruges*, Accessed 6 August 2026. <https://www.visitbruges.be/en/things-to-do/culture-and-heritage/basiliek-van-het-heilig-bloed-basilica-holy-blood>.

allegiance to Clement. This division only intensified in 1388 when the appointed Bishop of Tournai, Louis de la Trémouille, traded his Urbanist loyalties for Clementine. In retaliation, Urban granted his own legate, Bishop Guglielmo della Vigna of Ancona, administrative authority over the diocese. It was Urban's bishop who translated the blood into its new glass reliquary in 1388. The liquefaction occurred in his hands.³⁷⁰ As Thomas Boogaart has compellingly argued, the liquefaction mirrored the form and function of the transubstantiation of the Eucharist.³⁷¹ At a time when the validity of the sacraments was a top priority, the transformation of Christ's blood seemed to confirm della Vigna's abilities to consecrate the Eucharist and, subsequently, perform the sacraments. On the other, the miracle also identified Urban as the correct successor of Peter. Bishop della Vigna made such a belief explicit, saying that God had bestowed the relic upon Bruges so that it "should never dream of separating itself from the unity of the Roman church."³⁷² The re-emergence of the blood miracle only underscored this message.

In 1389, the Holy Blood of Bruges was the most analogous relic to San Gennaro's. These two objects were similar in form and function. Both consisted of small vials of blood; both liquified within their containers during the Schism; and both eventually formed the basis for a widely attended feast day and civic cult. Given these similitudes, Bruges' relic serves as a critical model by which to evaluate Gennaro's liquefaction, especially as I situate Gennaro's blood within Naples' experience of the Schism towards the end of this chapter.

III: Interpreting the Miracle

In this third and final part, I turn our attention towards interpreting the liquefaction within the contexts of Naples' civil war and experience of the Western Schism. While broaching the broader issues facing Naples, I will also weave in the models of late medieval holy blood I outlined above, with a particular attention to the concepts of presence, patronage, and martyrdom. This part will also question the *Siculum*'s presentation of the miracle to differentiate between the author's interpretation and those of other stakeholders. Though these are but a fraction of possible understandings of the miracle, they are fundamental in appreciating the profound significance that the relic held in Naples during this period.

We might begin this discussion by returning to the *Siculum*. This text reveals at least three stakeholders in Gennaro's blood cult: Naples' Capuana and Nido *seggi*, Archbishop Guindazzo, and the House of Anjou. I will begin with the first. As we know, the *Siculum* was written by an avid Angevin supporter.³⁷³ The entries for 16 and 17 August 1389 depict such sympathies vividly. On both days, the author presents a monolithic Neapolitan crowd which enthusiastically embraces the return of an Angevin king. There are no dissenters in sight. The author then utilises the liquefaction to further bolster support for the Angevin reconquest. For example, according to the *Siculum*, the liquefaction was spontaneous. The procession, the author alleges, arose "on behalf of the miracle."³⁷⁴ This insinuates that the melted blood was unexpectedly detected sometime that morning. Despite the problems with this timeline, which I will return to momentarily, the framing of this miracle betrays the author's intentions. The spontaneity of the miracle underscores its uncontrollable nature; it only occurs, like all medieval miracles, by the will of God. Consequently,

³⁷⁰ Brown, *Civic*, 64.

³⁷¹ Boogaart, "Our Saviour's Blood," 86–87.

³⁷² Brown, *Civic*, 58.

³⁷³ For further evidence, see: Kelly, *The Cronaca*, 89–91.

³⁷⁴ "...propter miraculum ..." de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 85.

the author has framed the liquefaction as a conduit for a divine message.³⁷⁵ The jubilation which precedes the miracle informs the reader that Gennaro's blood was a sign of God's favour upon the incoming King Louis II of Anjou. While we might pin this interpretation merely upon an Angevin supporter, we cannot neglect the author's noble origins. As mentioned earlier, the *Siculum* was likely written by a noble member of the Capuana or Nido *seggi*. Consequently, the vantagepoint which this text provides is one of Naples' aristocracies. Recognising the noble society to which the author belonged now allows us to identify the house of Capuana and/or Nido, if not the *seggi* more generally, as a key stakeholder in Gennaro's liquefaction. Given their consistent support for the House of Anjou during this period, we can imagine that, like the author of the *Siculum*, Naples' aristocracy interpreted the liquefaction as a sign of God's approval for the Angevin reconquest.

Thus far, I have established that the *Siculum*'s use of the liquefaction as a legitimising tool not only reflected the author's personal support for Louis II, but also that of the Neapolitan *seggi*. However, in order to cast the miracle as a sign of divine favour, the author misrepresented the events of 17 August. By questioning the timeline presented in the *Siculum*, as I will here, a different understanding of the miracle emerges. For example, the author claims that the procession rose up "on behalf of the miracle,"³⁷⁶ insinuating that the parade was improvised in response to an impromptu miracle. However, 17 August was neither a Januarian feast nor any other prominent Neapolitan festival. Subsequently, there was no immediate reason to have the blood on display; it was likely tucked away in the sacristy. If the relic was *not* on display, then how was the uncongealed blood discovered? Instead, it is more likely, as de Ceglia has argued, that the procession was a pre-planned event which incorporated the city's most important relics, including Gennaro's blood.³⁷⁷ Whether the blood melted that morning or during the event, an orchestrated procession would explain the liquefaction's detection.

Whereas de Ceglia theorised that this parade was meant as an act of supplication, I think it more likely that it was intended as a welcoming party for the French delegation. This theory involves some speculation, as the *Siculum* offers no other information other than that the procession arose "on behalf of the miracle."³⁷⁸ Nevertheless, mobilising the city's patrons to 'welcome' political or ecclesiastical figures was a common feature of medieval civic life.³⁷⁹ The *Siculum* sets the stage for such an honorific reception. Upon the arrival of the French messengers, Angevin and French delegations crafted a two-day celebration which displayed and bolstered the might of the House of Anjou. According to the *Siculum*, this included the illumination of the city on the 16th followed by a large gathering in Santa Chiara on the 17th, facilitating the announcement of the king's support. San Gennaro's procession is thus situated between these two events, at a distinctly anticipatory moment. The French messengers had satisfied the city's hunger, but they

³⁷⁵ de Ceglia, *The Natural History*, 19–20.

³⁷⁶ de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 85.

³⁷⁷ de Ceglia, *The Natural History*, 20.

³⁷⁸ "propter miraculum." de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 85. This event is absent from the *Diurnali*, further limiting our understanding.

³⁷⁹ For selected examples of welcoming processions: Andrew Brown, "Perceptions of Relics: Civic Religion in Late Medieval Bruges," in *Images of Medieval Sanctity: Essays in Honour of Gary Dickson*, ed. Debra Higgs Strickland (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 185–204; Rita Tekippe, "Pilgrimage and Procession: Correlations of Meaning, Practice, and Effects," in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles*, ed. Sarah Blick and Rita Tekippe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 693–751; Leslie Brubaker and Chris Wickham, "Processions, Power and Community Identity: East and West," in *Empires and Communities in the Post-Roman and Islamic World*, ed. Walter Pohl and Rutger Kramer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 121–87.

had not yet read the king's letter. On the one hand, we can imagine how a highly choreographed march of the city's patrons was designed to "meet" and "thank" those who had just swooped to Naples' aid. On the other, these glittering reliquaries and holy objects, many of which had been commissioned by previous Angevin monarchs, like Gennaro's bust, also astonished spectators and augmented a sense of anticipation for the following French announcement.

The procession also served a logistical purpose: shepherding the crowds towards the church of Santa Chiara, where Charles VI's support was to be announced. Santa Chiara was an ideal setting for this proclamation.³⁸⁰ Naples' inhabitants were accustomed to assembling in this place; Santa Chiara was regularly used for political and religious gatherings such as festive masses, coronations, and royal funerals.³⁸¹ Perhaps more crucially for Louis II, Santa Chiara visually recalled the history, authority, and splendour of Angevin rule in Naples. By 1389, the church was an Angevin necropolis, and frescoes and funerary sepulchres boasted of their prestigious lineage.³⁸² Now, with King Charles VI's endorsement, Louis II had come to claim his place within that dynastic tradition.

At this stage, it would be helpful to briefly summarise our findings. We have established that, contrary to its depiction in the *Siculum*, the procession of 17 August was an orchestrated event designed to welcome the French delegation, increase anticipation for King Charles VI's announcement, and herd the city's inhabitants towards Santa Chiara. Regardless of whether the liquefaction occurred prior to these procedures or during, the miracle took place within this structured demonstration of Angevin authority. Having deduced its purposes, we can thus identify its organisers: the Angevin and French delegations and Archbishop Guglielmo Guindazzo. We have already seen how the former's preparations included foodstuffs, illuminations, and Clement's letter.³⁸³ However, we ought to also consider the contributions of the latter. Based on medieval precedent, a relic procession of this kind was likely orchestrated by the city's archbishop, Guindazzo. By virtue of his office, Guindazzo was the custodian of the cathedral's relics. He therefore had access to, and authority over, when and how the relics were used. Like the royal delegations, Guindazzo had an invested interest in the establishment of Angevin rule. As mentioned above, Guindazzo was a Clementine archbishop. The return of the Angevins, and their Clementine loyalties, would push Naples closer into Clement's camp. Putting aside the matter of papal allegiances momentarily, we can theorise that Guindazzo worked in collaboration with the Angevin authorities in cultivating this multifunctional liturgical procession. In this context, we might interpret the liquefaction as a part of a well-coordinated effort on behalf of Naples' archbishop and the Angevin delegation to legitimise Louis II's kingship, if not also Clement's papacy. I will return to further unpack the issue of papal loyalties below.

At the same time, this miracle also speaks to the intense fragmentation plaguing Naples during this period. To legitimise the Angevin dynasty and to end what had become a protracted, deadly conflict, these parties turned not to a political or ecclesiastical authority, but to the city's patron saint. The special reliance upon San Gennaro in this particular moment not only underscores his role as Naples' patron, but also as a substitute for public authority. In this markedly fraught

³⁸⁰ Santa Chiara was built by King Robert of Anjou and his wife, Sancia, in the early fourteenth century. Stefano D'Ovidio, Francesco Aceto, & Elisabetta Scirocco, ed. *La chiesa e Il Convento di Santa Chiara* (Battipaglia: La Veglia & Carlone, 2014).

³⁸¹ D'Ovidio, Aceto, and Scirocco, eds. *La Chiesa e Il Convento di Santa Chiara*, 238-247.

³⁸² Bruzelius, *The Stones*, 134-37; Rosa Smurra, "Social Mobility and Funerary Monuments in the First Half of the Fourteenth-Century in Santa Chiara, Naples," in *Loci Sepulcrales: Places of Memory and Burial in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carla Varela Fernandes, Catarina Fernandes Barreira, et al., (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), 238-47.

³⁸³ de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 84-85.

moment, San Gennaro represented one of the few, if not only, figures whose authority and judgement the city could rally behind. This raises a slew of questions regarding the relationship between the saint and the civic authorities. Who was paying who homage here? Was San Gennaro professing his support for Louis II - or was the Angevin king seeking the saint's blessing?

Up until this point, we have situated the liquefaction within Naples' civil war. In the paragraphs below, I would like to turn our attention to the ongoing Western Schism. With the Holy Blood of Bruges as an example, I will establish how the liquefaction of Gennaro's blood may be interpreted as a sign of sacramental legitimacy and as a papal endorsement. As a reminder, Archbishop Guindazzo was a Clementine bishop presiding over a largely Urbanist flock. As was the case for bishops across Europe, the divided papal loyalties undermined Guindazzo's sacramental authority as adherents of Pope Urban considered the sacraments administered by Clementine clergy as illicit. In Bruges, which similarly faced a sacramental crisis, the liquefying blood of Christ identified Urban's camp as legitimate papal obedience and thus validated his clergy's sacraments. Given the parallels between Bruges and Naples' blood relics, as well as their experiences with the schism, we might theorise that Gennaro's liquefaction signalled the primacy of Clement, to whom Guindazzo pledged his allegiance. As we saw earlier in the *Siculum*, Gennaro's miracle derived from Christ himself. Although Naples' blood was that of a saint and not Christ's, it nevertheless acted as a conduit for God's approval for the Clementine sacraments.

By extension, the liquefaction also authenticated Archbishop Guindazzo's appointment to the Neapolitan see. Besides the sacramental issue, Clementine archbishops were not favoured in Naples. As mentioned earlier, tensions regarding papal obedience often became volatile in Naples; the urban populace did not hesitate to expel Clementine archbishops from the city or ransack their palace. To secure his ecclesiastical position, it was imperative that Archbishop Guindazzo authenticate his sacerdotal authority to perform the sacraments and assert his authority to sit on the episcopal throne. We have seen already how by validating Clement's papacy, Gennaro's blood legitimised Clementine liturgies. To validate his episcopal authority, he critically needed approval from the cathedral's patron: San Gennaro. Again, we might compare this situation to that of Bruges. There, the blood of Christ indicated the authority of della Vigna as the administrator of the diocese. In Naples, the blood of San Gennaro, shed on behalf of the Neapolitan church, confirmed Guindazzo's episcopal appointment.

While Guindazzo and other members of the Avignon obedience may have understood the liquefaction as a source of legitimacy, any approval of Clement's papacy would have been deeply distressing to Urban's supporters. For this reason, I would like to briefly consider how adherents of the Roman obedience would have conceived of Gennaro's liquefaction. Prioritising this vantagepoint allows us to consider the voices of Naples' non-noble, lay inhabitants which, as hitherto, I have yet to acknowledge. Evidence spotlighting this viewpoint is lacking. However, situating the blood in the context of the schism affords us a rare opportunity to consider those who consistently supported Pope Urban from the onset of the schism.

To unpack how Urban's supporters viewed Gennaro's miracle, I would like to cite the example of Becket Water. As noted above, these blood relics represented the martyr's resistance towards the encroachment of King Henry II and ultimately, the price which Becket paid for the liberation of the English church. As his cult spread, Becket's relic served as poignant reminders that the Church's liberty, in England or elsewhere, was paid for by the blood of the martyrs. That San Gennaro could function in a similar capacity to Thomas Becket is not merely a theoretical possibility. In fact, Gennaro had already been mobilised to liberate the Neapolitan church on at least one occasion during the Schism. The *Siculum* tells us that in 1386, Pope Urban banned public

liturgies in Naples to quell any Clementine masses.³⁸⁴ Despite the prohibition, Queen Margaret restored the public celebration of mass on 19 September, the patronal feast of San Gennaro.³⁸⁵ While Margaret herself rescinded the prohibition, by making her announcement on Gennaro's feast she implicitly attributed the liberation of the city's liturgical life to Naples' patron. This effectively cast San Gennaro as symbol of resistance in the face of an oppressive force, even if the aggressor was Pope Urban himself. This episode underscores the intimate relationship between the Neapolitan church and its patron saint. During a moment of acute ecclesiastical crisis, San Gennaro was invoked as the church's protector and defender of its autonomy.

Given this episode, I would like to reconsider the liquefaction as a symbol that, through Gennaro's patronage, the church in Naples would be liberated from the Avignon obedience. This is where a comparison to Becket Water is especially apt. These relics, which vividly recalled the saint's martyrdom through its liquid state, were mobilised across Europe in moments of ecclesiastical oppression. In the eyes of Urban's adherents, Naples was experiencing such a threat from the anti-pope and his clergymen. In 1389, Clement's grip over the city had intensified. Though Naples' archbishop and most of its secular clergy already professed Clementine allegiances, Louis II's conquest promised royal support for the Avignon obedience. Just as Becket's blood cried out for the Church's autonomy on a broader scale, we might imagine that Gennaro's blood called for the liberation of the Neapolitan church. This brief episode demonstrates the difficulties in interpreting San Gennaro's blood in such a highly fragmented society. What signalled divine approval for one camp simultaneously signalled a crisis for the other. Rather than conveying one, universally intelligible meaning, the liquefaction of Gennaro's blood thus emerges from the Western Schism as a contested sign, whose significance was contingent upon actively shifting ecclesiastical and political allegiances.

Conclusions:

I conclude this chapter with reflections regarding late medieval blood relics and the liquefaction's impact upon San Gennaro's fourteenth century cult. Whether solid or liquid, congealed or fresh, medieval blood relics emitted all sorts of messaging. Overwhelmingly in this period, holy blood was understood as the embodiment of a saint's or Christ's physical presence. The proximity between a divine entity and their devotees only intensified when these bloods began to bleed. Yet even bloods of a similar form and function could substantiate contrasting interpretations, as exemplified by the championing of rival papal obediences by Naples' and Bruges' blood relics. Ultimately, as this example demonstrates, the meanings imbedded in such objects are assigned by their immediate contexts and subsequently articulated by key stakeholders.

In the case of the liquefaction of 1389, such contexts included the Angevin-Durazzo civil war and the Western Schism. As we have seen, the interlocking relationship between the two conflicts intensified the city's experience with both. The protracted civil war destabilised the capital city, left a power vacuum in which competing authorities emerged, and contributed a city-wide famine. At the same time, disruptions to episcopal leadership and doubts surrounding

³⁸⁴ Urban's decision was preempted by the deterioration of his relationship with the Durazzo. Earlier that year, Charles had been assassinated and his wife, Queen Margaret, was considering switching her allegiance to Clement. The ban on public liturgies was likely Urban's attempt to stamp out the Avignon obedience. For Urban's prohibition: de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 65. For the pope and the queen's (poor) relationship: Rollo-Koster, *The Great Western Schism*, 38–44.

³⁸⁵ Margaret's reversal was a public display of support for the Clementine camp. Again see: de Blasiis, *Cronicon*, 65.

sacramental legitimacy undermined the authority of Naples' archbishop, if not the whole of the Neapolitan church. Together, these two crises in governance shattered the city across royal and papal lines. Over the course of the 1380s, Naples was led by two popes, two kings and two archbishops- but only one San Gennaro.

Within these circumstances, San Gennaro represented a critical form of stability and site of contestation. On the one hand, he represented an integral source of public authority in a rapidly evolving and ever-fragmenting political and ecclesiastical landscape. On the other, the universality of his cult invited competing interpretations of the liquefaction as various groups sought to appropriate the saint's approval and intercession. By closely scrutinising the *Siculum* and resituating the miracle within its historical context, I have attempted to identify such stakeholders above. They included, but were not limited to, the author of the *Siculum*, the Neapolitan *seggi*, Archbishop Guindazzo, the Angevin dynasty, and the people of Naples. Like most holy blood in the later Middle Ages, Gennaro's relic was capable of simultaneously expressing parallel, diverging, and conflicting messages for each of these entities.

Furthermore, the blood relic represented the endurance of a project already begun by Charles II and Archbishop da Viterbo: shaping San Gennaro into the patron of the Neapolitan church. As we saw in the previous chapter, both men established Gennaro as the Assumption's patron saint and, via the reliquary bust, evoked his physical presence within the cathedral complex. This sense of presence became more immediate and more palpable in the blood. While this blood was understood as shed for the entire city of Naples, it was especially poured out on behalf of the Neapolitan church. This conviction found its expression in the reliquary tabernacle, which I discussed in the introduction of this chapter. As we have seen, the tabernacle rendered the blood immediately visible in both its coagulated and liquified states. I have also demonstrated how the liquefaction transcended spatial and temporal boundaries to bring San Gennaro's martyrdom into the present day. Not unlike how the Eucharist elicited Christ's sacrifice upon each transubstantiation, every liquefaction revived the moment of Gennaro's execution and thus reformed the bonds of his patronage over Naples. In effect, this relocated the saint's martyrdom from the amphitheatre at Pozzuoli to wherever the blood was kept.

The deliberate placement of this blood relic on top of the miniaturised cathedral thus localised the saint's sacrifice to the Cathedral of the Assumption. In doing so, this reliquary boldly asserted that Gennaro's martyrdom was not merely commemorated in Naples but was enacted for, and claimed by, the church in Naples itself. Taken together, the reliquary bust and tabernacle demonstrate that San Gennaro's patronage over the church in Naples was a critical, if not the defining, feature of his fourteenth century cult. In the following chapter, we will continue to unpack how San Gennaro's distinctive intercession for the church was manifested on the feast of his translation.

Part Two: Experiencing San Gennaro

Chapter Three: San Gennaro of the Inghirlandati

Introduction

The legend of San Gennaro's translation has captured the imagination of the city of Naples for centuries. As we saw in the Prologue, the story of how Gennaro's remains were salvaged from the Solfatara and ultimately reinterred in the catacombs just outside the city walls was preserved in two early medieval *vitae*.³⁸⁶ This event was pivotal in the development of the cult; after all, Gennaro's only link to Naples was the site of his grave. Exactly how this transformative moment was celebrated in the Middle Ages, however, is shrouded in mystery. Though we know that the feast was commemorated in April in the ninth century, our earliest description of its procedures does not appear until 1337, in a set of liturgical reforms known as the Orsini Constitutions.³⁸⁷ In that year, Archbishop Giovanni Orsini decreed that the feast be celebrated annually on the First Sunday in May. The prescribed clerical dress code for this event evolved into the tradition of the *inghirlandati*, floral-crowned priests, for whom this chapter is named.³⁸⁸ In the following pages, I will reconstruct and reinterpret Gennaro's translation feast based on Orsini's instructions.

The Orsini Constitutions have been woefully understudied. In Januarian studies, its existence is often cited as proof that the feast was celebrated in 1337. Otherwise, neither the reforms nor their context has been the subject of a detailed modern historical analysis. Instead, early modern iterations of the feast dominate Januarian scholarship, and with good reason. Descriptive and wide-ranging sources from the sixteenth century onward, including ceremonial diaries, Neapolitan histories, and observations from spectators, have produced robust understandings of the feast's form and function.³⁸⁹ In contrast, the Orsini Constitutions is the sole surviving description of the feast during the fourteenth century. Further complicating matters is the history of the manuscript itself; though several early modern historians cited Orsini's original reforms, the texts went missing in the eighteenth century. Partial transcriptions of the reforms have been published, however, by Giuseppe Sparano and Luigi Parascandolo.³⁹⁰ Unfortunately for this analysis, neither historian fully transcribed the passages relevant to San Gennaro's translation feast. While both declare that Constitutions #35 through #40 are dedicated to this celebration, only four (#35-38) were transcribed by Parascandolo. Sparano seems to have summarised the remaining two, but this remains unclear. As a result, we are left with an incomplete set of instructions.

³⁸⁶ Prologue, pp. 23-25.

³⁸⁷ As per the Marble Calendar: Prologue, p. 27.

³⁸⁸ The term '*inghirlandati*' was first used in Giovanni Pontano's *Charon* (c.1469). For the purposes of continuity between this chapter and the next, I will refer to the garlanded priests as such here.

³⁸⁹ Vitale, "Il culto ianuario," 103-46; Dauverd, *Church and State in Spanish Italy*; Eugenio Imbriani, "The Elegance of the Past: Descriptions of Rituals, Ceremonies and Festivals in Nola," in *Ambrogio Leone's De Nola, Venice 1514: Humanism and Antiquarian Culture in Renaissance Southern Italy*, ed. Fulvio Lenzo, Bianca De Divitiis, and Lorenzo Miletto (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 138-55; Romeo, "Inquisition," 235-56.

³⁹⁰ Parascandolo transcribed portions of the constitutions from Camillo Tutini's notes. He also drew on a 1542 publication of the diocesan reforms of Neapolitan archbishop Vincenzo Carafa. Carafa re-ratified Orsini's Constitutions, thus allowing Parascandolo to transcribe further portions of the text. For more on the manuscript tradition: Luigi Parascandolo, *Memorie storiche-critiche-diplomatiche della chiesa di Napoli*, 3 (Napoli: Tipografia di P. Tizzano, 1849), 73-74; Zigarelli, *Biografie dei vescovi*, 73-74. For modern scholarship on the Orsini Constitution see: Domenico Mallardo, "La Pasqua e la Settimana Maggiore a Napoli dal sec. V al sec. XIV," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 66 (1952): 3-36. Vinni Lucherini, "Ebdomadari versus canonici: gli istituti clericali, il potere ecclesiale e la topografia medievale del complesso episcopale di Napoli," *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 36 (2006): 613-649; Giuseppe Sparano, *Memorie storiche per illustrare gli atti della S. Napoletana* (Naples: Giuseppe Raimondi, 1768); Parascandolo, *Memorie*, 3. Unless otherwise specified, Latin translations are my own.

Nevertheless, as this chapter will show, the Orsini Constitutions offers invaluable insights into the construction, execution, and experience of this festival.

To explore how this celebration functioned as a civic feast, and thereby fill in some of the gaps present in the Orsini Constitutions, scholarship on patronal feasts north of Rome proves critical. The works of Richard Trexler, Edward Muir, and Diana Webb are especially pertinent to this chapter.³⁹¹ From these studies, a pattern emerges. These celebrations included religious and festive components; the day often began with a liturgical procession, which included the patron's relics, that looped around the city and concluded either at the cathedral or some other important ecclesiastical building. The second half of the day was dedicated to festivities, including games and competitions, feasting, and other forms of social bonding, such as competitions, jousting tournaments and reenactments.³⁹² To encourage widespread participation, businesses were required to close during these feasts.³⁹³ From Webb, Trexler, and Muir's studies, we are left with a rich and textured portrayal of late medieval patronal feasts. These celebrations were multi-faceted events, sparking a wide range of political, social, and religious experiences. As we will see throughout this chapter and the next, San Gennaro's translation feast was structured, and functioned, similarly. These northern models, therefore, allow me to flesh out the experience of this Neapolitan feast which is otherwise lost in the historical record.

Furthermore, as these historians have demonstrated, the religious and festive portions of patronal feasts served several critical civic functions, namely reinforcing hierarchies and bridging the gaps between social strata. In this chapter, and the next, I argue that this Neapolitan festival similarly served as a civic celebration, encouraging communal celebration, the formation of a local identity, and performed key social responsibilities, including the formation– and renegotiation– of social and ecclesiastical hierarchies. In this way, this investigation contributes to a larger historiographic discussion concerning the civic nature of southern Italian feasts.³⁹⁴ As identified by several historians, these civic connotations of these celebrations have either been neglected or outright rejected in previous scholarship, consequently creating the impression that they differed dramatically from the experiences in the north and thus enhanced the divide between the two regions.³⁹⁵ While San Gennaro's feast does indeed, at times, diverge in form and function from his patronal counterparts north of Rome, this chapter nevertheless emphasises its civic characteristics and seeks to integrate it within the broader context of Italian civic religious feasts, as has been the mission of many recent historians of southern Italy.³⁹⁶

Furthermore, while the framework provided by Webb, Muir, and Trexler is a helpful guide, its sources differ dramatically. Webb, among other scholars of central and northern Italy, relies on municipal statutes, account books, and ceremonial diaries to construct a textured exploration of late medieval festival culture.³⁹⁷ Furthermore, there is the matter of visibility. Whereas in municipal

³⁹¹ Trexler, *Public Life*; Muir, *Civic Ritual*; Vauchez, "Patronage des saints."; Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna*; Webb, *Patrons*.

³⁹² We will hear more about games and competitions in Chapter Four.

³⁹³ As Richard Trexler demonstrated in medieval Florence, tradesmen and businessmen often brokered deals on religious feast days while the shops were closed. It is plausible that these clandestine arrangements also took place in Naples on Gennaro's feast. Trexler, *Public Life*, 269–70.

³⁹⁴ Introduction, pp. 16–17.

³⁹⁵ This also ties into an even broader conversation relating to the 'Southern Question': Introduction, pp. 10–11.

³⁹⁶ As argued several times in this recent volume (see especially Pasquale Palmieri's argument, 94–99): de Divitiis, *A Companion to the Renaissance in Southern Italy (1350–1600)*.

³⁹⁷ As seen throughout: Webb, *Patrons*.

records, it is all too easy to observe the laity *and* clergy, the Orsini Constitutions concentrate on the latter. While I take great efforts to incorporate the laity into this chapter, the sources prevent me from providing as robust a portrait of lay experiences as those north of Rome. Finally, a word must be said on the dangers of interpreting medieval ritual. As eloquently argued by Phillippe Buc, such rites are *not* unambiguous forms of communication.³⁹⁸ Rather, these events represent complicated conceptual structures, whose signs and symbols could be interpreted differently by a range of participants and onlookers. Texts which describe ritual, such as the Orsini Constitutions, were written by authors with their own sets of understandings. Consequently, we cannot solely mine these documents for facts nor assume that these rituals were enacted exactly as described. Thus, while I seek to reconstruct these festive procedures, I do so with the awareness that Orsini's instructions represent a version of events idealised by the institutional church. Without further sources that describe alternative experiences, these constitutions represent our sole opportunity to view this spectacular celebration.

So, this chapter is divided into two parts. In the first, I begin with some context for the constitutions. The bulk of this part is then dedicated to parsing - and contextualising - Orsini's instructions. In the second part, I offer two separate interpretations of the feast: one which emphasises its social function and the other which explores its devotional contexts.

I. The Orsini Constitutions

In 1337, Archbishop Giovanni Orsini (c. 1300- 1358) promulgated 70 constitutions concerning the liturgical rites and ceremonies of the Neapolitan cathedral.³⁹⁹ By this point, Orsini had sat on the episcopal throne for a decade. This was his first - and only - ecclesiastical appointment. Orsini grew up at the papal court in Avignon, then in its earliest stages.⁴⁰⁰ Pope Clement V only relocated the court in 1309; Orsini arrived shortly thereafter. Giovanni's experience at the court, paired with his impressive family lineage,⁴⁰¹ uniquely positioned him for the Neapolitan episcopate. Not only did he serve as a chaplain to popes Clement V and John XXII, but he was also an attendant to King Robert of Anjou.⁴⁰² Though the papacy and the House of Anjou already maintained a formidable alliance, their agendas became progressively aligned during this period. As Italy became increasingly factionalised between the Guelfs (Pro-Papal) and the Ghibellines (Pro-Imperial), the papacy became ever more reliant on Angevin Naples for

³⁹⁸ Buc, *The Dangers*, 8-9.

³⁹⁹ In early modern historiography, they are also referred to as the "Ritual Constitutions" to distinguish them from an earlier set of reforms by Archbishop Humbert D'Ormont in 1317. D'Ormont's reforms were focused on the Divine Office and clerical conduct throughout the Archdiocese of Naples. For transcriptions of D'Ormont's constitutions: Mazzocchi, *Dissertatio historica*, 149-56.

⁴⁰⁰ For Clement: Guillaume Mollat, *The Popes at Avignon, 1305-1378*, trans. Janet Love (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963), 27-39. For the papacy's move to Avignon: Helen Jane Nicholson, ed. *Clement V and the Road to Avignon, 1304-1309* (London: Routledge, 2011).

⁴⁰¹ The Orsini family was highly influential. Several members of the family rose to powerful positions in the curia, including Giovanni Gaetano Orsini who became Pope Nicholas III in 1277. For more on the Orsini family, see: Andrea Frances Hood, "Viterbo in Conflict: The Orsini, Power and Territory, 1277-1307" (PhD Dissertation, University of California, 1996); Elisabetta Mori, *L'Archivio Orsini: la famiglia, la storia, l'inventario* (Rome: Viella, 2016).

⁴⁰² King Robert briefly transferred his court to Avignon in 1320. After a spat with John XXII in 1324, with whom he shared a close relationship, Robert returned to Naples. Darleen Pryds, *The King Embodies the Word: Robert d'Anjou and the Politics of Preaching* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 82-103.

military support. This was especially true after King Louis IV invaded Italy in 1327.⁴⁰³ This alliance worked both ways. As Louis' claim to the imperial throne threatened the stability of his kingdom, King Robert was more than happy to campaign against the German king and his Ghibelline supporters. Maintaining Naples' position as a Guelf stronghold was of the utmost importance to both pope and king.

Giovanni's career demonstrates a commitment to the pro-Papal camp. Between 1325 and 1327, he was apprenticed to his uncle, Cardinal Giovanni Gaetano Orsini.⁴⁰⁴ At the time, the cardinal was living in central Italy, working to resolve the political tensions between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines. Cardinal Orsini was a committed Guelf and trusted advisor to Pope John XXII. Under his uncle's guidance, Giovanni likely developed his own Guelf sensibilities, had they not existed already. His appointment to the Neapolitan episcopate in late 1327 was therefore a strategic effort to create a unified, Guelf front in Angevin Naples. Indeed, Giovanni remained a faithful ally to the papacy and the Angevin dynasty throughout his episcopate.

Archbishop Orsini's reforms were likely the result of a papal reform project instigated by Pope Benedict XII.⁴⁰⁵ By Benedict's election in 1334, papal authority had been severely weakened by the Guelf and Ghibelline conflict as well as the Beatific Vision Debate. In brief, Benedict's predecessor, John XXII, had preached that the souls of the saints - that is, the sinless destined for Heaven - will only experience the Vision of God *after* the Final Judgement.⁴⁰⁶ His comments triggered a fiery, acrimonious debate; previously, the church taught that the *visio Dei* was instantaneous after death.⁴⁰⁷ Though supported by his curia, John found few allies outside of Avignon.⁴⁰⁸ The debate ultimately injured the pontiff's command over theological matters. Immediately upon his election, Pope Benedict sought to restore what had been lost.

⁴⁰³ Of course, the conflict between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines is far older than Louis IV's invasion. For its origins and its manifestation under Pope John XXII, see: Sylvain Parent, *Dans les abysses de l'infidélité: Les procès contre les ennemis de l'église en Italie au temps de Jean XXII (1316-1334)* (Rome: Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 2014); Daniel Waley, *The Italian City-Republics*, Fifth ed. (London: Routledge, 2022), 85-102; Francesco Storti, "Factional Conflict and Political Struggle in Southern Italian Cities," in *A Companion to the Renaissance in Southern Italy*, ed. Bianca de Divitiis (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 231-52.

⁴⁰⁴ For Giovanni Gaetano's career, see: Blake R. Beattie, *Angelus Pacis: The Legation of Cardinal Giovanni Gaetano Orsini, 1326 - 1334* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

⁴⁰⁵ Benedict was known as a meticulous reformer, bent on competency and orthodoxy. For Mollat's traditional biography and a more recent treatment, see: Mollat, *The Popes at Avignon*, 27-32; Irene Bueno, ed. *Pope Benedict XII (1334-1342): The Guardian of Orthodoxy* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

⁴⁰⁶ Pope John ultimately recanted on his deathbed in 1334. Two years later his successor, Pope Benedict XII, reaffirmed the previous understanding of the Beatific Vision. The matter was doctrinally put to rest. The most comprehensive history of the Beatific Vision debate remains: Christian Trottman, *La vision beatifique des disputes scolastiques à sa définition par Benoît XII* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1995). Also see: Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 1200-1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 279-86; Isabel Iribarren, "Theological Authority at the Papal Court in Avignon: The Beatific Vision Controversy," in *La vie culturelle, intellectuelle et scientifique à la cour des Papes d'Avignon*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse (London: Brepols, 2006), 277-301; György Geréb, "A Supremely Idle Question? Issues of the Beatific Vision Debate Between 1331-1336," *Przegląd Tomistyczny* 24 (2018): 487-529.

⁴⁰⁷ As Thomas Aquinas expounded in the 1240s, the *visio Dei* then intensified after the Final Judgement, the end of days during which souls were reunited with their bodies. Aquinas' rationale was approved as official Church teaching by the Council of Vienne in 1311. Iribarren, "Theological Authority," 280-81.

⁴⁰⁸ John XXII was supported by a handful of Conventual Franciscans, including the Minister General Guiral Ot, as well as the members of his curia living in Avignon. He was opposed by the Dominican order, King Philip VI Valois, and the philosophy faculty at the University of Paris, among others.

Between 1335 and 1337, the pontiff sent Bertrand de Deaux, archbishop of Embrun, to the Italian peninsula as a "nuncio-reformer."⁴⁰⁹ De Deaux set his sights on diocesan administration, hoping that efficient organisation and orthodox liturgies would encourage submission to the pope. His mission began in Naples where he was formally received by King Robert of Anjou. Though no evidence of the interactions between the nuncio and Archbishop Orsini survives, we can imagine how the nuncio guided Orsini's reforming efforts, if not triggered them entirely. The issue of institutional obedience, which runs through the heart of this text, most clearly demonstrates the influence of de Deaux's mission on Orsini's reforms.

Of course, Orsini's constitutions were also oriented towards localised concerns. First and foremost, none of his predecessors had produced a formalised body of liturgical instructions to suit the new Angevin cathedral. As we saw in chapter one, the construction of the cathedral was a lengthy and uneven process. Works continued well beyond the date of its consecration, which was sometime around 1315. Furthermore, the project created two distinct buildings: the Cathedral of the Assumption and the Basilica of St Restituta (i.e. the former site of the Cathedral of the Savior). Perhaps stalled by the lengthy works, Naples' archbishops were slow to address how the liturgy was to be enacted in these new structures. In 1317, Archbishop Umberto d'Ormont made provisions for the Divine Office. He otherwise left the liturgy alone. D'Ormont was followed by three short-lived, absentee archbishops, who made no attempt to codify Naples' liturgies.⁴¹⁰ Orsini himself did not address the situation until after de Deaux's visit. This further leads me to believe that the Orsini Constitutions were triggered by the papal nuncio himself. Tensions between the cathedral canons and the *ebdomadari* also necessitated episcopal intervention.⁴¹¹ The two groups were constantly antagonising one another for use of the cathedral and the basilica.⁴¹² Therefore, we must understand Orsini's reforms as the establishment of liturgical norms and clerical responsibilities for a recently finished cathedral. This text was also intended to reorient Naples' liturgies towards the matter of institutional obedience, as demanded by the pontiff. Together, we can understand these ambitions as the lens through which Archbishop Orsini interpreted the liturgical celebrations included within it. The intersecting demands of local governance and ecclesiastical discipline likely explains the emphasis on episcopal obedience during San Gennaro's translation feast, as we will see below.

The scope of the Constitutions reveals that Orsini was not attempting to provide an exhaustive account of Neapolitan liturgical or religious practice. Its primary concern was the liturgical life of the cathedral and especially the archbishop. Consequently, these reforms included universal solemnities, such as Easter, and local feasts, including the translation feast of San Gennaro. It also incorporates local forms of urban devotions, including the popular cult of the Holy Cross and the *staurite*, a Neapolitan lay confraternity committed to serving the sick and the poor since at least

⁴⁰⁹ Sylvain Parent, "Benedict XII and Italy: Restoring Orthodoxy and Consolidating Papal Sovereignty after John XXII," in *Pope Benedict XII (1334–1342): The Guardian of Orthodoxy*, ed. Irene Bueno (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 183.

⁴¹⁰ This included Matteo Filomarino (1320–1322), Bertoldo Orsini (1322–1324), and Annibale da Ceccano (1324–1327). For their biographies, as well as d'Ormont's: Zigarelli, *Biografie dei vescovi*, 68–72.

⁴¹¹ The *ebdomadari*, a congregation of 40 priests tasked with saying weekly masses in the cathedral. They were *not* members of the cathedral chapter. Lucherini, "Ebdomadari."

⁴¹² As Lucherini demonstrated, this text thus represents a long-overdue attempt to establish the rights and responsibilities of these two bodies. See: *ibid*.

the eleventh century.⁴¹³ Orsini's inclusion of the *staurite* reveals his intention to situate the cathedral's liturgical plans within the larger context of Naples' devotional life. For example, on Palm Sunday, the *staurite* were instructed to join the archbishop's procession from the cathedral to the basilica of San Giorgio Maggiore.⁴¹⁴ En route, the parade would pause for a race between the cross-bearers of the *staurite*. On Easter Sunday, meanwhile, the clerical heads (*primicerii*) of the *staurite* were to accompany the archbishop from the cathedral to the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore carrying silver processional crosses while other *staurite* members carried iron crosses.⁴¹⁵ In both cases, the inclusion of the *staurite* testifies to the significance of the confraternity, and the cult of the Holy Cross more broadly, in Naples while also upholding episcopal leadership through these processional rituals.

At the same time, several liturgies and cultic practices popular in Naples in this period are missing from these reforms. The Feast of Corpus Domini, for example, is missing although it was celebrated annually. Additionally, the saints' cults addressed by Orsini are largely confined to those represented within the cathedral's *sanctorale*, such as Gennaro, Agrippinus, Eutichus, Acutius, Aspren and Restituta. As we saw in the Prologue and Chapter One, these figures belong to an established repertoire of Neapolitan sanctity, many of them bishops, martyrs, or both. By contrast, the constitutions contain no provisions for several newer cults and devotions actively promoted by the Angevin monarchy, including Franciscan (especially Spiritualist) devotions and the cult of Mary Magdalene. These omissions do not suggest that these cults were universally unpopular during this period. On the contrary, Queen Sancia's patronaged contributed substantially to the success of the Spiritualist movement, which found a home at the Basilica of Santa Chiara.⁴¹⁶ Nor was the archbishop wholly detached from the devotional priorities of the Angevin royal family. For example, after Queen Sancia founded the church and convent of Santa Maria Maddalena in 1324, Archbishop Orsini himself presided over ceremonies in which former prostitutes renounced their previous lives.⁴¹⁷ Nevertheless, instructions for the feast of the Magdalene or any notifications relating to the Spiritualists are notably absent.

Instead, there is an apparent division between the liturgical priorities of the archbishop and those of the Angevin court. The Constitutions privilege the city's old-guard heroes, most of whom were buried in the cathedral, and largely ignore newer devotions flourishing elsewhere in the city. This observation accords with Vitolo's argument that Naples' archbishops and secular clergy were

⁴¹³ For the cult of the Holy Cross and the *staurites*: Giovanni Vitolo, "Culto della croce e identità cittadina a Napoli," in *La croce: iconografia e interpretazione*, vol. 2, ed. Ulderico Parente and Boris Ulianich (Naples: Elio de Rosa Editore, 2007), 101-126; Stefano D'Ovidio, "Sacred Imagery, Confraternities, and Urban Space in Medieval Naples," in *Confraternities in Southern Italy: Art, Politics, and Religion (1100-1800)*, ed. David D'Andrea and Salvatore Marino (Toronto: Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2022), 45- 52.

⁴¹⁴ For the instructions: Parascandolo, *Memorie*, vol.3, 128-129.

⁴¹⁵ Sparano, *Memorie*, 159-160; Also see this treatment: Domenico Mallardo, "La Pasqua e la Settimana Maggiore a Napoli dal secolo V al XIV," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 66 (1952): 3-36.

⁴¹⁶ See Ronald Musto's work on Sancia and the Spiritualists: Ronald Musto, "Franciscan Joachimism at the Court of Naples, 1309-1345: A New Appraisal," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 90, vol. 3-4 (1997): 419-486; Ronald G. Musto, "Queen Sancia of Naples (1286-1345) and the Spiritual Franciscans," in *Women of the Medieval World*, Julius Kirshner and Suzanne Wemple, eds., (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997), 179-214.

⁴¹⁷ This was the case in 1334, for example. Adrian S. Hoch, "Pictures of Penitence from a Trecento Neapolitan Nunnery," *Zeitschrift Für Kunstgeschichte* 61 (2) (1998): 212. For the cult of Mary Magdalene in Naples, see: Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalene*.

especially resistant to newer saints' cults and related devotions, even if patronised by the Angevin royal family.⁴¹⁸

Orsini's treatment of individual feasts further illustrates his selectivity. Some rites required more detailed instructions than others. For example, the feasts of St Agrippinus and St Aspren are mentioned briefly; Orsini only specifies which clergy were responsible for celebrating mass. The directives for San Gennaro's patronal feast, held in September, are similarly concise. This celebration is mentioned only once in the Constitutions, in a section regarding Naples' most important solemnities, where Orsini stipulates that the archbishop must preside over the mass.⁴¹⁹ In contrast, Orsini's instructions for Gennaro's translation feast are extensive, making up six constitutions in total (#35 - #40).⁴²⁰ Such sustained attention denotes the celebration's complexity; as I will demonstrate below, it was a complicated, multi-levelled, two-day event. The disproportionate attention given to Gennaro's feast in these reforms suggests that this celebration was highly significant to the Neapolitan episcopate, if not one of the most important dates on Naples' liturgical and social calendars.⁴²¹ Furthermore, the archbishop's compulsory attendance demonstrates that Gennaro's translation feast was one of his critical responsibilities.⁴²² Altogether, these constitutions not only reveal which feasts mattered most to Naples' archbishop, but also how such celebrations could be mobilised to articulate his authority and responsibilities.

The Januarian festivities described in this text were purportedly based on "custom"⁴²³ suggesting that these prescriptions were already enacted for some time before 1337. However, the extent to which Orsini adapted previous norms or established new practices is unclear.⁴²⁴ As mentioned, Orsini was the first to codify the new cathedral's liturgical practices. Our understanding of these rites in the previous cathedral is limited.⁴²⁵ This is especially true of San Gennaro's translation feast. As we saw in the Prologue, the earliest evidence of a translation feast appears in the so-called "Neapolitan Marble Calendar," which dates the celebration 13 April.⁴²⁶ After this calendar, explicit references to the feast disappear from the historical record. There is a possibility, however, that Pope Clement IV's bull of 1266 made an implicit reference. As we saw in chapter one, the pontiff moved Gennaro's patronal feast from September to 8 May. Vinni Lucherini has argued that Clement had merged the celebrations of Gennaro's martyrdom with that of his

⁴¹⁸ Vitolo, "Santità, culti, e strutture socio-politiche," 35–37.

⁴¹⁹ Constitutions #41 – 47 concern Naples' solemnities, including Ascension Sunday, The Assumption of Mary, Pentecost, the Transfiguration, Christmas, San Gennaro's *dies natalis* (#46), and the Feast of All Saints. Though not explicitly stated, this directive has larger implications. From a liturgical standpoint, solemnities required the singing of the Creed, a double Office, and potentially a procession, inside or outside the cathedral. More broadly, local businesses were closed. Noblemen and civic authorities usually took the occasion to distribute alms/foodstuffs to the poor. San Gennaro's patronal feast was, therefore, one of the most critical dates on Naples' calendar. See: Sparano, *Memorie istoriche*, 228.

⁴²⁰ For a full transcription of Constitutions #35–38, see Appendix 1.

⁴²¹ As we see further below, Orsini states the instructions dictate actions which were "*more solito*." Parascandolo, *Memorie*, vol. 3, 133, fn. 3.

⁴²² At least in theory. As we will see in chapter four, fifteenth century archbishops were increasingly absent from the feast. The *cimiliarch*, the head of the cathedral chapter, took their place.

⁴²³ "more solito" Parascandolo, *Memorie*, vol. 3, 133, fn. 3.

⁴²⁴ We do know, however, that the Orsini Constitutions remained valid diocesan regulations until the Tridentine Reforms were introduced in 1565. They were re-ratified by three archbishops including Gaspare de Diano in 1442, Alessandro Carafa in 1484, and Vincenzo Carafa in 1542. Carafa's additions in 1542 were later published in: *Rituum archiepiscopalis et metropolitanae ecclesiae Neapolitanae*, ed. Alberigo Oliva (Venice: Venturino Ruffinelli, 1542).

⁴²⁵ For a helpful summary of what we know: Lucherini, *La cattedrale*, 149–235.

⁴²⁶ Prologue, p. 27.

translation.⁴²⁷ Lucherini presumes that, by 1266, the translation feast was already celebrated on 8 May. After all, if the translation feast still took place on 13 April, it is highly unlikely that the pontiff would reschedule Gennaro's *dies natalis* only three weeks later. Though difficult to substantiate, her theory thus has its merits. Nevertheless, this scant and speculative evidence base leaves much to be desired. Without further descriptions, it is nearly impossible to say if, or how, Archbishop Orsini adapted previous iterations of the feast. Perhaps the only comment we can make is regarding the time of year. Whether in April or May, it seems that the translation was always commemorated in the springtime. Since source material is basically non-existent until 1337, the following sections concentrate on Orsini's festive procedures.

1.1. A Procession and an Obedience Ceremony

Let us now turn our attention to the text itself. According to the constitutions, San Gennaro's translation feast took place over two days: the Saturday before the first Sunday in May (the vigil) and the first Sunday in May (the feast day). The vigil began Saturday morning at dawn. Two clerics were charged with carrying San Gennaro's head, "covered in cloths," from the Cathedral of the Assumption to one of seven designated churches.⁴²⁸ Two additional clerics carrying lit candles flanked the relic in procession. During this period, Gennaro's skull was likely stored in the cathedral's sacristy.⁴²⁹ The feast thus offered a rare opportunity for non-cathedral staff to view the relic.⁴³⁰

Orsini's suggested churches included: Santi Apostoli, San Paolo Maggiore, Santa Maria Maggiore, Santa Maria in Rotonda, Sant'Andrea di Nilo, San Giorgio Maggiore and Santa Maria nella Piazza (See Map One).⁴³¹ His reasons for choosing these churches are unclear; there is no obvious connection between them.⁴³² Some were linked by founding legends. For example, Emperor Constantine allegedly founded five of the seven.⁴³³ Three of the churches, San Giorgio, San'Andrea and Santa Maria in Rotonda, belonged to Naples' surviving Greek communities.⁴³⁴ It

⁴²⁷ Lucherini, "Le processione," 14–15.

⁴²⁸ "Caput beatissimum Januarii coopertum pannis..." Parascandolo, *Memorie*, vol. 3, 133 fn. 3.

⁴²⁹ As we saw in chapter two, we do not have confirmation of the relic's exact whereabouts until 1390. A sacristy inventory from that year tells us that, at that time, the blood and the head both resided in the Tesoro Vecchio.

⁴³⁰ As was custom for this period, it would only have been displayed on the saint's feasts as well as moments of crisis or significant political ceremonies – as we saw with the blood in 1389 in Chapter Two.

⁴³¹ "...S. Apostoli, S. Pauli Major., S. Mariae Major., S. Mariae Rotundae, S. Andreae ad Nidum, S. Giorgii Major., S. Mariae ad Plazzam, vel ad aliam Ecclesiam, si... Archiepiscopo videbitur..." Parascandolo, *Memorie*, vol. 3, 133, fn 3. For the history of these churches, see: Carlo Celano, *Delle notizie del bello, dell'antico, e del curioso della città di Napoli: giornata seconda* (Napoli: Giacomo Raillard, 1692); Mazzocchi, *Dissertatio historica*; Sparano, *Memorie istoriche*, 157–58; Luigi Catalani, *Le chiese di Napoli descrizione storica ed artistica* (Naples: Tipografia fu Migliaccio, 1845).

⁴³² The development of Naples' religious topography is difficult to ascertain. Besides the destruction of archives, earthquakes and political instability have destroyed much of the evidence. Much of what we know comes from the *Cronaca di Partenope*, the first vernacular history of Naples. For a recent edition: Kelly, *The Cronaca*. Sixteenth and seventeenth century histories/guidebooks of Naples are also useful tools. See especially: Stefano, *Descrittione*. Bartolommeo Capasso's guide is also a critical resource: Bartolommeo Capasso, *Topografia della città di Napoli al tempo del ducato* (Napoli: Tipografia Francesco Giannini & figli, 1892).

⁴³³ Including Santi Apostoli, Santa Maria Maggiore, Santa Maria in Rotonda, San'Andrea, and San Giorgio.

⁴³⁴ There were six Greek churches in Naples during this period: San Giorgio, San'Andrea, Santa Maria in Rotonda, San Gennaro ad Diaconiam, San Giovanni e Paolo, and Santa Maria in Cosmedin. The Orsini Constitutions outlined special liturgical responsibilities for these communities, especially around Easter. For more on the six Greek

is also possible that these churches were chosen for logistical reasons. All seven buildings had large naves and piazzas, allowing for great crowds and lengthy processions. We might even consider that the archbishop maintained a special jurisdiction, perhaps an ancient one, over these particular churches. Without further evidence, however, it is difficult to describe their role with certainty.

The solemn transportation of Gennaro's skull is the only prescription for the vigil. Still, we can glean a great deal of information from the text. This procession takes on a funerary character expressed most explicitly with the shrouding of San Gennaro's relic. Although Orsini does not specify, we can presume that Gennaro's skull was placed within its reliquary bust, commissioned in 1304 by King Charles II of Anjou. As the cloth obscured its face, we might consider that it was meant to reference the *orarium* tied across Gennaro's eyes during his beheading. It is more likely, however, that the cloths visually recalled the saint's burial; the instruction to cover the head "in cloths" veiled the remains as one would place a burial shroud over a corpse. The anthropomorphic bust would have emphasised this point; as we saw in the first chapter, life-like reliquaries "fleshed out" a saint's presence by providing a visual of the saint's human features.⁴³⁵ The accompanying candles bolstered the funerary imagery employed during this procession.⁴³⁶ I will return to this point in the interpretation section below.

Once the relic reached the designated church, it was somehow concealed or hidden. What exactly this entailed is not clear. Orsini mentions the rite only in passing:

"37. [On Sunday] The Lord Archbishop... [goes] in procession [to the church] with his entire chapter, bishops, abbots, all the clergy, and all of the people congregated there. [The archbishop] goes into the church, **in which the head of the blessed Gennaro had been hidden on the Saturday immediately preceding, in the morning...**"⁴³⁷

Orsini's ambiguous description leaves much to be desired. As I will demonstrate below, comparing this brief instruction to Good Friday Deposition Rites helps us unpack Orsini's meaning. For now, it is enough to note that the relic remained in the church for roughly 24 hours. On Sunday morning, Gennaro's skull emerged from its hiding place into great crowds of clergymen and laity alike. From the church, Gennaro's relic was processed on a litter to the cathedral. The full instructions are as follows:

"...and since the whole of the city of Naples should be there, [they] are obliged to escort the head of the most blessed Gennaro... and thus two [men] from the whole aforementioned seat of Capuana and Nido, two [men] from other seats and two [men] from the people are bound to hold the pallium by the rods above the head of the Blessed Gennaro, as is custom. On that aforesaid day, the prelates are bound to carry the head for one

churches, see: Mazzocchi, *Dissertatio historica*, 112. Capasso, *Topografia*, 95–96; Lucherini, *La cattedrale*, 350, 357.

⁴³⁵ Sally J. Cornelison and Scott B. Montgomery, ed. *Images, Relics, and Devotional Practices in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 2–3.

⁴³⁶ For candles and funeral processions: Maria Antonietta Visceglia, "Corpo e Sepoltura nei Testamenti della Nobiltà Napoletana (XVI-XVIII Secolo)," *Quaderni Storici* 17 (1982), 591; Martina Saltamacchia, "A Funeral Procession from Venice to Milan: Death Rituals for a Late-Medieval Wealthy Merchant," in *Dealing with The Dead*, ed. Thea Tomaini (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 213–14.

⁴³⁷ "Num. XXXVII... Dominus Archiepiscopus... processionaliter cum Capituolo suo toto, Episcopis, Abbatibus, Clero universo, cunctis de populo ibid. congregatis, vadit ad Ecclesiam, **in qua Caput beatissimum Januarii reconditum fuerat die Sabbati proxime praecedentis, de mane...**" Parascandolo, *Memorie*, vol. 3, 133 fn. 3. Emphasis my own.

third of the road, according to the good pleasure of the Lord Archbishop and afterwards, where they were tired, the chapter of the cathedral of Naples would carry [the head]. When [the head] was carried away from the said chosen [church], and reverently placed on the altar, the Lord Archbishop goes to his Seat... and begins Vespers..."⁴³⁸

Like other Italian civic patrons of this period, the procession of Gennaro's skull relic thus formed an integral portion of his feast day. We can see similar liturgical practices in Bologna, for example, with the head of their patron St Petronius, and in Florence, with that of St Zenobius.⁴³⁹ This constitution depicts a well-attended and lengthy procession. Though Orsini fails to outline the exact route, we can confidently assume that this procession circumambulated the city of Naples.⁴⁴⁰ Such lengthy routes were commonplace in late medieval Europe, serving to mark the city's boundaries and creating a shared perception of urban space.⁴⁴¹ In this case, Gennaro's procession also defined the relationship between the city's cathedral and Orsini's seven churches. Given the antiquity of these spaces, we can speculate that both processions on Saturday and Sunday were designed to make Naples' historic Christian past visible.

More generally, relic processions facilitated greater interactions between the saint and his flock; by the fourteenth century, it was widely believed that sacred remains could sanctify an urban landscape as well as its inhabitants.⁴⁴² It was crucial, therefore, that the saint saw as much of Naples as possible – and vice versa. It is also plausible that the procession stopped at the Porta di San Gennaro. This gate led to the Catacombs of San Gennaro, the site of Gennaro's first Neapolitan tomb. We can imagine the entourage pausing at this gate, therefore, to acknowledge the catacombs' role in the translation legend.

This route also facilitated the involvement of Naples' inhabitants, including the city's men, women and children. Since the procession circled the city, many could stand near their homes, or perhaps look down from their windows, to watch San Gennaro pass by. This proximity was critical in facilitating interactions between the saint and these attendees, especially as spectators primarily engaged with the feast through a visual dimension.⁴⁴³ At the same time, they brought their own performative value to festive celebrations. Across Italy, and indeed Europe, crowds were expected

⁴³⁸ "...et cum ibi fuerit universitas civitatis Neapolis quae Caput beatissimum Januarii associare tenetur...duo de praedicta universitate de Platea Capuana et Nidi, et inde duo de aliis Plateis, et duo de populo portare tenentur supra Caput beatissimum Januarii pallium cum hastis more solito. Quod Caput in die praedicta deferre tenentur Praelati usque ad tertium spatium viae secundum beneplacitum Domini Archiepiscopus et postea ubi fatigati essent, Capitulum Ecclesiae Neapolis deferre tenetur. Quod cum delatum fuerit ad dictam Ecclesiam, et in Altare reverenter...repositum, Dominus Archiepiscopus vadit in Sedem suam...et incipit Vesperas..." *ibid*.

⁴³⁹ Webb, *Patrons*, 16.

⁴⁴⁰ See Map One for the city walls and Orsini's seven churches.

⁴⁴¹ For a helpful case study in how this was done in Salisbury, see: Christian Frost, *Time, Space, and Order: The Making of Medieval Salisbury* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009), esp. 112-117. For a helpful summary of medieval liturgical processions, and their customary routes, see: Roger E. Reynolds, "The Drama of Medieval Liturgical Processions," *Revue de Musicologie* 86 (2000): 127-42.

⁴⁴² Snoek, *Medieval Piety*, 250-260. For several cases in Tuscany, for example: Benjamin Brand, *Relic Cults and their Liturgies in Medieval Tuscany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁴⁴³ For visual participation in processions: Bob Scribner, "Popular Piety and Modes of Visual Perception in Late-Medieval and Reformation Germany," *Journal of Religious History* 15 (1989): 448-69; Jill Stevenson, "Sensual Bodies and Devotional Encounters: the Influence of Performance on Lay Visual Piety in Late Medieval York" (PhD Dissertation, City University of New York, 2006). Cynthia Hahn's article is especially helpful for thinking about the visual construction of sanctity, even outside processional contexts: Cynthia Hahn, "Seeing and Believing: The Construction of Sanctity in Early-Medieval Saints' Shrines," *Speculum* 72 (1997): 1079-1106.

to interact with these parades, whether in positive ways or negative ways. This included cheering, singing hymns, reciting prayers, or even ridiculing members of the procession. There is no reason to believe that such behaviours were absent from San Gennaro's feast.

San Gennaro's skull was ultimately taken back to the cathedral. The relic was then placed on the main altar and the archbishop led Vespers. This prescription suggests that the procession took up almost a full day. From here, Orsini expresses great concern over clerical dress:

"...the auxiliary Bishops and Abbots standing in the stalls or the usual places... and... required to come to the mass were the Archpresbyters of Calvizzano, Afragola, and Fuorifiume, with their Clerics with crowns of roses and other flowers, and in fact carrying tree branches decorated with flowers and different kinds of birds... (Constitution 38) Before the Lord Archbishop is in the cathedral, all the bishops and abbots are required to be ready in the choir together with the entire clergy of the city of Naples, namely bishops and abbots with copes, mitres and crosses; however, the chapter with tunics and copes but truly all the clergy with copes, crowned with crowns of roses or other flowers on their heads, and they also carried trees decorated with flowers and different birds, etc."⁴⁴⁴

We have thus been finally introduced to Naples' famed garlanded clergy. It is evident that Archbishop Orsini understood these *inghirlandati*, as they were later called, as a crucial component of Gennaro's feast.⁴⁴⁵ The emphatic nature of the text, exhibited in the phrases "*clerici vero omnes cum cottis...*" and "*nec non deferre arbores ornatas floribus...*" as well as the repetition of instructions, may also suggest a hesitancy to enact these requirements amongst the clergy. The presence of garlanded priests, and especially the use of roses, has prompted various interpretations. Alessio Mazzocchi first compared the feast to the pagan feast of *rodismo*, or *rosalia*, in which participants adorned themselves in roses or violets and commemorated their dead.⁴⁴⁶ Domenico Ambrasi suggested that Gennaro's feast had been assimilated with traditional May Day celebrations, indicated by the roses in the priests' crowns.⁴⁴⁷ The relationship between this celebration and the emergence of spring is not too surprising. As we saw earlier, this feast was scheduled for the springtime since at least the ninth century.

Perhaps the most relevant comparison, however, can be made to other patronal translation feasts celebrated near Naples. My primary examples come from Salerno and Amalfi. On 6 May, Salerno celebrated the translation feast of St Matthew, their patron. Clergies were required to carry "trophies" of flowers during the procession towards the cathedral.⁴⁴⁸ Similarly, flowers and birds were required during the procession on St Andrew's translation feast in Amalfi on 8 May.⁴⁴⁹ In

⁴⁴⁴ "...Episcopis et Abbatibus suffraganeis stantibus in stallis seu locis consuetis ...et ad... Missam venire tenentur Archipresbyteri Calviczani, Afragolae, et Foris fluminis, cum Clericis suis cum coronis roseis et aliorum florum, nec non et deferre arbores ornatas floribus et avibus diversis...Num. XXXVIII...Antequam Dominus Archiepiscopus sit in Ecclesia, tenentur Episcopi et Abbates omnes suffraganei una cum Clero universo civitatis Neapolis esse in Choro parati, videlicet Episcopi et Abbates cum pluvialibus mitris et crociis; Capitulum autem cum cottis et pluvialibus Clerici vero omnes cum cottis, coronati coronis roseis vel aliorum florum in capitibus, nec non deferre arbores ornatas floribus et avibus diversis, etc." Parascandolo, *Memorie*, vol. 3, 133 fn. 3.

⁴⁴⁵ Giovanni Pontano labelled them as such in his work, *Charon*. We will hear more about this in the next chapter.

⁴⁴⁶ Mazzocchi, *Dissertatio historica*, 52.

⁴⁴⁷ Domenico Ambrasi, "La processione della goliardia napoletana e i 'ludi della porcula,'" in *Seicento napoletano: arte, costume e ambiente*, ed. Roberto Pane (Napoli: Edizioni di Comunità, 1984), 392 – 407. For May Day celebrations in the broader European context, see: Antonella Caforio, "Il Ciclo del Maggio Feste di Primavera in Europa," *Studi in Sociologia* 47 (2009): 95–114.

⁴⁴⁸ Giovanni Vitolo, "Città e Chiesa Nel Mezzogiorno Medievale: La Processione Del Santo Patrono a Salerno (Secolo XII)," *Studi Storici* 41 (2000): 978.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

both Salerno and Amalfi, the garlanded clergy presented their flowers to the bishop in the cathedral, often on their knees, as a tribute.⁴⁵⁰ We can therefore understand these rituals as a kind of episcopal obedience ceremony. As Giovanni Vitolo has demonstrated, both ceremonies can be dated at least to the twelfth century.⁴⁵¹ As these cases suggest, there was clearly a connection between patronal translation feasts, episcopal obedience, and floral crowns in medieval southern Italy.

Based on these analogous rites, I believe that a similar episcopal obedience ceremony took place at the conclusion of Gennaro's procession. Given the examples of Salerno and Amalfi, this ceremony was probably not Orsini's invention. It is more likely that this rite, or something similar, already existed in Naples. In any case, it is evident that Archbishop Orsini viewed the obedience ceremony as a critical component of Gennaro's translation feast. My hypothesis rests on Naples' *inghirlandati* as well as the required attendance of diocesan clergy. Orsini's emphasis on the floral dress code suggests that, like in Salerno and Amalfi, these objects were gifted to the archbishop as a sign of the cleric's fidelity. Orsini sought such loyalty from across his archdiocese. He specifies that all his priests, deacons, suffragan bishops, abbots, and archpriests, specifically those from Calvizzano, Afragola, and Fuorifiume, were required to attend. He further instructs these clergymen to sit in the choir while the archbishop took his place on the episcopal throne. On the one hand, this arrangement was typical for singing the Divine Office. On the other hand, the archbishop's position made it possible for his clergy to approach him *ex cathedra*. Thus, even the seating arrangements recalled the archbishop's status as the head of the diocese.

Gennaro's reliquary had a special role to play in materialising his holy powers. As the Orsini Constitutions dictate, the reliquary bust was placed on the cathedral's main altar as the procession concluded. We can surmise, therefore, that the bust was left on the altar during the obedience ceremony. Consequently, the rite took place in the presence of San Gennaro, who watched from the highest place of honour in the Neapolitan cathedral. Performing oaths with relics was not uncommon during this period.⁴⁵² For example, on the feast of St Geminianus, members of the local councils swore an oath of fidelity to Modena on the saint's arm relic.⁴⁵³ Though the constitutions do not dictate any physical interaction between the clerics and Gennaro's skull, it is possible that each member touched, genuflected or otherwise acknowledged the saint's presence while professing their allegiance to the archbishop. The presence of Gennaro's relic would have had an intimidating effect. If any of these clergymen were to reject the authority of their archbishop, they risked condemnation by a divine authority.

This obedience ceremony bears great similarities to other submission rituals which took place on patronal feasts in the central and north of Italy. These ceremonies not only underscored ecclesiastical authority, as was the case in Naples, but also political and secular entities. In Venice, for example, the feast of St Mark on 25 April, which included the procession of the saint's relics, culminated in a tribute to the doge and magistrates from local clerics and religious orders, thereby

⁴⁵⁰ Research on these southern Italian patronal translation feasts is severely lacking. Vitolo's article remains one of the few on the subject. See: *ibid*.

⁴⁵¹ A similar event can also be found in fifteenth century Nola. On 25 April, priests from the diocese processed to Nola's cathedral wearing floral crowns and carrying roses. Upon arrival, they would present their rose bouquets to their bishop, seated on his episcopal throne, as a sign of fidelity. See: Imbriani, "The Elegance," 144.

⁴⁵² Michalina Duda and Sławomir Józwiak, "On What Were Oaths Taken in Christian Latin Europe in the High Middle Ages (12th- early 14th centuries)?," *Mediaevistik* 32 (2019): 143 – 157.

⁴⁵³ Webb, *Patrons*, 218

acknowledging their submission to these secular powers.⁴⁵⁴ At the same time, processional order and liturgical ceremonies reinforced the Venetian ecclesiastical hierarchy. The interlocking of saint, secular and ecclesiastical authorities has thus led Muir to characterise Saint Mark's cult as "essentially civic and political."⁴⁵⁵ We can see similar civic rituals elsewhere. In Siena on the Feast of the Assumption, for example, all participants of the procession were required to bow before a statue of the Virgin. As Francoise Delannee has shown, this act was not only a sign of obedience to the Virgin but was also a sign of submission to the ecclesiastical and secular authorities in Siena.⁴⁵⁶ Likewise, the practice by which lesser communes sent a *palio* (gold-cloth) to the greater communes on their patronal feast further articulated hierarchies of inter-communal authority. This was the relationship, for example, between Arezzo, Pistoia, and Volterra (lesser) and Florence (greater).⁴⁵⁷ As this brief survey demonstrates, Orsini's episcopal obedience ceremony was one of several rites enacted on the Italian peninsula which employed a saint's relics and/or feasts to legitimise, display, and uphold various kinds of authority. In this sense, San Gennaro's feast performed a pivotal civic function, one which we will return to in the conclusion of this chapter.

II: Interpreting the Translation Feast

Though the social function of religious feasts has long been established, historians have yet to unpack how the same was true of San Gennaro's translation feast during this period.⁴⁵⁸ I strive to do so in the section below. At the very least, Orsini's reform demonstrates that San Gennaro's translation feast functioned as a large-scale civic celebration, not unlike the patronal feasts found in central and northern Italy. As per Orsini's instruction, representatives of the full range of Naples' inhabitants were meant to attend, including the men, women, and children, the poor, tradesmen, non-noble citizens, the nobility (the *seggi*), and the clergy - among others. As we will further discuss in the next chapter, those from outside the city also attended the feast as members of the archdiocese of Naples. It is also plausible that members of the royal family, visiting dignitaries, and religious clergy at least viewed the festivities, if not participated in other ways. It is a shame that neither the Orsini Constitution nor any other contemporary source details the composition of the crowds and their varied experiences. Our understanding of the festival is thus lacking in that regard especially in relation to the laity, and even more so to women and children. Nevertheless, we can say that like other civic holidays in medieval Italy, Neapolitan businesses were closed on both of Gennaro's feasts.⁴⁵⁹ This would have further encouraged attendance.

Other facets of Italian feasts are more difficult to locate in the sources. For example, we have no evidence that Naples' nobility or confraternities performed acts of almsgiving, as such

⁴⁵⁴ Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 87–89.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁴⁵⁶ Francoise Glenisson Delannee, "Fete et societe: l'assomption a sienna et son evolution au cours du xvi siecle," in *Les fêtes urbaines en Italie à l'époque de la renaissance*, ed. Françoise Decroisette and Michel Plaisance (Paris: Klincksieck-Presses, 1993), 64–129.

⁴⁵⁷ Webb, *Patrons*, 200–201.

⁴⁵⁸ For the feast's social structure and civic components in Viceregal and Baroque Naples, see: Dauverd, *Church and State in Spanish Italy*, 103–146; Hills, *The Matter of Miracles*, 65–122.

⁴⁵⁹ Evidence that storefronts were closed on holy days, including this one, appears as early as the 1320s. See: Domenico Ambrasi, "La vita religiosa," in *Storia di Napoli*, vol. 3 (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1969), 454.

entities did north of Rome, nor do we have descriptions of large-scale feasting.⁴⁶⁰ While it is plausible that such components were incorporated at San Gennaro's feast, we can otherwise say very little about them without further evidence. Furthermore, while the role of secular authorities at these celebrations is clear in the Italian Communes, we cannot say the same for Naples. During this period, as Webb has demonstrated, patronal feasts were increasingly co-opted by the local, lay authorities. This included paying for, organising, and participating in the procession and the subsequent celebrations.⁴⁶¹ Unlike in the north, however, there is little to no evidence that Naples' secular rulers, that is, the Angevin monarchs, similarly intervened in these festive procedures. In fact, these rulers are entirely excluded from the Orsini Constitutions, and we have no other contemporary evidence of their participation. We can speculate on several reasons for their apparent absence, including the nature of the source, which primarily fixates on ecclesiastical participation. Additionally, King Robert and Queen Sancia directed their religious and devotional interests elsewhere; as has been well-explored, both monarchs, but especially the queen, were devoted patrons of the Franciscan Order who sought to cultivate a distinctly Franciscan spirituality in Naples.⁴⁶² As this brief example demonstrates, the methods by which Naples' monarchs sought to create, and cultivate, the city's devotional life differed from those of the municipal powers in the north.

While the organisation of Gennaro's feast seems to have been led by ecclesiastical authorities, this nevertheless did not preclude it from performing key social functions. More specifically, like those in the north, this patronal feast expressed of power dynamics, including those relating to social and ecclesiastical hierarchies. I might start with the latter. As I have established, episcopal obedience is one of Orsini's chief concerns in this text. For that reason, Naples' ecclesiastical hierarchy is explicitly acknowledged in these constitutions. We have already seen, for example, how the episcopal obedience ceremony necessitated the attendance of all of Naples' clergy. This included the prelates, the chapter, suffragan bishops, abbots, among others. With the full range of the clergy present, Gennaro's procession could be organised in order of rank. This was customary for medieval liturgical processions. Lesser clergy, such as deacons and priests, would thus begin the procession while the more important members, such as abbots, suffragan bishops, and the cathedral chapter, were found towards the end. The archbishop was last, signalling his position as the head of the church.⁴⁶³ The institutional hierarchy of the church was also embodied by the prelates and the cathedral chapter who, as the constitutions describe, took turns carrying the litter and subsequently Gennaro's relic. To carry such a holy object was not only a great honour, but also a matter of safety. Any wrong move, and the reliquary - and the relic within - could tumble to the ground. This role was therefore highly significant. This prestigious position

⁴⁶⁰ As seen in Florence, for example: Francesco Salvestrini, "La festa di San Giovanni a Firenze tra medioevo e prima età moderna," in *Rituali civici e continuità istituzionale nelle città italiane in età moderna*, ed. Gian Maria Varaini (Venice: Viella, 2023), 190–194.

⁴⁶¹ Webb, *Patrons*, 200.

⁴⁶² More specifically, Queen Sancia was devoted to the *Fraticelli*, a controversial sect of the Franciscan order. See: Ronald Musto, "Queen Sancia of Naples (1286-1345) and the Spiritual Franciscans," in *Women of the Medieval World: Essays in Honor of John H. Mundy*, ed. Julius Kirshner and Suzanne Wemple (Oxford: Blackwells, 1985), 179–214.

⁴⁶³ As Clifford Flanigan demonstrated, medieval liturgical processions were designed to highlight the pre-eminence of the bishop. See: C. Clifford Flanigan, "The Moving Subject: Medieval Liturgical Processions in Semiotic and Cultural Perspective," in *Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüskens (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 47.

was thus granted to Naples' most important clergy, other than the archbishop: the prelates and the chapter.

While this procession indicated Naples' ecclesiastical pecking order, it also served as a unifying force. Such regulated attendance cannot be found elsewhere in the Orsini Constitutions, suggesting that this feast was one of the few opportunities, if not the only, for the archdiocesan clergy to gather in one place. The uniform clerical costumes emphasised this point. With the exception of the archbishop, *all* members of the clergy appeared in floral crowns and carrying tree branches. Though ecclesiastical vestments would signal rank, this festive dress would assist in blurring the lines between the strata and present the Neapolitan church as one, united entity. By dressing the clergy in a similar manner, Orsini also distinguished Naples' ecclesiastical world from that of the laity.

Naples' lay hierarchy is less visible in this text than that of the church. Nevertheless, Orsini's pallium bearers offer a unique vantagepoint by which to view an ongoing negotiation of power between the Neapolitan *seggi*. Archbishop Orsini carved out a special role for the *seggi*, as well as the *popolo*, during this feast. Six men, he established, were to carry the pallium, a portable canopy that hung over the litter. Four of these pallium bearers originated from the *seggi*, referred to as *platea* in the text. The other two came from the *popolo*. These terms require some clarification. The history of the *seggi* is notoriously difficult to reconstruct.⁴⁶⁴ During the reigns of King Charles I and Charles II, the *seggi* had a broad definition.⁴⁶⁵ A *seggio* could refer to a geographic region, such as a neighbourhood, or to an administrative body. Though the *seggi* were often identified by their aristocratic members, these bodies consisted of both noble and non-noble peoples. The largest and most ancient of these were Capuana and Nido, both located within the city walls.⁴⁶⁶ Capuana and Nido were classic adversaries, constantly competing with one another and antagonising other smaller *seggi*. Under Robert of Anjou, these *seggi* evolved into more formalised associations and took on political roles.⁴⁶⁷ In 1314 King Robert of Anjou ordered that of Naples' six city judges, three must be elected from the noble *seggi* and the other three from the *popolo*. These six positions became known as the *eletti*.

Further complicating matters is the ambiguous definition of the *popolo*. As Samantha Kelly has summarised, Angevin records refer to the *popolo* in several different ways, including as a social group and as a type of *seggi*.⁴⁶⁸ It is perhaps easier to define what the *popolo* was not during this

⁴⁶⁴ For a summary of the problem, see: Monica Santangelo, "Preminenza aristocratica a Napoli nel tardo medioevo: i tocchi e il problema dell'origine dei sedili," *Archivio storico italiano* 171 (2013): 273–318.

⁴⁶⁵ Giuliana Vitale's work on the *seggi* in the Angevin period is especially helpful: Giuliana Vitale, "Nobiltà napoletana della prima età angioina. elite burocratica e famiglia," in *Ricerche sul medioevo napoletano*, ed. Alfonso Leone (Napoli: Edizioni Athena, 1996), 187–222; *Élite burocratica e famiglia. Dinamiche nobiliari e processi di costruzione statale nella Napoli angioino-aragonese* (Naples: Liguori Editore, 2003).

⁴⁶⁶ At the very least, both neighbourhoods predated the Angevin conquest. The Capuana *seggi* took on the upper half of Naples, while Nido settled for the lower. Gennaro Maria Monti, "Il Patto dotale napoletano di Capuana e Nido," in *Dal Duecento al Settecento: studi storico-giuridici* (Naples: I.T.E.A., 1925), 1–39; Vitale, "Nobiltà," 40–41.

⁴⁶⁷ The history of the *eletti* is just as muddled as that of the *seggi*. The positions can generally be dated to the turn of the fourteenth century, but the exact date (and their exact function) remains contested. For two different perspectives, see: Giovanni Vitolo, "Il Regno angioino," in *Storia del Mezzogiorno*, vol. IV, ed. Giuseppe Galasso and Rosario Romeo (Naples: Editalia, 1986), 11–86; Guido D'Agostino, *Per una storia di Napoli capitale* (Napoli: Liguori, 1988). Also see Kelly for a succinct summary: Kelly, *The Cronaca*, 33.

⁴⁶⁸ Angevin tax records, for example, distinguished between the *seggio*'s noble and 'popular' members to set taxation rates. These records demonstrate the existence of several kinds of *seggi*, including those with only noble members,

period. Unlike in Viceregal Naples, the Angevin *popolo* was not a singular, recognised body of non-noble Neapolitan citizens.⁴⁶⁹ Whereas from the sixteenth century onward, the *popolo* seat was located in the Piazza Sellaria, the Angevin *popolo* had no meeting place. Yet, somehow, three members from the *popolo* were made *eletti*. How such elections occurred without one formalised body remains a crucial question in Neapolitan scholarship. Though much of the *popolo*'s history has yet to be clarified, we can generally say that this term referred to non-noble Neapolitans.

As the *seggi* were progressively formalised in the 1330s, their numbers decreased. Though the exact count is contested, roughly five of these *seggi* remained by the time of the Orsini Constitutions.⁴⁷⁰ The dwindling numbers left a power vacuum, one which Capuana and Nido wished to fill. By 1337, their attempts to dominate one another reached a fever pitch. King Robert was forced to intervene and order a truce via the so-called "Edict of Peace."⁴⁷¹ Orsini's constitutions directly reflect this conflict. Orsini guaranteed Capuana and Nido one representative each in Gennaro's procession. Broadly speaking, this ensured their place reflected Capuana and Nido's superiority amongst the *seggi*. At the same time, Orsini's pallium bearers fit into a much larger Angevin strategy aimed at appeasing these warring factions. Hopefully, the enforced proximity would encourage camaraderie rather than discord.

The remaining pallium bearers further highlight the ongoing transformation of Naples' *seggi* hierarchy. After Capuana and Nido, Orsini offers two places to two unnamed *seggi*. First, the anonymity of these *seggi* reinforces Capuana and Nido's place at the top of the *seggi* hierarchy. Whatever the identity of these additional *seggi*, their positions were unsecured. Second, this prescription likely reflected the ongoing consolidation of the *seggi*. As mentioned, the number of these bodies rapidly decreased in the 1330s; many of the smaller *seggi* were incorporated into Capuana and Nido. Like many others in Naples, Orsini was probably uncertain which *seggi* would survive the year. He therefore left the identity of these two pallium-bearers adaptable to any changing circumstances. Finally, Orsini offers two places to the *popolo*. However it was organised, this group received only two delegates to the *seggi*'s four. Naples' noblemen were thus better represented. The uneven distribution of pallium bearers thus reflects

those with mixed members, and those with only *popolo*. In these sources, the *seggi* clearly refer to geographic territories rather than administrative bodies. Kelly, *The Cronaca*, 37. For the tax records: Michaelangelo Schipa, "Nobili e popolani in Napoli nel medioevo in rapporto all'amministrazione municipale," *Archivio storico italiano* 7 (1925): 3–44, 187–248.

⁴⁶⁹ By the late fifteenth century, the *seggi* (which included the *popolo*) were six: Capuana, Nido, Montagna, Porto, Portanuova, and Popolo. Giovanni Muto, "Urban Structures and Population," in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 35–63.

⁴⁷⁰ According to Arnaldo Venditti. His count includes Capuana, Nido, Portanova, Porto and Montagna. Rosalba di Meglio counts four - Capuana, Nido, Portanova, and Porto. In either case, this is a massive drop from the time of the Angevin Conquest. According to Venditti, there were upwards of 29 *seggi* in Naples at that time. Arnaldo Venditti, *Urbanistica e architettura nella Napoli angioina* (Napoli: Società editrice Storia di Napoli, 1900), 685–86; Rosalba Di Meglio, "Nobiltà di seggio e istituzioni ecclesiastiche nella Napoli dei secoli XIV–XV," in *Ordnungen des sozialen Raumes: die Quartieri, Sestieri und Seggi in den frühneuzeitlichen Städten Italiens*, ed. Tanja Michalsky and Grit Heidemann (Berlin: Reimer, 2012), 34–35.

⁴⁷¹ The conflict between Capuana and Nido came to a head in 1338, one year after the Orsini Constitutions were promulgated. In that year, King Robert of Anjou published the so-called "Edict of Peace," disavowing the "many instances of persecution, wounding, murder, injury, and other offenses," both *seggi* engaged in. In 1339, the king increased their representation amongst the city judges and magistrates, in the hopes this would decrease the violence in the streets. For a transcription of the edict, see: Giovanni Antonio Summonte, *Historia della città e regno di Napoli*, vol. III (Naples: Antonio Bulifon, 1675), 401. For the feud: Monti, "Il Patto dotale napoletano di Capuana e Nido," 1–39; Rosalba Di Meglio, "Nobiltà di seggio," 33–52.

Naples' social hierarchy, in which the noblemen took precedence.

At the same time, the pallium bearers represented a form of cooperation between Naples' lay and clerical members. While carrying the pallium, these men had to cooperate with the clergymen carrying the litter, and subsequently the reliquary. The pallium had a dual purpose: to protect and to signal the sanctity of a holy object being carried in procession, usually a Eucharistic host or a relic. While the litter bearers were physically responsible for the safety of Gennaro's relics, the pallium bearers were symbolically accountable. The preservation of this holy object was a collaborative effort between clergymen, nobles and non-nobles. This role thus afforded laymen a rare opportunity, albeit symbolic, to share in the safeguarding of Gennaro's relics with the clergy.

II.I. Reenacting a legend

If the translation feast functioned as a social tool, this represented only one layer of the feast's meaning. A closer inspection of Orsini's instructions reveals that the procession was also designed as a reenactment of Gennaro's translation legend. I am not alone in this interpretation. Lucherini has theorised, for example, that the *inghirlandati* visually recreated the rural environment in which Gennaro's remains were first discovered.⁴⁷² As the procession circumnavigated the city, she further argues, the *inghirlandati* ritually transformed Naples into the translation journey. Lucherini's hypothesis is well-founded. Transfiguring an urban landscape into a sacred one was a common feature of medieval processions. During Palm Sunday processions across Western Europe, for example, clergy and laity carried palm branches to recreate Christ's journey from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem. Consequently, a city became a new Holy Land.⁴⁷³ In Rome during Lent, Stationary processions recalled Rome's early Christian past, transporting participants to the long-gone age of martyrdom.⁴⁷⁴ We can imagine that the *inghirlandati* similarly conveyed an earlier age. At a minimum, the procession recalled one of the city's founding myths, that is, the arrival of their patron saint.

Lucherini's interpretation begins and ends with the *inghirlandati*. I would like to expand her evidence base by returning to Saturday's events. In doing so, I will demonstrate how the reenactment of Gennaro's translation was far more detailed than previously understood. As mentioned earlier, Orsini instructed his clergy to conceal (*reconditum fuerat*) Gennaro's skull in one of seven churches on Saturday morning. It is not immediately obvious what this entailed; Orsini offers no further instructions. A comparison to medieval Deposition Rites will help us unpack this mysterious command. These rites were celebrated widely across Western Europe in

⁴⁷² Lucherini, "Le processione," 16.

⁴⁷³ For an assortment of case studies on medieval Palm Sunday processions, see: Margot Fassler, "Adventus at Chartres: Ritual Models for Major Processions," in *Ceremonial culture in pre-modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Howe (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 13–62; Craig Wright, "The Palm Sunday Procession in medieval Chartres," in *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages*, ed. Margot E Fassler and Rebecca A Balzter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 346–347; Paolo Pirillo, "La Domenica della Palme, un castello e due chiese: popolamento e parrocchie nel piviere di Gaville," in *San Romolo a Gaville: storie di una pieve in età medievale*, ed. Paolo Pirillo and Maureo Ronzani (Rome: Viella, 2008), 149–174. For Palm Sunday in medieval and early modern Naples, see: Sparano, *Memorie storiche*, 225; Mallardo, "La Pasqua," 3–36; Dauverd, *Church and State in Spanish Italy*, 147–85.

⁴⁷⁴ See: John F Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Rome: Pontificum Institutum studiorum orientalium, 1987).

the late Middle Ages.⁴⁷⁵ On Good Friday, a crucifix, Eucharistic host, or image of Christ was wrapped in a burial shroud and processed throughout the city. The rite was staged as a burial. Candles were lit and attendees dressed in mourning robes. To recreate his interment, Christ's 'body' was then placed in a makeshift sepulchre. These temporary sepulchres varied in design. In France and England, large wooden structures resembling the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem were erected near the chancel. Dark curtains and tabernacles could also suffice. In Wittenberg and Venice, for example, a host was 'buried' in a tabernacle on a side altar. In Wittenberg, curtains were installed around the altar so that the tabernacle was concealed.⁴⁷⁶ The ritual was far more ornate in Venice.⁴⁷⁷ During the afternoon, a host was processed in the Piazza San Marco on a bier, covered in a black cloth. It was then placed in a gold tabernacle decorated with many "ornaments," which was then sealed with the Doge's signet ring.⁴⁷⁸ In Venice, Wittenberg, and elsewhere, clergy then kept vigil at the provisional tomb throughout the night. This included praying the Divine Office and reading Psalms aloud. In some locations, the church also remained open for the laity to participate in the vigil. On Easter morning, these makeshift sepulchres were triumphantly reopened to reveal an empty tomb.⁴⁷⁹

The purpose of the Deposition Rite was twofold. First, it was a reenactment.⁴⁸⁰ The burial of the host or crucifix on Good Friday allowed the bishop to uncover an empty tomb on Sunday morning, as per the Easter story. At the same time, the liturgy was designed to draw Christ's crucifixion, death, and resurrection into the present day. For the Christian, these historical moments could cross temporal boundaries to simultaneously occur in the past *and* in the present.⁴⁸¹ The *depositio*, therefore, invited the local community to participate in Christ's death in *this* specific place and time.⁴⁸²

Comparing the Deposition Rites to Orsini's instructions allows us to conceive of San Gennaro's translation feast as ritualised storytelling. Like the Good Friday liturgies, the Saturday

⁴⁷⁵ For the development of the Deposition Rite: Christophe Chaguinian, ed. *Good Friday Ceremonies with Articulated Figures in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2023). Chaguinian, among others, roughly dates this liturgy to the twelfth century. This rite was especially popular with the Franciscan Order and was thus disseminated wherever the order travelled from the fourteenth century onward. As Claudio Bernardi and Carla Bino establish (pp. 234-308) in *Good Friday Ceremonies*, it is difficult to determine how early these rites were introduced to Naples. The earliest evidence of a Deposition Rite in Naples appears in 1437, but the rites were likely enacted earlier. For 1437: Solange Corbin, *La deposition liturgique du Christ au Vendredi Saint; sa place dans l'histoire des rites et du théâtre religieux (analyse de documents portugais)* (Paris: Société d'éditions les belles lettres, 1960), 357. Regardless of the exact date, the popularity of this liturgy in the fourteenth century leads me to believe that it was enacted by the Franciscans in Naples during this period (perhaps at San Lorenzo or Santa Chiara). At the very least, as a highly educated member of the clergy, Archbishop Orsini would have been aware of the liturgy's existence.

⁴⁷⁶ Amy Knight Powell, *Depositions: Scenes from the Late Medieval Church and the Modern Museum* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 47.

⁴⁷⁷ For Deposition Rites in Venice: Anna Seragiotto, "Il culto eucaristico a venezia nel tardo medioevo: riti, opere, spazi" (Phd Dissertation, University of Padova, 2024), 41–46.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴⁷⁹ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 294–95; Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 247–48.

⁴⁸⁰ For the more performative aspects of this liturgy, see: Donna L. Sadler, *Stone, Flesh, Spirit: The Entombment of Christ in Late Medieval Burgundy and Champagne* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 111–48.

⁴⁸¹ Sadler's understanding of these rituals as the joining of the past, present *and* future is particularly helpful in this discussion. See: *ibid.*, 120–25.

⁴⁸² For Christ's presence in Holy Week Liturgies: Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 293–96; Seragiotto, "Il culto eucaristico," 45–46.

procession had an especially funerary character. San Gennaro's skull was shrouded on a litter, surrounded by candles, and solemnly transported to its next location. There, it was concealed. Exactly how this occurred remains unclear, as Orsini does not describe the arrangement. If we continue to use these rites as a comparable example, we might hypothesise that Gennaro's reliquary was placed in a symbolic tomb. Orsini's instruction to cover the reliquary in cloths might suggest that the bust was "buried" beneath this makeshift shroud. Regardless of how the relic was hidden, this action mimicked San Gennaro's first burial. I would further contend that this reliquary was left shrouded on an altar for public display. This would allow the faithful to venerate Gennaro whilst he was in his 'tomb.' I base this argument on the timing of the ritual. As per Orsini's instructions, the relic was left in the church from Saturday to Sunday morning. It is highly unlikely that the reliquary sat unacknowledged during this 24-hour period. Instead, the church was likely left open during the day, and possibly throughout the night, as it was during the *depositio* liturgy, for the veneration of Gennaro's remains. We can surmise that the clergies of each church performed their own liturgies before the relic. At the very least, this included praying the Divine Office.

The archbishop then arrived on Sunday morning to triumphantly "discover" San Gennaro's remains. In doing so, he emulated his predecessor, Bishop John I, to whom Gennaro's fifth-century translation is attributed.⁴⁸³ And thus, the archbishop triggers the translation journey, embodied by the procession. I might further suggest that those attending the procession represented the larger Christian community which first accompanied the saint's relics to Naples. Consequently, all of Naples had a role to play in the translation story. However, there is a critical difference in the conclusions of the translation legend and the fourteenth century reenactment. Whereas in the legend, Gennaro's body is deposited in the catacombs, during the feast his remains are placed on the cathedral's high altar. The messaging is clear: San Gennaro belongs in the cathedral under the protection of the archbishop and his clergy.

The annual retelling of Gennaro's translation reinforced its memory amongst the Neapolitan people and preserved it for future generations. Yet, this feast was more than just storytelling. By drawing Gennaro's translation into the present day, the whole city reconfirmed the patronal contract between Naples and its patron saint. The relationship between a patron and his people was a reciprocal one. Saints performed miracles; their devotees offered them homage; and thus, the cycle continued. Gennaro's patronage hinged on his translation. This was his only link to Naples; as we saw in the Prologue, neither his life nor his death fostered any connection to the city. If the city wanted to guarantee his guardianship, they needed to reaffirm the bonds forged at Gennaro's arrival. Consequently, Neapolitans from all social and ecclesiastical backgrounds were called to translate the saint as if for the first time. The *inghirlandati* transformed into the landscape and the people of Naples emulated the early Christian community. The use of flowers and tree branches, like the palms which ushered Christ into the city on Palm Sunday, welcomed San Gennaro into Naples. The archbishop's role was particularly critical in renewing the patronal contract. If Naples had a patron in San Gennaro, they had a bishop to thank. It was Bishop John who initiated Gennaro's patronage by sponsoring the fifth century translation. By stepping into their predecessor's shoes, Naples' archbishops were responsible, if only ceremoniously, for re-initiating the relic transfer. This ritual also demonstrates that the relationship between Naples' archbishop and its patron saint was a symbiotic one. The archbishop's authority was legitimised through Gennaro's holy presence, and San Gennaro's patronage was reaffirmed by the archbishop.

⁴⁸³ I speak more about Bishop John in the Prologue. Also see: Berto, ed. *The Deeds*, 9.

Conclusions:

To conclude this chapter, I would like to take a step back and situate San Gennaro's translation feast within the broader context of Italian civic celebrations. Overwhelming in this period, patronal saints increasingly embodied forms of power. By associating themselves with these divine entities, ecclesiastical, royal, and civic officials alike could enhance their authority. Acknowledgements of power dynamics manifested in obedience rituals which were increasingly scheduled during patronal feasts. Such ceremonies often took place in front of the saint's relics which legitimised the hierarchies on display. We can see similar dynamics at play during San Gennaro's translation feast. As in the centre and north of Italy, this celebration was shaped by local social structures and interests, as exemplified in the procession as well as the episcopal obedience ceremony. For example, the presence of members from the *seggi* and the *popolo* as pallium-bearers simultaneously reflected ongoing negotiations of power, especially between Naples' aristocratic families, highlighted the dominance of these families over the city's humbler social classes, and fostered civic cohesion. Encouraging civic solidarity between the social groups was also achieved by inviting the entire city to attend the festival. Key to this shared sense of identity was the cult of San Gennaro. Though their roles and levels of participation varied, all walks of life were encouraged to attend the celebration, which revolved around their shared patron.

At the same time, submission rituals helped affirm pre-existing hierarchies, as seen most notably in the episcopal obedience ceremony enacted in the cathedral. Like in Salerno and Amalfi, Naples' ecclesiastics foregrounded their own internal hierarchy during their patron's feast by offering tributes to their archbishop. Though the surviving evidence (i.e. the Orsini Constitutions) prioritises this ceremony, and subsequently the ecclesiastical connotations of the feast, it also points to a complex dynamic at play between lay and clerical bodies. While the obedience ritual required formal participation from clerics, the earlier procession implicitly situated lay participants within the same ecclesiastical hierarchy. Given the examples of the civic feasts north of Rome, we might further speculate that the Neapolitan laity were encouraged to donate candles, or some other offering, to the saint, not only to venerate their patron but also to signal their allegiance, if not submission, to the local church authorities. What is clear, however, is that the entire celebration acted as a kind of obedience ritual, whether explicitly or implicitly, one which integrated clerical and non-clerical actors within a deliberately ordered hierarchy.

Of course, we must take care to admit that this interpretation is rooted in the purpose of the Orsini Constitutions themselves. As noted, these reforms were intended to encourage institutional obedience, as desired by Pope Benedict. They thus emphasise the rites and procedures relating to this point, while omitting other components such as participation from the crowds. They also describe an idealised version of events; the absence of further sources prevents us from exploring how rituals relating to obedience and legitimacy were contradicted or disputed, if ever, during the fourteenth century. As we will see in the following chapter, we *can* pursue this enquiry in the fifteenth century. Otherwise, I must acknowledge that our understanding of this fantastic celebration is incomplete.

Nevertheless, from this snapshot I have argued that San Gennaro's feast performed several critical social functions and functioned as a civic feast, not unlike those found north of Rome.⁴⁸⁴ This evaluation thus challenges previous historiographical arguments, which root experiences of civic religion in the deeds of secular municipal authorities, as noted in the introduction of this

⁴⁸⁴ As such, it fits squarely within recent calls to treat festivals of southern Italy as civic, as in: Palmieri, "Religion: Institutions, Devotion, and Heresy."

thesis.⁴⁸⁵ There is at least one issue with this definition: it too narrowly reflects the experience of the Italian communes. Naples, for example, was not led by a municipal government but rather a monarchy which, according to the evidence, did not seek to intervene or otherwise curate the saint's patronal feast in any capacity. Instead, as this chapter has demonstrated, responsibility for organising and shaping the feast lay primarily with the city's ecclesiastical authorities. Moreover, while the cult of San Gennaro did come to articulate forms of authority, not unlike the patrons of the north, it was not configured as an expression of political authority. Rather, as we saw in Part One, Naples' patron was consistently presented as the emblem of the Neapolitan church. Acknowledging these important distinctions is critical in expanding the definition of late medieval civic festivals.

The case of Naples suggests that civic identity and expression were not exclusively mediated through local secular rulers. Like the municipal authorities in the north, Naples' leading ecclesiastical figures were acutely aware of the wider social and political needs of the urban community and employed this patronal feast as a means of addressing them. In this respect, the feast of San Gennaro was shaped by the needs and interests of the local community, including internal political dynamics, constituting it as an inherently civic celebration. The following chapter will continue to explore how this civic character developed across the fifteenth century, and how the cult of San Gennaro was increasingly seen as a critical component of Naples' civic identity.

⁴⁸⁵ Introduction, pp. 16-17.

Chapter Four: San Gennaro of the Pig

Introduction:

“In Naples, a populous city in Campania, in the month of May priests go in procession through the city wearing garlands like young lovers. But this is nothing. Learn a thing that deserves to be heard by the wise with their ears shut. When the whole population has assembled in the church, a female piglet is let down from the beams of the rooftop, bound with a rope and smeared with soap. The country folk are there, called to the sport. Then a great contest ensues, as the yokels strive to grasp the pig while those holding her suspended artfully evade the hands of the yokels and now pull the rope away, now let it loose in different directions. While this is going on, with the crowd intent on the game and cheering now one side, now the other, then, like a heavy rain, a great quantity of water, and a greater one of sewage and urine is poured from the roof in several places at the same time. Even human excrement is involved and it doesn’t stop until the peasants have taken control of the pig by force. What do you think of this, Charon?”⁴⁸⁶

Giovanni Pontano, *Charon* (c.1491)

So says the god Mercury to the ferryman of the River Styx in Giovanni Pontano's dialogue, *Charon*. Published in 1491, Pontano's filthy rendition of the *festa dell'inghirlandati* has, understandably, captured the imagination of readers for centuries. Several aspects of this text are difficult to believe. It is hard to imagine, for example, a live animal squealing and dangling from any church's rafters. Further still, Pontano leaves us with all sorts of logistical questions. Who was responsible for cleaning up such a mess? How could the chapter perform their liturgical duties with the smell of excrement wafting through the transept? And, most pertinently for us, what is the connection - if any - between a pig and the translation of San Gennaro?

The evidence base for Gennaro's pig-game is extremely limited; Pontano's *Charon* is the first of only two written accounts. Resultingly, the ritual has largely been overlooked in historical scholarship. Only two historians, Domenico Ambrasi and Giovanni Romeo, have attempted to interpret the event.⁴⁸⁷ As we will see further below, both men have loosely linked it to the authority of the Neapolitan archbishop. The historical community has yet to otherwise contextualise the ritual within late medieval or early modern festival culture. We are thus left with a reductive portrait of the event, one which casts the ritual as a ridiculous superstition. This chapter seeks to unpack the relationship between a pig and a patron saint. Just as Robert Darnton questioned “but why cats?” and the amusement behind their violent killings, I seek to flesh out the purposes and meanings behind Gennaro's pig, and its gruesome demise.⁴⁸⁸ To do this, I will compare Gennaro's pig to the countless other animal-related games enacted on civic feasts across the Italian peninsula and thereby demonstrate its critical social function. As in Chapter Three, I recognise that the scarcity of the sources produces a somewhat limited window into this intriguing chapter of San

⁴⁸⁶ “Neapoli, Campanorum urbe celebri, Maio mense sacerdotes per urbem coronati incedunt, quasi amantes adolescentuli. Sed hoc quidem levius fuerit. Rem nosce dignam tamen quae a sapientibus viris clausis auribus audiatur. Ubi omnis populus in templo convenit, de trabibus summi tecti resti deligata porcella demittitur ac multo sapone circumlita. Adsunt agrestes ad ludum vocati. Ibi oritur magna contentio, agrestibus ut ea potiantur annitentibus, qui vero appensam illam tenent agrestium manus arte ludentibus ac nunc subtrahentibus funem nunc in diversa laxantibus. Dum haec geruntur, turba ludo intenta et nunc his nunc illis plaudente, ibi quasi himber magna vis aquarum, maior iuris atque urinae e tecto compluribus simul locis diffunditur; agitur etiam humanis excrementis, nec prius cessatur quam agrestes porcella vi potiti sint. Quid igitur tibi videtur, Charon?” Giovanni Pontano, *Dialogues I*, trans. Julia Gaisser (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 66–67. Translation by Gaisser.

⁴⁸⁷ Ambrasi, “La processione,” 494; Romeo, “Inquisition,” 240–41.

⁴⁸⁸ Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*, 82.

Gennaro's history. Following the advice of Burke and Buc, I take care to contextualise the sources and their authors' own vantagepoints, where I can, in order to make sense of an admittedly bizarre event.⁴⁸⁹

In doing so, I aim to reconstruct the varied experience of the translation feast in the second half of the fifteenth century. Once again, the sources from the north of Rome serve as a helpful model by which to estimate the experience of San Gennaro's translation feast during this period. As we saw in the Angevin period, sources for central and northern Italy differ dramatically from those of Naples. The former include detailed municipal statutes regarding processional orders, payment plans, and event schedules. There are no comparable sources for the translation feast.⁴⁹⁰ More broadly, the surviving Aragonese chancellery records offer an uneven and incomplete understanding of Quattrocento Neapolitan festival culture. While we can piece together a portrait of secular tournaments hosted by the Angevin and Aragonese dynasties, it is not always clear how religious feasts were marked.⁴⁹¹ At the same time, this investigation is not limited to the pig ritual. During this half-century, a critical component of Gennaro's early modern cult took shape: the annual liquefaction of his blood relic. Taken together, this chapter seeks to explore how this cult increasingly took on civic connotations as seen through the ritual of the pig and the blood.

Before diving into the feast, I must say a few words about this time period. This discussion jumps more than a century from the previous chapter. Between the Orsini Constitutions (1337) and the drafting of *Charon* (c.1469-1491), Naples experienced the Western Schism, the Black Death, several succession crises, and the Aragonese conquest.⁴⁹² The Aragonese Conquest of Naples is especially relevant to this discussion. I might briefly summarise those events here.⁴⁹³ In 1442, King Alfonso V (the Magnanimous) of Aragon conquered the Kingdom of Naples, thus concluding nearly two centuries of Angevin rule. The Aragonese takeover was precipitated by a succession crisis during the reign of Queen Joanna II of Naples. Having no heir of her own, the queen adopted Alfonso in 1421. The contract was short-lived. Joanna and Alfonso's relationship disintegrated; she declared the adoption null and void; and Duke Louis III of Anjou was declared her successor. After Joanna died, Alfonso initiated his second campaign for the kingdom. Between 1435 and 1442, the king waged war on René of Anjou, Louis' successor and claimant to the throne. Having laid siege to Naples for six months, Alfonso finally took the capital city in June of 1442. He

⁴⁸⁹ Burke, *The Historical Anthropology*; Buc, *The Dangers*.

⁴⁹⁰ For festivals in Aragonese Naples: Giuliana Vitale, *Ritualità monarchica, cerimonie e pratiche devozionali nella Napoli aragonese* (Agropoli: Laveglia Editore, 2006); Cristiana Anna Addesso, *Teatro e festività nella Napoli aragonese* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2012). Thanks to the survival of ceremonial diaries, we know far more about festivals in Viceregal Naples. See: Franco Mancini, *Feste ed apparati civili e religiosi in Napoli dal vicereame alia capitale* (Naples: Rilegato, 1968); Gabriel Guarino, *Representing the King's Splendour: Communication and Reception of Symbolic Forms of Power in Viceregal Naples* (Manchester: Manchester University Press); John Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan: Citizen Culture in Baroque Naples* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010); Gabriel Guarino, "Public Rituals and Festivals in Naples, 1503-1799," in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 257-279; Gabriel Guarino, "Taming Transgression and Violence in the Carnivals of Early Modern Naples," *The Historical Journal* 60 (2017): 1-20.

⁴⁹¹ Hope Maxwell, "Elefante Grandissimo Con Lo Castello Di Sopra' Il Trionfo Aragonese Del 1423," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 150 (3) (1992): 847-75.

⁴⁹² The schism is addressed in Chapter Two.

⁴⁹³ For the Aragonese conquest: Alan Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous: The Making of a Modern State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); Mario del Treppo, "Il regno aragonese," in *Storia del Mezzogiorno*, ed. Giuseppe Galasso and Rosario Romeo (Naples: Edizioni del sole, 1986), 87-201; Galasso, *Il Regno di Napoli*; Giuseppe Caridi, *Gli Aragonesi di Napoli: una grande dinastia del Sud nell'Italia delle signorie* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2021).

effectively rejoined the Kingdoms of Naples and of Sicily, separated since the Sicilian Vespers in 1282. Alfonso remained King of Naples and Sicily until his death in 1458. He was succeeded by his illegitimate son Ferdinand I (1458-1494). Though Alfonso's kingship is responsible for several key developments in Gennaro's cult, the majority of this chapter takes place during Ferdinand I's reign.

More broadly, Naples' fraught political circumstances distinctly shaped San Gennaro's feast quite differently from those of his counterparts in centre and northern Italy. Even after Alfonso secured the Regno, Angevin contenders for the Neapolitan throne re-triggered several succession crises, many of which were sponsored by the papacy.⁴⁹⁴ Despite their best efforts neither Alfonso nor Ferdinand I secured a long-lasting papal alliance, certainly not one as amiable and productive as their Angevin predecessors. The strain between the two powers placed Naples' archbishops in the difficult position of intermediary.⁴⁹⁵ During the same period, the Neapolitan episcopal throne acted as a stepping stone to high-powered positions in the curia. Archbishops became increasingly absent from the Neapolitan see in favour of living in Rome. These absentee clergymen compounded what was already a disrupted ecclesiastical network. Since the beginning of the Western Schism (c.1378),⁴⁹⁶ recurring political turmoil in Naples prevented episcopal elections, forced clerics to flee, and otherwise interrupted ecclesiastical governance in the capital city. A series of papal crises further distracted these men, including the election of an anti-pope at the Council of Basel-Ferrara-Florence.⁴⁹⁷ During this period, we can thus characterise Naples' archbishops as preoccupied at best; and at worst, absent and negligent. As we will see further below, Naples' increasingly ineffectual episcopate impacted how Gennaro's translation feast was experienced and interpreted by the Aragonese court.

Also during this period, King Alfonso established one of the most impressive humanistic courts in all of Europe.⁴⁹⁸ As one of the richest funds available to scholars in Italy, Alfonso's court became a workplace for Italy's leading humanists, including Lorenzo Valla and Antonio Beccadelli (Panormita).⁴⁹⁹ Neapolitan intellectuals shared a passion for classical literature and archaeology and rhetorical skills with their Italian (and transalpine) counterparts.⁵⁰⁰ At the same time, fifteenth century Neapolitan humanism reflected the tastes and demands of the Aragonese court, especially that of Alfonso the Magnanimous. This especially included the production of civic propaganda

⁴⁹⁴ In 1459, for example, the barons revolted in favour of the Angevin contender, René of Anjou. For a lengthier discussion of the succession crises, again see: Caridi, *Gli Aragonesi di Napoli*.

⁴⁹⁵ The Aragonese did not achieve a true advocate within the papal curia until the episcopate of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, who negotiated many, exceedingly fragile truces. We will hear more about Carafa in Chapter Six.

⁴⁹⁶ For more on the Schism's effects in Naples, see chapter two.

⁴⁹⁷ For an overview of what was a complicated council: Thomas M. Izbicki, Michiel Decaluwe, and Gerald Christianson, eds., *A Companion to the Council of Basel* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

⁴⁹⁸ For Alfonso and Neapolitan humanism, see: Alan Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous: King of Aragon, Naples, and Sicily 1396-1458* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Fulvio Delle Donne, *Alfonso il Magnanimo e l'invenzione dell'Umanesimo monarchico: ideologia e strategie di legittimazione alla corte aragonese di Napoli* (Roma: Istituto storico Italiano per il medio evo, 2015).

⁴⁹⁹ For more on Panormita's role in Alfonso's court: Alan Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous: King of Aragon, Naples, and Sicily* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1990), 306–57.

⁵⁰⁰ For Neapolitan humanism in a Renaissance context: Mario Santoro, "Humanism in Naples," in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, ed. Albert Rabil (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 296–331.

which expounded upon Naples' exceptional history and urban features, not only to cultivate an illustrious civic identity, but also to legitimise Aragonese kingship.⁵⁰¹

It also included ecclesiastical criticisms, as seen most vividly in the works of Valla, but also in those of Giovanni Pontano and the *Accademia Pontaniana*, a gathering of humanists in Naples.⁵⁰² Originally designed by Panormita, the group was named after its second leader, Giovanni Pontano. Pontano, a humanist from Umbria, arrived in Naples in 1458 at the behest of King Alfonso the Magnanimous.⁵⁰³ Pontano himself operated within courtly circles; he not only tutored the royal princes, but also carried out several diplomatic missions on behalf of his king throughout his life. As previous historians have noted, the academy maintained a remarkable relationship with the Aragonese court, demonstrating an "efficient cooperation and solidarity" between the monarchy and Naples' intellectual life.⁵⁰⁴ At the same time, this academy fostered rich and fulfilling connections with the intellectual communities found in other Italian courts, including those in Milan, Ferrara, Rome, and Florence.⁵⁰⁵ Humanists exchanged writings and manuscripts for purposes of collaboration and competition.⁵⁰⁶ The significance of such interactions will become clear towards the conclusion of this chapter.

To explore how San Gennaro's cult was employed by Naples' humanist circles, I utilised several textual sources of different genres. It would be helpful to introduce them here. First, there are the panegyrics to King Alfonso, such as that composed by Panormita in 1455 and its subsequent commentary by Aeneas Piccolomini, the future Pope Pius II, penned in 1457.⁵⁰⁷ Taken together, the two demonstrate a coordinated effort to cast Alfonso as the heir to the ancient Roman Emperors and as a most Christian king, presiding over a holy empire. There were also cultural dialogues, such as those written by Giovanni Pontano, which set contemporary issues against a classical antiquity backdrop. I will go into Pontano's text in far more detail below. Religious works were also common forms of literature. This included hagiographic texts, though compared to other genres, the court's output was minimal. Most importantly for our purposes are the works of Lupo de Spejo and Fra Bernardino of Sicily. Both produced accounts of holy persons, namely San

⁵⁰¹ Again, see: Donne, *Alfonso il Magnanimo*.

⁵⁰² Valla penned other controversial works while funded by King Alfonso, including attacks on the validity of the Vulgate and the Apostles' Creed. For Valla's work in its humanist context: Lodi Nauta, "Lorenzo Valla and Quattrocento Scepticism," *Vivarium* 44 (2006): 375–395. For more on the academy, see: Shulamit Furstenberg-Levi, *The Accademia Pontaniana: A Model of a Humanist Network* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

⁵⁰³ For Pontano's career: Erasmo Percopo, *Vita di Giovanni Pontano* (Napoli: Editoriali Assimilate, 1938); Lorenzo Geri, *A colloquio con Luciano di Samosata: Leon Battista Alberti, Giovanni Pontano ed Erasmo da Rotterdam* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2012): 119–164; Enrico Carrara, *Pontano, Giovanni* in *DBI*, LXXXIV (2015), 729–740.

⁵⁰⁴ Davide Canfora, "Culture and Power in Naples from 1450 to 1650," in *Princes and Princely Culture 1450–1650*, eds. Alasdair A. MacDonald, Martin Gosman, and Arjo J. Vanderjagt (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 81.

⁵⁰⁵ Furstenberg-Levi, *The Accademia*, 87–124.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 1–17.

⁵⁰⁷ For a recent edition: Antonio Beccadelli, *Alfonsi regis dicta aut facta memoratu digna: I detti e i fatti memorabili di re Alfonso*, ed. Fulvio delle Donne (Basilicata: Basilicata University Press, 2024). Piccolomini had been sent to Naples on behalf of the pope to convince Alfonso to lead a crusade on the Turks. Flattery won him no favours; Alfonso ultimately rejected the pope's request and the crusade was scrapped. For a helpful overview of the conflict and Piccolomini's role, see: John-Paul Heil, "Assassinations, Mercenaries, and Alfonso V of Aragon as Crusader King in the Thought of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini," *The Catholic Historic Review* 107 (2021): 325–48. For Piccolomini's text, see: Enea Silvio Bartolomeo Piccolomini, *Commento agli Alfonsi regis dicta aut facta memoratu digna di Antonio Panormita*, ed. Fulvio delle Donne (Basilicata: Federico II University Press, 2025).

Pellegrino and San Gennaro, and tied their sanctity to the glory of Naples.⁵⁰⁸ I will treat de Spejo's work in this chapter; we will return to Fra Bernardino's work in chapters five and six. Finally, we will also consider the works of a Neapolitan courtier which, though not written by a member of the court, offer privileged insights into the humanist circles operating in Naples. I am referring to Loise de Rosa's personal memoir, written in parts between 1452 and 1475.⁵⁰⁹

Finally, to contextualise the pig-game we need a rough status update on the development of San Gennaro's cult. Considerable gaps in source material prevent a clear picture of the fifteenth century translation feast. Other than Pontano's brief mentioning of the *inghirlandati*, we have no description of the procession from this century. Though the Orsini Constitutions were re-ratified in 1440, by then archbishop Gaspare de Diano, it remains unclear how strictly they were followed. Pontano's description suggests that the *inghirlandati* procession remained a defining feature of this feast.⁵¹⁰ In the absence of evidence to the contrary, this chapter assumes that this feast was still celebrated on the First Sunday in May. It further presumes that both the saint's head and blood were processed. I based this argument on a handful of notices from the 1490s, which inform us of the date and the relics' inclusion.⁵¹¹

This chapter has three parts. To improve our understanding of Gennaro's pig-game, it begins with a survey of festival culture in fifteenth-century Italy, with a special emphasis on competitions and tournaments which involve animals. This section will also demonstrate the range of functions such games served during civic feasts. From there, the second part explores the evidence for the Januarian pig-competition, however limited, before turning to possible interpretations. Here, I offer some hypotheses as to how this event simultaneously upheld social boundaries and encouraged bonding. Finally, in the third part, I direct our attention towards the question of civic pride by incorporating recent developments relating to the liquefaction, as found in the writings of several humanists.

I: Festival culture in fifteenth-century Italy

By the mid-fifteenth century, patronal feasts in Italy had transformed into raucous and entertaining displays of civic pride. Such celebrations still began with the procession of relics. The city's guilds and confraternities were also represented, taking their place towards the end. Once the procession concluded, at either the cathedral or some other important building, tributes were offered. As we saw in the previous chapter, this included acknowledgements of authority and fidelity from the lesser to the greater authority. In the case of the communes, obedience was offered to the greater Commune; in the case of Venice, to the Doge. At this phase, relics were placed on public display.

⁵⁰⁸ We will hear more about Bernardino's *vita* of San Gennaro in chapters five and six. For the *vita* of San Pellegrino: Antonio Vuolo, "Tre manoscritti agiografici poco noti della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli," *Annali della facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Napoli* 28 (1985–1986): 97–128.

⁵⁰⁹ Loise de Rosa, *Ricordi: edizione critica del ms ital. 913 della bibliothèque nationale de France* (Roma: Salerno Editrice, 1998).

⁵¹⁰ The garlanded priests seem to disappear in the second quarter of the 17th century. In 1617, Giuseppe Mormile described the *inghirlandati* as an ongoing fixture of the translation feast. However, in 1633, Camillo Tutini refers to the priests in the past tense, signaling that they were no longer present. See: Giuseppe Mormile, *Descrittione dell'amenissimo distretto della città di Napoli* (Naples: San Biagio, 1617), 105–06; Tutini, *Memorie*, 95–97.

⁵¹¹ In 1490 and 1496, respectively, the blood was recorded liquefying on the feast of the *inghirlandati*. These episodes mark a notable uptick in evidence for the miracle, as described in: Vitale, "Il culto ianuario."

After any offerings or relic expositions, the festive portion of the feast would begin. In some communes, such as Poggibonsi, a trumpeter marked the switch between the feast's liturgical and festive components. In Poggibonsi and Bevagna, and indeed throughout the communes as Vauchez and Webb have shown, in the afternoon of these feasts, sweets were distributed to children, games were played, and a market was held. Shops remained closed on penalty of fine. Nobility and guilds offered alms to the poor, especially in the form of food.⁵¹² Most cities in the centre and north of Italy held a *palio*, that is, a horse race, through the city streets. This occurred in Pavia, for example, on the translation feast of their patron, Syrus.⁵¹³ The *palio* also took place on the Feast of St John the Baptist in Florence and on the Feast of the Assumption in Siena. Both races occurred in the afternoon, long after the liturgical portion of the feast was complete.⁵¹⁴

Horse racing was not the only kind of competition enacted on these feasts, however. The people of Pavia, for example, partook in a footrace. Prizes included salted meat and ribbons.⁵¹⁵ Games which incorporated animals were far more common, however. In Bologna, the Council of Elders would roast a large pig, decorate it in laurels, and throw it from the balcony of the Palazzo d'Accursio on the feast of St. Bartholomew.⁵¹⁶ A contest then ensued. Crowds of Bolognese citizens pushed and shoved one another to tear away at the roast. Simultaneously, the elders tossed live birds with clipped wings from the balcony. The crowds would grab whatever birds they could hold onto and take them home for feasting. Finally, a cauldron of soup was poured from the balcony onto the crowds - allegedly to their amusement. As this example demonstrates, utilising animals for entertainment was not uncommon during this period. This was especially true for pigs. For example, on the Sunday before Lent began, live pigs in crates were rolled down the hill of Monte Testaccio in Rome.⁵¹⁷ The pork was then roasted for city-wide feasting on Fat Tuesday. In Venice during Carnival, pigs were released in the Piazza San Marco so Venetians could chase and slaughter them for dinner.⁵¹⁸ Though these examples are not of saint's feasts, they nevertheless demonstrate how torturing live animals was an accepted form of merriment during this period. The animals in question were often consumed once the game or competition was complete. This was the case in Rome and Venice, as above, as well as in Bologna, with the roasted pig and the live birds. Such practices demonstrate the wide-spread use of animals in civic and religious celebrations, a point which will prove critical for our analysis of Gennaro's pig-game.

These games could be interpreted in several ways; I will offer only a few relevant options here. The games were often played during the spring or summer, signalling the prosperity that came with the warmer climate. As has been well established in previous scholarship, holy days and civic holidays emphasised the cyclical nature of life; as the community entered spring, the people were meant to leave the sombre nature of winter behind and welcome a new, more joyful

⁵¹² Webb, *Patrons*, 198–200; Vauchez, "Patronage des saints," 62–63.

⁵¹³ Webb, *Patrons*, 200.

⁵¹⁴ Trexler, *Public Life*, 263–74; Delannee, "Fete et societe," 64–129.

⁵¹⁵ Webb, *Patrons*, 199–200.

⁵¹⁶ Nicholas Terpstra, "Bologna's Feast of the Roast Pig: A Carnavalesque festival in a sixteenth-century Italian city square," in *A Sourcebook of Early Modern European History: Life, Death, and Everything in Between*, ed. Ute Lotz-Heumann (London: Routledge, 2019), 92–94; Lorena Vallieri, "La festa della Porchetta a Bologna: nuove prospettive di indagine," *Drammaturgia* 16 (2020): 111–71.

⁵¹⁷ Minou Schraven, "Roma Theatrum Mundi: Festivals and Processions in the Ritual City," in *A Companion to Early Modern Rome, 1492–1692*, ed. Barbara Wisch, Pamela M. Jones, and Simon Ditchfield (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 255.

⁵¹⁸ Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 170.

climate.⁵¹⁹ Consequently, these rituals also carried connotations about the food supply and the exchange of labour. The animals utilised for these rituals were the fruit of farmers' labour. They must have been transported from the countryside into the city. Then, the beast had to be purchased by a wealthy donor and donated for the festivities. This was the case, for example, for the pig in Bologna which the city elders paid for and then donated to the ravenous crowds.

The games played on patronal feasts were also meant to strengthen alliances, encourage positive attitudes towards the city, and affirm social hierarchies. The Feast of the Pig in Bologna serves as a good example. Lorena Vallieri has identified how this event acted as a gift-giving exercise, meant to encourage collective gratitude throughout the city.⁵²⁰ While a valid interpretation, the ritual also served to confirm Bologna's social hierarchy. Those of a higher class, the noble elders, literally stand above those of a lesser class, the city's peasants. The elites confirm their status by derisively offering the commoners a taste of fine food, that is, of a roasted pig. In the eyes of the elites, the peasants confirm their place by acting more like a pack of wild animals than a group of civilised humans. Richard Trexler has exemplified how the *palio* functioned similarly in Florence. He has also demonstrated how patronal feasts in the communes served as settings for contract negotiations. While businesses were closed, those living inside and outside the city walls dealt with the supply of goods, especially foodstuffs, for the year ahead.⁵²¹ These business transactions thus strengthened the bonds between the city-dwellers and the country-folk.

It is worth noting that while evidence for Neapolitan festivals of this kind in the later fifteenth century is comparatively scarce, Naples nevertheless participated in the broader culture of rollicking saintly celebrations found elsewhere on the peninsula. For example, celebrated on 23 and 24 June, the feast of St John the Baptist acquired new significance and increased popularity during this period.⁵²² Its festivities were marked by bonfires and marriage rituals; eligible men and women were encouraged to lead over the fires and pray for a good marriage match. The celebrations attracted the participation of all walks of Neapolitan life, from lay common people, to clerics, to royal elite. It was said that King Alfonso I met his famous mistress, Lucrezia d'Alagno, on the eve of the celebration, which further encouraged young woman to participate in the festivities.⁵²³ On the morning of the 24th, a mass was said at the saint's church, San Giovanni a Mare, followed by a procession of his statue.⁵²⁴ Although this is the extent of our limited understanding of the fifteenth-century feast, it attests to a festive culture similar to that of northern and central Italy (barring any live animals). The combination of religious observance and festive entertainment demonstrates that the cultural conditions necessary for such spectacles were present and active in Naples, setting our scene for the festivities surrounding Gennaro's translation feast.

⁵¹⁹ Herman Tak, *South Italian Festivals* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000), 101–02.

⁵²⁰ Vallieri, "La festa," 111–71.

⁵²¹ Trexler, *Public Life*, 263–74.

⁵²² After the *Popolo* (*seggio*) adopted John the Baptist as its patron in 1522, the feast's popularity rose and even more so after his blood first liquefied in 1522. We know far more of the 16/17th century feast than the medieval: Gina Iannella, "Les Fetes de la Saint-Jean a Naples (1581-1632)," in *Le Fetes Urbaines en Italie a l'epoque de la Renaissance Verone, Florence, Sienna, & Naples*, ed. Françoise Decroisette and Michel Plaisance (Klincksieck: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1993), 131-186; John. A Marino, "The Zodiac in the Streets: Inscribing 'Buon Governo' in Baroque Naples," in *Embodiments of Power: Building Baroque Cities in Europe*, ed. Gary B. Cohen and Franz A. J. Szabo (Oxford: Berhahn Books, 2008), 203-229; Dauverd, *Church and State*, 218 – 246. For the Baptist's blood: Ponticelli, *Il Sangue che bolle*, 84-85.

⁵²³ Iannella, "Les Fetes de la Saint-Jean," 136.

⁵²⁴ Ibid, 137.

Thus far, I have summarised common attributes of saints' feasts in fifteenth-century Italy. Ecclesiastical sources, however, denote a different side of festival culture. In the second quarter of the century, the institutional church sought to prevent festive celebrations from taking place in sacred spaces. This can most clearly be seen at the Council of Basel. In June of 1435, the council forbade the clergy, under threat of losing their revenue for three months, from allowing any kind of theatre performances, meals, dances, or banquets in any church or cemetery. Furthermore, any persons found participating in such activities were to be punished via ecclesiastical censures.⁵²⁵ The constitutions targeted all sorts of inappropriate behaviours in churches including banquets, the disruption of the divine office, and other non-devotional behaviors. It especially attacked the Feast of Fools.⁵²⁶ These reforms demonstrate that liturgical spaces were utilised for non-liturgical acts with the approval of the clergy. The financial punishment for complicit clergy demonstrates a division in the church. What one clergyman considered illicit, another deemed acceptable - or at least tolerable. These provisions also suggest that the boundaries between the sacred and the profane had become rather permeable. We can see this in the council's emphasis on place. If the council had concerns for scandalous behaviours occurring *outside* church spaces, it made no mention of it. Instead, the council remained focused on restoring its own sacred perimeter.

Naples was not exempt from these behaviours nor their subsequent reform. In 1440, the then archbishop Gaspare de Diano promulgated a handful of liturgical constitutions addressing similar issues. These reforms were amongst de Diano's first episcopal tasks; he had only been named archbishop two years prior.⁵²⁷ It bears noting that Gaspare was present for at least a portion of the Council of Basel. He begins by admonishing all people, lay and cleric, to act appropriately in sacred spaces. No one was to engage in foul or profane conversations nor any activity that would disturb the liturgy.⁵²⁸ He goes on to say:

"Indeed, in days not long past a certain abuse prevailed in the city of Naples, so that in churches in which sacred ceremonies should be attended with earnest hearts, dancing is done, and feasts are held, horses are brought in, and other noxious and detestable acts are practiced: On which, wishing to cut off all matter, we, with the consent of our Neapolitan Chapter, decree and admonish all and individual men and women of the city and diocese of Naples... that they shall not hold dances or banquets in the churches, or any of them bring horses... except with our permission: otherwise we pass a sentence of excommunication on them, and on whomever of them we please, in these writings."⁵²⁹

⁵²⁵ For the council: Michiel Decaluwe, *A Companion to the Council of Basel*. For the reform in question: COGD, 2, 954-960.

⁵²⁶ Max R. Harris, *Sacred Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 207.

⁵²⁷ For de Diano's, career: Zigarelli, *Biografie dei vescovi*, 96-97.

⁵²⁸ "ex quo in locis eisdem gessare debent varia & multo forties foeda, & prophana colloquia..." *Rituum archiepiscopalis*, 82r.

⁵²⁹ "... Sane diebus non longe praeteritis in civitate neapolitana abusio quaedam invaluit, ut in ecclesiis in quibus attendi debent intentis praecordiis sacra solentia, chorea fiunt, atque convivia, introducuntur equi, allique actus noxii, & detestabiles exercentur: super quibus volentes omnem materiam amputare, de consensus nostril neapolitani Capituli statuimus, ac monemus omnes. & singulos mores & foeminas civitatis, & diocesis neapolitanae, ... ut in ecclesiis ipsis, aut ipsorum aliqua, choreas, aut convivia non faciant, equos non introducant ... seu representationis alicuius faciendae de nostra licentia cumtaxat excepta: alioquin in Ipsos, & ipsorum quem libet excommunicationis sententiam ferimus in his scriptis." *ibid*.

Though he has not lifted the council's words verbatim, de Diano's constitution bears many similarities to Basel's reforms. Like the council, he generally bars any banqueting or dancing inside a church space. Given his address to all individuals of "the city and the diocese," we can surmise that these abuses were widespread throughout the archdiocese of Naples. Furthermore, this scandal transcended any boundaries between the laity and the clergy; as in the council's prescriptions, de Diano rebukes both states. Although the Gennaro's pig-game is absent from this constitution, the archbishop's efforts to quell subversive behaviours suggests that the Neapolitan people were well on their way to wrestling pigs - if they had not started all ready.

De Diano had not introduced the council's reforms to Naples wholesale. We can attribute this, in part, to the nature of the council. A large portion of Basel's reforms were directed at the papacy and were therefore irrelevant to the governance of an archdiocese. However, the archbishop had ample opportunity to incorporate Basel's other statutes on the liturgy and clerical behaviors. He chose not to do so. De Diano's selectiveness speaks to his priorities. Chief among them was reaffirming the sanctity of church spaces. In Naples, as elsewhere in Europe, such elements of festival culture had crept into liturgical spaces. In light of this, we might question the scandalous nature of the Januarian pig-game. Bringing a live pig into the cathedral certainly defied the rule against "noxious and detestable acts" within sacred spaces. However, it is important to remember that we do not know when the Januarian pig contest began. Pontano's *Charon*, our earliest evidence of the game, was not drafted until 1469. That was nearly 30 years after de Diano's constitutions. Were the festivities in defiance of these regulations or had the memory of them long faded? Alternatively, we might consider that the constitutions were not strictly enforced. Or, despite Basel's best efforts, perhaps the lines between the sacred and the profane remained blurry. So: was the pig game a "noxious and detestable act?" Was it condoned by complicit clergy but condemned by higher authorities? Or did it exist somewhere in between?

II: Experiencing the Translation Feast in the Fifteenth Century

As mentioned, the evidence for San Gennaro's pig competition is limited to only two written sources. The first is Pontano's *Charon*. The second is a statement taken during an inquisitorial tribunal in 1580. However, in this section I will also consider a third source regarding a similar event in Nola, a city not far from Naples. Ambrogio Leone's history *De Nola*, published in 1514, describes how a live pig was hung from the ceiling of Nola's cathedral on Pentecost. Similarities between these three texts will help us reconstruct San Gennaro's elusive pig-game. With this in mind, I turn first to Giovanni Pontano.

Pontano penned numerous works while in Naples, including poems, astrological works, and dialogues, the first of which was *Charon*. Many of Pontano's works criticised the clergy and the authority of ecclesiastical leaders. This, as we saw in the introduction, was part of a much larger Aragonese scheme to undermine the dominion of the pope. We can see this clearly in *Charon*. The text, which was drafted in 1469 and published in 1491, grapples with clerical misconduct and the superstitious beliefs of the common people.⁵³⁰ In the dialogue, the god Mercury is the spokesperson for the greed and gluttony of the bishops. On several occasions in the text, Mercury offers a tirade against episcopal authorities, calling them "terrible misers," whose only aim is to "increase their property, pile up money, and keep busy fattening their bodies."⁵³¹ As

⁵³⁰ For an introduction to the text see: Julia Gaisser, "Introduction," in Giovanni Pontano, *Dialogues I*, xii-xvii.

⁵³¹ Pontano, *Dialogues I*, 62-63.

Giovanni Romeo has shown, Gennaro's pig-game further illustrates the corruption of the clergy. I will return to this interpretation below.

Acknowledging that Pontano likely embellished his description for dramatic purposes, we can glean several details from *Charon*. First is Pontano's inclusion of the *inghirlandati*. Their presence indicates that the floral garlands were an identifying feature of San Gennaro's translation feast. Pontano never explicitly mentions San Gennaro nor his feast in this text. Instead, his allusion to the priests' early May procession is enough to date the ritual. He makes no mention of the episcopal obedience ceremony. It is difficult to envisage when this rite was performed - if it was at all. From Pontano's wording, the pig competition occurred in the cathedral after the procession.⁵³² The crowds, he claims, congregated inside the church; the pig was hung from the roof's beams; and the excrement was thrown from the ceiling. We can imagine that those holding the rope lowered and raised the pig, not unlike a piñata. What happened once the pig was caught, Pontano does not say.

As Romeo noted in his analysis, Pontano's account was not taken seriously by the historical community until a second report of the game was discovered in the 2000s. While working with sixteenth century diocesan criminal processes, Romeo unearthed a new account of the Januarian pig contest.⁵³³ According to Antonio Cocozza, a 90-year-old-fisherman from Portici, a live pig was lowered by an iron wire into the cathedral's *piazza* on the day of San Gennaro's translation feast. Three players then attempted to cut the sow down. The victor kept the pig and won a cash prize. Antonio further claimed that he witnessed the game during his youth. Based on the man's reported age, we can roughly date his memories to the turn of the sixteenth century.

While the fisherman's account affirms the existence of a pig-ritual, it describes a game far less raucous than Pontano's. For example, the fisherman recounts only water - not urine - falling onto the crowds. The locations of the game also vary. While Pontano's pigs dangle from the cathedral's ceiling, Antonio's hangs from outside the church. We might be able to account for the discrepancy by acknowledging the physical state of the cathedral. As further discussed in chapter six, the cathedral was seriously damaged after an earthquake of 1456. It was not fully restored until 1484.⁵³⁴ It is plausible that during the restoration, concurrent with Pontano's time in the city, the game was held indoors. Perhaps the pig hung from a construction crane or scaffolding. By the time the fisherman witnessed the event, the cathedral was rebuilt. Perhaps to avoid damaging the newly renovated space, the pig was forced outdoors. We also must remember to incorporate de Diano's reforms. According to the archbishop, plenty of scandalous behaviours were performed within Naples' sacred spaces in the first half of the century. It is plausible that Gennaro's pig-game was simply a continuation of these "noxious and detestable acts" which the archbishop was unable to thwart.

⁵³² Pontano only refers to an "ecclesia" as the location of the pig game. However, based on the inquisition testimony and Leone's *Nola*, Pontano most likely referred to the cathedral. Consequently, I will refer to the location as the cathedral.

⁵³³ This account is preserved in an unpublished manuscript in the Archdiocesan Archives in Naples. For more, see Giovanni Romeo, "Inquisition and Church in Early Modern Naples," In *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: The Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 241. Naples' Inquisitorial processes are, unfortunately, outside the scope of this dissertation and too complicated to detail in this chapter. Giovanni Romeo continues to lead the field in Neapolitan inquisition research. See, for example, Giovanni Romeo, *Ricerche su confessione dei peccati e Inquisizione nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, (Napoli: La Città del Sole, 1997).

⁵³⁴ Bruno Figliuolo, *Il Terremoto del 1456* (Salerno: Studi Storici Meridionali, 1989).

We now turn to the work of Ambrogio Leone. In 1514, Nolan-born humanist Ambrogio Leone published a history of Nola. In it, he described a similar pig-competition which was still performed in the cathedral.⁵³⁵ According to Leone, a live pig was strung up inside the church on the feast of Pentecost. Like in Pontano's account, the pig was lowered and raised on a rope. Five or six men, wearing pillows on their head for protection, then tried to pull it down. To increase the game's difficulty, other participants threw water, balls of tow, and nettles from a temporary platform built for the occasion. Leone's pig-game sounds quite similar to Gennaro's pig-game. In fact, after describing Nola's competition, Leone mentioned that a "similar" event took place inside Naples' cathedral.⁵³⁶ He then cites Pontano's *Charon*. We ought to note that Leone was not only familiar with Pontano's *Charon* but knew Pontano personally. After attending the University of Naples, Leone joined the *Accademia Pontaniana*. At the time, the academy was headed by Pontano. Leone remained within humanist circles of Naples before moving to Venice in the early years of the sixteenth century. Based on their proximity, Leone was almost certainly influenced by the famous Neapolitan humanist. While we can trace many similarities between Leone and Pontano's pigs, their interpretations differ greatly. We will hear more on this in the following section.

Before moving forward with this investigation, I would like to pause here and summarise what these sources tell us about Gennaro's pig. Based on these three accounts, we can date the ritual from at least 1469 through 1514, that is, from the drafting of *Charon* until the publication of *De Nola*. Just how frequently the game was played, however, is unclear. Feasts and games were often cancelled or postponed due to war, famine, or social uprisings.⁵³⁷ Given Naples' proclivity for political upheaval during this period, it is easy to imagine that Gennaro's pig was not always invited to the cathedral. Nevertheless, the three pig games all share similar characteristics. All accounts include live pigs hanging from cathedrals, whether inside or out. All records detail frenzied attempts to pull the animal down. Objects were thrown at the players while they wrestled the pig, potentially including human excrement. This made the task more arduous for the participants - and more entertaining for spectators. We can say with some certainty that the victor won the animal, as the fisherman stated, if not also a cash prize. This is in line with fifteenth century practice; as we saw earlier, animal-related competitions often ended with the winners feasting on their prize. It is difficult to determine the composition of the players. Leone specifies masculine participants while Pontano and the fishermen use gender neutral language. Even if the game was played entirely by men, this did not preclude involvement by women. At a bare minimum, women would attend the event, as elsewhere in Italy during such events. Furthermore, compatibility between the accounts suggests that some kind of pig-competition did indeed take place at the cathedral complex. While it is difficult to imagine such an activity occurring indoors, we must acknowledge its possibility. In light of the inconsistent evidence, however, we can only say that the ritual occurred somewhere in the cathedral's complex.

What remains to be settled are the origins of this competition. Only Domenico Ambrasi has offered a theory. In 1984, Ambrasi proposed that the pig game was a debauched remnant of

⁵³⁵ Ambrogio Leone, *De Nola* (Venice: Girolamo Mocetto, 1514), LV - LVI; Eugenio Imbriani, "The Elegance of the Past: Descriptions of Rituals, Ceremonies and Festivals in Nola," In *Ambrogio Leone's De Nola, Venice 1514*, eds. Bianca de Divitiis, Fulvio Lenzo, and Lorenzo Miletto (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 145-147.

⁵³⁶ "Huius quinimo simile Neapoli factitatur atque in basilica archiepiscopali, quod a plerisque vicio magno datum est. Quorum unus est Iovianus Pontantus, is enim in Charonte scripsit, id tractari ab iis: qui ut porci luto gaudent." Ambrogio Leone, *De Nola* (Venice: Girolamo Mocetto, 1514), LVI, verso.

⁵³⁷ Vauchez, "Patronage des saints," 59-80.

an obedience offering given to the archbishop by the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Pietrasanta.⁵³⁸ His evidence stems from seventeenth century Neapolitan histories, which I will now recount. According to the histories of Cesare d'Engenio Caracciolo (1623), Pompeo Sarnelli (1688), and Carlo Celano (1692), Santa Maria Maggiore was founded in direct response to a sixth century demonic pig terrorising the people of Naples.⁵³⁹ The Neapolitan bishop Pomponius directed his prayers to the Virgin Mary for aid. The Virgin instructed the bishop to build a church in her name wherever he found a blue cloth. The bishop discovered the cloth, built a church in that exact location, and the pig died. To commemorate the event, Neapolitans erected a bronze statue of a pig on the top of Pietrasanta's bell tower.⁵⁴⁰ According to both Caracciolo and Celano, the clergy from the Pietrasanta used to proceed to the Neapolitan cathedral with a pig which they then killed onsite. Unfortunately, neither historian dates this ritual. Caracciolo further develops this narrative, claiming that the entire city participated in the pig's death which he referred to as a game. Further still, Caracciolo declares that *this* game was played on the translation feast of San Gennaro as a "sign of joy."⁵⁴¹ And thus, the legend of a demonic pig evolved into a ritual offering which then transformed into Gennaro's notorious pig-game. As a reminder, the Pietrasanta was one of Archbishop Orsini's seven churches. Ambrasi subsequently argues that this pig was originally a component of the episcopal obedience ceremony which took place on Gennaro's translation feast.

Ambrasi's theory is compelling. However, the sources leave much to be desired. For example, Caracciolo and Celano's accounts are the only remaining evidence of a pig offering made from the Pietrasanta to the archbishop. It remains unclear when this ritual even took place. However, Ambrasi's argument does demonstrate a loose - but historic - connection between Gennaro's pig and the episcopal obedience rituals enacted on the saint's feast. The association between the animal and the matter of episcopal authority appears again in Pontano's *Charon*. To fully unpack the links between the pig and the Neapolitan episcopate, I return to Pontano's text. In the next section, I will interpret this competition as an expression - and a criticism - of Naples' ecclesiastical hierarchy. First, however, I wish to take a step back and situate Gennaro's pig amongst the many examples of festive competitions enacted on Italian patronal feasts.

II.I. Interpreting the Pig Game

As we saw earlier, these festive activities not only demonstrated social hierarchies, but also encouraged social bonding. San Gennaro's pig-game was no different. Leone's description offers the best vantagepoint by which to unpack this argument.⁵⁴² For Leone, the pig contest was a symbolic gigantomachy.⁵⁴³ There were the *rustici*, that is, peasants from the countryside, who represented the giants. They attempted to storm Mount Olympus and take the place of the gods. Those throwing nettles and buckets of water, representing the gods, prevented them from their ultimate goal. Instead, the pig is offered as a consolation price. The game thus symbolises the

⁵³⁸ Ambrasi, "La processione," 494.

⁵³⁹ Cesare D'Engenio Caracciolo, *Napoli sacra* (Naples: Ottavio Beltrano, 1623), 60–61; Pompeo Sarnelli, *Guida de' forestieri, curiosi di vedere, e d'intendere le cose più notabili* (Napoli: Antonio Bulifon, 1688), 79; Celano, *Delle notizie del bello*, 193–94.

⁵⁴⁰ The statue has since been melted down. The date of this is unknown but it had already occurred by the time of Caracciolo's *Napoli Sacra* published in 1623. Caracciolo, *Napoli sacra*, 61–62; Celano, *Delle notizie del bello*, 193.

⁵⁴¹ "Questo giuoco si sole[v]a far 'anche in Napoli nella Traslazione di San Gianuario nostro Compatriota, e Tutelare in segno d'allegrezza..." Caracciolo, *Napoli sacra*, 61.

⁵⁴² Imbriani has considered Leone's embellishments, here: Imbriani, "The Elegance," 138 – 55.

⁵⁴³ Leone, *De Nola*, LVI, verso.

restoration of the cosmic order. The *rustici*'s struggle for the pig, therefore, articulated their position at the bottom of Nola's social strata. Those further up the hierarchy are literally at the top, standing on some kind of tall structure within the cathedral. There, they freely manipulate the pig - and the *rustici*. Though Leone does not identify these figures, they likely represented Nola's noble and elite classes. While this competition clearly references Nola's social rankings, it also alludes to its ecclesiastical hierarchy. Nola's pig-ritual was enacted on the feast of Pentecost, the celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ's twelve apostles. The feast was intrinsically linked to the authority of the bishops, as apostolic successors.⁵⁴⁴ The relationship between this feast and episcopal authority suggests that the *rustici* were not simply wrestling with a pig, but indeed with the instituted hierarchy of the church.

We can imagine that Gennaro's pig game similarly displayed, reinforced, and criticised Naples' social and ecclesiastical hierarchies. Like in Nola, Naples' participants were men from the countryside. Pontano identified them as *agrestes*, for example. There is other evidence to suggest that the Naples competitors originated from the countryside. Antonio, the fisherman, was from Portici, a town which was under the jurisdiction of the archpriest of Fuorifiume. As noted in the Orsini Constitutions, this cleric was required to attend the feast with his garlanded clergy. The fisherman's attendance suggests that participation in the feast was not limited to city-dwellers; persons from the countryside, namely from those dioceses obligated to send their clergy, also joined in the festivities. The presence of these country-folk demonstrated their place at the bottom of Naples' social and ecclesiastical strata. Both *rustici* and *agrestes* carry a negative connotation; these men are boorish labourers, coming from rural areas and therefore outside of civilised society. These men were encouraged to act like the animals they raised, wallowing in all sorts of mud and filth. It would be all too easy to embarrass these men in a competition as unrestrained as this.

We might also consider that, as in Nola, Naples' competition represented the inversion of the ecclesiastical order. Set at the cathedral, the visual representation of the institutional church in Naples, this game allowed common lay people to physically grapple with – if not also mock - the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Ambrasi's theory only emphasises this point. If the animal had indeed originated as an episcopal offering, its hanging from the rafters of the cathedral, covered in all sorts of filth, represented a pivotal shift in how San Gennaro's feast was experienced. What was once designed as a day of tribute and obedience had devolved into raucous entertainment and a mocking of the supreme authority of the archbishop. At the same time, this reading of the pig-competition should not draw a definitive line between clerical and lay experiences. As our investigation of the Council of Basel and de Diano's 1440 reforms demonstrated, some men of the cloth must have been complicit, if not actively participating, in the revelry which took place inside churches. Similarly, it is possible that some clergymen, perhaps from the chapter, condoned or even engaged with the pig-competition. This would not only explain its presence within the cathedral complex, but also why Pontano framed this event as an example of ecclesiastical corruption – a point I will return to below.

Concurrently, this competition is riddled with pastoral connotations. The pig and the visiting country folk helped bring the rural into Naples' urban environment. Like the pig in Bologna, Gennaro's pig also celebrated the toils of farm labour. At the same time, we could speculate that the pig game was designed to incorporate the country-dwellers into the festive

⁵⁴⁴ For Pentecost: Roger E. Renyolds, "The Imago Christi in the Bishop, Priest, and Clergy," in *A Companion to Priesthood and Holy Orders in the Middle Ages*, ed. Gregory Peters and Colt Anderson (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 150–87.

procedures. This was in line with common fifteenth-century practices; we saw earlier how civic feasts in the communes similarly invited persons from outside the walls. We saw this especially on the feast of St John the Baptist in Florence. The competition would therefore encourage social bonds between the city- and the country-folk, who rarely shared the same space. So, while we could consider Gennaro's pig-game as a form of social division, at some level it also encouraged social bonding. Like we saw in the previous chapter, saints' feasts often expressed ideas of social cohesion and social division in overlapping and contradictory ways. Gennaro's feast was no different.

Throughout this investigation, we have questioned the permissibility of hosting such an outlandish event in the cathedral complex. We have also seen how in centre and northern Italy, games and competitions involving animals were common and sanctioned events at patronal feast days. Based on these examples, I contend that Gennaro's notorious pig-game was an organised competition akin to those found elsewhere on the peninsula. This outrageous contest was permissible because ultimately, it demonstrated that Naples' social and ecclesiastical hierarchies were unyielding. At the end of the day, the *rustici* returned to their farms, the merchants to their shops, and the archbishop to his episcopal palace. Still, the limited source base raises more questions than it answers. For example, we do not know who donated or paid for the pig. Consequently, we cannot comment on the exchange of labour as we could in the Italian communes. Did the visiting countryfolk drag along their prize pig for this exercise, to cultivate good will with the city dwellers? Was it an honour to have your pig chosen? Or did the leaders of the *seggi*, or even the archbishop, pay for the animal as a gift-giving exercise, akin to the elders of Bologna? Based on other patronal feasts in Italy, we might surmise it was the former, the noblemen of the *seggi*, who paid for the festivities.⁵⁴⁵ However, without further evidence, it is difficult to say.

By exposing the similarities between Gennaro's pig game and other contests performed on patronal feasts, it is evident that, in continuation to what we saw in the previous chapter, this translation feast continued to operate as a civic festival. More than a trivial or comic spectacle, this pig-ritual allowed the Neapolitan community to wrestle, literally and figuratively, with a well-established social and ecclesiastical hierarchy. Moreover, it facilitated critical interactions between the city-folk and the country-dwellers, encouraging cohesion between the two.

At the same time, there are distinctions to be made between Naples' civic festival and those north of Rome. On a superficial level, Gennaro's pig game was not the awe-inspiring tournament that we see in the Italian communes. Trained noblemen, meant to invoke a chivalric era, participated in the *palio*. The pig contest seems to have been played by untrained local laborers and was much smaller. Horse-riding and jousting tournaments wowed foreigners and boosted political allegiances. While it served an important social function, it is difficult to imagine the pig contest inspiring any sort of wonder or demonstrating the might of the Aragonese dynasty. Naples' political circumstances likely explain this divergence. In the centre and north of Italy, bodies of lay authorities took hold of their patrons' feasts. Acknowledging the destruction of the Aragonese chancellery, there is no evidence that the Aragonese monarchy similarly intervened in Gennaro's feast. While absence of evidence does not necessarily preclude their involvement, it does point to a broader pattern: the comparative lack of monarchical engagement with the cults of Naples' titular saints, a dynamic we already touched upon with the Angevins in the previous chapter. At the same

⁵⁴⁵ The two *contrade* (neighborhoods) of Venice took turns sponsoring the translation feast of Saint Mark in the later Middle Ages, for example. This included paying for the games, opening their palace for visits, and distributing food. See: Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 140–41.

time, the limited evidence does not allow us to explore how other urban authorities, namely the leaders of the *seggi*, helped shape this ritual.

Naples' greasy pig also signals sexual and gender dynamics at play during this event. During this period in Italy, pigs were associated with heightened sexual appetites, if not general merriment. As consuming pork was understood as a sort of aphrodisiac, pigs were often served during festivals as a part of the general raucous atmosphere.⁵⁴⁶ This characterisation of the animal squares with Pontano's framing of the feast. As indicated by his taunting classification of the *inghirlandati* as "young lovers," Pontano clearly understood this affair as one which encouraged sexually immorality. Not unlike Carnevale or other contemporary celebrations, it seems that San Gennaro's *fešta* served as the setting for sensual transgressions.⁵⁴⁷

Pontano's description of the pig specifically as a *sow* has further sexual connotations. Admitting the possibility of an Pontanian embellishment, such specificity would suggest that the animal's sex was somehow important to the game's proceedings. The symbol of the sow carried several interpretations during this period. First, it was known as a sign of sin and uncleanness.⁵⁴⁸ From this, we can interpret the game as an opportunity for participants to physical grapple with their own spiritual crimes. Perhaps the cathedral, its setting, represented the church's ability to wash away these sins through the sacraments, especially that of confession. On the other, sows were often associated with humiliation rituals during this period, perhaps suggesting that this event had erotic undertones.⁵⁴⁹ As noted above, it is possible that this competition was played solely by men. If so, then this ritual may be considered an inversion of the sexual order as the men pursue an animal rather than a human woman. We may also consider the sexual violence embedded in this activity. Tied up with ropes, this sow is particularly helpless to the brutality of man. From a different angle, such contempt may not have been directed at the female sex but rather at the participating *rustici*. After all, all three of our sources underline the participation of those from beyond the city walls. Naturally, these readings are dependent on Pontano's own interpretation of events which, as we will see further below, are rooted in his own particular criticisms. Nevertheless, this brief discussion demonstrates that the varied, cultural symbolisms associated with the sow no doubt contributed to the game's purpose and to the general sense of amusement.

Before turning to the next development in San Gennaro's cult, there is a final interpretation of the pig-game worth exploring: that of ecclesiastical criticism. We have already seen how the pig-game elicited Pontano's disgust. However, the driving force behind Pontano's critique was the Neapolitan clergy and episcopate. The clerical reproaches found in *Charon* have long been acknowledged. As Giovanni Romeo has demonstrated, Pontano employs San Gennaro's feast to exemplify the clergy's immorality and ineptitude.⁵⁵⁰ For example, Pontano mockingly identifies the *inghirlandati* as "young lovers," thus implying sexual misconduct between the clergymen.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁶ For the symbolism of pigs: Sarah Phillips, "The pig in medieval iconography," in *Pigs and Humans: 10,000 Years of Interaction*, eds. Umberto Albarella, Keith Dobney, Anton Ervynck, and Pter Rowley-Conwy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 373-387; Laura Giannetti, "The Sausage Wars," in *Sex, Gender and Sexuality in Renaissance Italy*, eds. Jacqueline Murray and Nicholas Terpstra (London: Routledge, 2019), 160-179.

⁵⁴⁷ The historiography of sexuality and inversion at Early Modern festivals is too large to treat here. See the recent study for a helpful overview, pressing questions, and bibliography: Alessandro Testa, *Rituality and Social (Dis)Order: The Historical Anthropology of Popular Carnival in Europe* (London: Routledge, 2021), esp. 102-113.

⁵⁴⁸ Phillips, "The Pig in Medieval Iconography," 375.

⁵⁴⁹ Phillips, "The Pig in Medieval Iconography," 376-377.

⁵⁵⁰ Romeo, "Inquisition," 240-43.

⁵⁵¹ "quasi amantes adolescentuli," Pontano, *Dialogues I*, 66-67.

Furthermore, the pig-game is meant to exemplify the clergy's failure to rescue their flock from the stains of sin and superstition. For example, while sarcastically defending the ritual, Charon argues that the game demonstrates humanity's propensity for sin. "Just like pigs in the mud," Charon says, "the whole human race wallows in the slime and filth of superstition."⁵⁵² The clergy are implicitly implicated in this behaviour; they have allowed - if not encouraged - their people to wallow in human excrement within the city's most sacred space. Consequently, this spectacle becomes not only a critique of the laity's devotional practices, but also an indictment of ecclesiastical governance itself. What kind of archbishop condoned such behaviour? How could any archbishop claim jurisdictional authority - or moral superiority - while their flock wrestled live farm animals in their cathedral?

While Pontano's criticisms are pointed at the institutional church more broadly, they likely reflected Naples' immediate circumstances. Pontano drafted *Charon* between 1469 and 1491, a period during which the Neapolitan episcopal throne was occupied first by Oliviero Carafa (1458-1484) and then by his brother, Alessandro Carafa (1484-1503). We will meet both brothers in the next chapter. For now, let me offer a few takeaways from their careers. Oliviero Carafa was an ambitious humanist, loyal servant of the Aragonese, and dedicated prince of the church.⁵⁵³ We know that the first decade of his episcopate was spent working for King Alfonso, culminating in his appointment as president of the Sacred Royal Council in 1465. Oliviero and Pontano operated in the same circles. The pair's relationship is not entirely clear. Based on their proximity, it is likely that Pontano knew of Oliviero's goals, ambitions, and eventually, his extended period of absence. In 1467, the cleric became a cardinal and relocated to Rome. Although he was not the first Neapolitan archbishop to become a cardinal, Oliviero was the first to accept the position and remain archbishop.⁵⁵⁴ He thus ushered in a new era of absenteeism; Oliviero was rarely in Naples, excepting a few visits to mark political and royal occasions.⁵⁵⁵ As the head of the cathedral chapter, Alessandro Carafa took his brother's place in his absence. This included performing significant liturgies, such as those relating to San Gennaro, as per the Orsini Constitutions.

Read against this backdrop, Pontano's portrayal of the pig-game likely reflected contemporary anxieties surrounding episcopal absenteeism and clerical neglect. Without the watchful eye of their superior, the *inghirlandati* transformed from obedient prelates to "young lovers." Even worse, Naples' cathedral had been reduced to a stable because of the archbishop's negligence. Pontano's criticisms were indicative of the age; across Quattrocento Italy, clerical authorities increasingly neglected their local pastoral duties in favour of high-powered positions and ecclesiastical benefices elsewhere.⁵⁵⁶ Resultingly, the laity increasingly turned to more localised forms of devotion which, at times, pushed - if not contravened - the boundaries of prescribed practice. Within this context, the pig-game thus emerges at the intersection of increasingly ineffective ecclesiastical authority and transgressive behaviours. Its eventual suppression in the sixteenth century, of which we unfortunately know very little, aligns with the

⁵⁵² "Et hi qui porcellam lusitant palam faciunt aequae ac suae luto humanum omne genus superstitionis coeno sordibusque volutari." Ibid.

⁵⁵³ For more on Oliviero Carafa's career, see Chapter Six.

⁵⁵⁴ Previously, archbishops immediately resigned from the episcopate upon their Roman appointment.

⁵⁵⁵ Oliviero's visits to Naples are well-documented because they were so infrequent. See: Franca Petrucci, *Oliviero Carafa*, in *DBI*, XIX (1976): 588-596.

⁵⁵⁶ Palmieri, "Religion: Institutions, Devotion, and Heresy," 94-95.

broad ecclesiastical climate, in which Neapolitan authorities undertook more concerted efforts to regulate and curtail forms of devotion or festive culture which fell outside sanctioned norms.⁵⁵⁷

III. Civic Pride

During this period, the civic connotations of San Gennaro's cult also appeared beyond the translation feast and in several texts written by local humanists. As I mentioned in this chapter's introduction, the works of such artisans often reflected the ambitions of the Aragonese monarchs, who sought to cultivate an illustrious and sacred Neapolitan civic identity. As demonstrated in several texts, which I introduced in the beginning of this chapter, key to the creation of this shared identity was the cult of San Gennaro, particularly his regularly liquefying blood. For example, in his commentary (c.1456) on Panormita's *Deeds of King Alfonso*, Piccolomini proclaimed there were four "singular and noteworthy" things about Naples: King Alfonso, the urban landscape, San Gennaro's relics, and the region's ancient ruins.⁵⁵⁸ More specifically, he notes that the brilliance of the relics lay in their thaumaturgical abilities. He explains: "[in Naples] they display [the blood] congealed, then liquid, although it was shed in the name of Christ twelve hundred years ago."⁵⁵⁹ Where or when the miracle occurred, however, he does not say.

Over a decade later, the saint – and his blood – appear in de Spejo's *Vita di San Pellegrino* (c.1468).⁵⁶⁰ In it, the holy figure San Pellegrino travels to Naples in the twelfth century to witness the city's famous blood miracle.⁵⁶¹ The relic, which was usually "as hard as stone," melts into a "frothy ebullition" when brought into contact with the saint's head.⁵⁶² While de Spejo has clearly backdated the liquefaction to link Pellegrino to Naples, his description of the blood reflects a contemporary understanding of the miracle. Shortly after, this formula appears again in a memoir (written between 1452-1475) by an Aragonese courtier, Loise de Rosa. While describing the wonders of Naples, de Rosa details the relics, saying: "[San Gennaro's] blood, which stands like a stone, liquifies when it sees the head, as if it issued from the head, and it works, and has worked, many miracles."⁵⁶³ He goes on to say that the skull is the most beautiful relic in the world.

Putting aside the core objectives of these texts momentarily, these writings attest to the key transformation of the liquefaction during the second half of the Quattrocento. What was once a random, one-off event became a reliable, if not annual, occasion. As noted by de Spejo and de Lupo, this miracle could be triggered by bringing the skull and blood together. This formula is a popular topic in Januarian studies and has been especially investigated by de Ceglia, who loosely

⁵⁵⁷ Both Palmieri and Romeo overview these efforts: Romeo, "Inquisition."; Palmieri, "Religion: Institutions, Devotion, and Heresy."

⁵⁵⁸ Piccolomini, *Commento agli Alfonsi regis*, 7.

⁵⁵⁹ "...si quis audire potis sit, sacrum illum divi Ianuarii cruorem, quem modo coagulatum, modo liquentem ostendunt, quamvis ante annos mille ducentos pro Christi nomine sit effusus." Ibid., 116. Translation my own.

⁵⁶⁰ Amitrano and Alfano, *Il miracolo*, 2nd Ed., 102-104; Vuolo, "Tre manoscritti," 123-24. For more on Lupo's role in the court: Vitale, "I santi," 93-128.

⁵⁶¹ San Pellegrino is a mysterious - if not mythological - figure. For a summary of his cult: Vitale, "I santi," 119-21.

⁵⁶² "...durum sanguinem sicut saxum," "...spumante ebullitione." Alfano and Amitrano, *Il Miracolo*, 2nd Ed, 103. De Spejo also notes that the blood was divided between two glass vials ("ubi geminae phialae vitreae"). This seems to be our earliest reference to *both* vials which still exist today.

⁵⁶³ "...lo sangue suo, e sta como una preta, e como vede la testa se fa liquido, como mo' fosse insuto da la testa, e fa e have fatto più miracule." Antonio Altamura, ed. *Napoli aragonese nei Ricordi di Loise De Rosa* (Naples: Libreria Scientifica Editrice, 1971), 191. Translation my own.

associated its development with the second half of the fifteenth century.⁵⁶⁴ I wish to make a more definitive statement. By 1468, this mechanism was not a developing theory: it was a well-defined formula. This is clearly demonstrated by de Spejo and reaffirmed by de Rosa. From this, we can make broader claims about the experience of San Gennaro's translation feast during this period. As de Ceglia has established, whenever the miracle became provokable, it became expected.⁵⁶⁵ All it took was a bit of staging to bring the two objects together and produce the miracle. Assuming that both relics were processed during the translation feast during this period, then such a miracle would have almost certainly taken place during this celebration.

I therefore contend that the liquefaction was an anticipated feature of San Gennaro's translation feast from at least 1468 onward. While this development will be especially important for our analysis of the 1490s and beyond in Chapter Six, it also reinforms our understanding of this civic celebration. The promise of a miracle would have certainly generated enormous excitement from the congregation. After being processed alongside the *inghirlandati*, these sacred objects were likely placed on the main altar, where the blood would melt. This placement is in line with Orsini's instructions and the subsequent liquefaction is attested in later evidence. In 1495, for example, King Charles VIII of France attended the translation feast and saw the blood liquefy on the main altar.⁵⁶⁶ In the schedule of events, the pig-competition occurred sometime after the ebullition of the blood. The juxtaposition between the relic and the pig is almost striking. At one point, a massive crowd fills the cathedral to witness the remarkable transformation of a centuries-old vial of coagulated blood. Shortly thereafter, a wriggling, greased-up sow descends either from the rafters or from an apparatus just outside. Together, these events testify to a marked development in how the laity participated in San Gennaro's translation feast – a point I will return to in this chapter's conclusion.

While the liquefaction's trigger clearly fascinated these humanists, they did not merely intend to record the formula for a miracle. Instead, all three of these writings converge in their presentation of San Gennaro's relics as a point of civic pride. In the writings of Piccolomini and de Rosa, this connection is made explicit, as the relics are directly integrated into longer lists of Naples' uniquely defining attributes. De Spejo articulates this association more implicitly. His retrospective insertion of the miracle into a twelfth century narrative suggests that by the mid-fifteenth century, this phenomenon had become sufficiently characteristic to serve as a marker of the city's sacred identity across temporal boundaries. Despite the differences in genre between this humanist commentary, hagiographical vita, and courtly memoir, these texts thus share a common rhetorical objective: to demonstrate and amplify Naples' exceptionalism.

Alongside other identifying features of the city, including Aragonese kingship, as well as the urban and natural landscapes, San Gennaro's cult assumes a prominent position. The inclusion of the saint's relics not only underscores their miraculous nature, but also their centrality in the contemporary civic imagination. Evidently, by the third quarter of the fifteenth century, San Gennaro's cult had become emblematic of the city of Naples. Moreover, given that these writers were actively employed in the Aragonese court, it is likely that such representations both reflected and reinforced royal priorities under both King Alfonso I and his son, Ferdinand I.

⁵⁶⁴ As de Ceglia has demonstrated, the belief that the liquefaction could be triggered in this manner lasted well through the mid-18th century. See: de Ceglia, "A Liquid Miracle."

⁵⁶⁵ Again, de Ceglia's work is extremely helpful in appreciating the consequences of the miracle's "trigger."

⁵⁶⁶ Robert Gaguin, *La mer des chroniques et mirouer historial de France* (Paris: Jehan de La Garde, 1520), 102.

Still, there are distinctions to be made in the Aragonese' use of Gennaro's cult. To appreciate this point, it is perhaps helpful to compare it with their patronage of St George. It has long been established that King Alfonso I, and his predecessors, devoted increased attention to military saints, including St George and St Michael.⁵⁶⁷ Adapting a previous Valencian tradition, King Alfonso established a confraternity in George's name and made him the patron of his military forces. This patronage was visualised vividly during the dazzling re-enactment of the king's conquest of Naples, which took place on 2 June.⁵⁶⁸ During the event, an image of the saint was displayed on the soldiers' shields, underscoring George's role in Alfonso's victory. Here we can see a distinct difference in interactions between the Aragonese monarchs and the two saints. In the case of St George, the monarchs (especially Alfonso I) intervened directly into the cult by establishing confraternities, designating him as a military patron, and introducing new representations of the saint during a city-wide event. Such efforts ultimately associated this divine figure with the military might of the Aragonese dynasty. We do not see such direct and immediate royal intervention in Gennaro's cult. Instead, these humanists' texts suggest that the monarchs were content in endorsing a well-established Neapolitan devotion, provided it ultimately served the glorification of Aragonese rule.

Still, this observation complicates our previous understanding of the Aragonese' relationship with the cult, which has refuted any form of Aragonese intervention in its development.⁵⁶⁹ While indeed, there remains no evidence of liturgical reforms or material patronage from the Aragonese, these texts point to a coordinated strategy in which San Gennaro was elevated as a civic emblem, one whose relics were portrayed as uniquely Neapolitan and thus a matter of urban pride.

Conclusions:

This chapter has identified several analogies with the civic patronal festivities of central and northern Italy, including the use of animals in competitive spectacles that both reaffirmed social hierarchies and fostered civic cohesion across social classes. Like its northern counterparts, Gennaro's pig-game also carried pastoral connotations, encouraging participation from communities beyond the city walls, as well as ones of sexual transgression and humiliation, embodied in the sow. Yet, the differences between Neapolitan and northern Italian patronal feasts outlined in the previous chapter remain evident. From the extant evidence, Naples' celebration maintained its ecclesiastical connotations and we have no evidence that the city's secular authorities attempted to reshape its proceedings. Furthermore, while San Gennaro continues to emerge as a civic patron, he does not evolve into the emblem of local political or military authority as figures such as St Mark in Venice or St Ambrose in Milan, do during this period.⁵⁷⁰ Instead, he remained critically associated with the Neapolitan church and its episcopate, as seen vividly in Pontano's scathing ecclesiastical critiques, which he deliberately framed around the saint's feast. In this way, we can trace continuity between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; as we saw in

⁵⁶⁷ For Aragonese devotions, see especially: Vitale, "I santi," 93–128.

⁵⁶⁸ Francesco Senatore, "La processione del 2 giugno nella Napoli aragonese e la cappella di S. Maria della Pace in Campovecchio," in *Images, cultes, liturgies : les connotations politiques du message religieux*, ed. Laura Gaffuri and Paola Ventrone (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2014), 239–257.

⁵⁶⁹ Vitolo, "Santità, culti, e strutture socio-politiche," 37.

⁵⁷⁰ As mentioned in: Introduction, pp. 15–16.

the previous three chapters, the saint maintained his special affiliation with the local church, largely thanks to the efforts of King Charles II and several archbishops.

At the same time, this period witnessed the strengthening of the cult's association with Naples' civic identity. As uniquely Neapolitan, Gennaro's sacred remains became symbols of urban pride.⁵⁷¹ But these relics were not meant to be a Neapolitan secret. In the introduction of this chapter, I mentioned that Naples' humanist circles engaged widely with Italian intellectual communities. Piccolomini, de Spejo, and de Rosa were no different. Their works were intended for circulation amongst local and foreign courts. Including the blood was a form of publicity. To bolster Naples' spiritual reputation, these authors needed to acquaint unfamiliar audiences with the relic and demonstrate its miraculous abilities. Yet, while the blood was a badge of honour, it took some explaining. By clarifying its mechanism, de Spejo and de Rosa explained – if not systematised – the miracle for Neapolitans and non-Neapolitans alike.⁵⁷² Explaining this relic to other Italian courts was critical in assembling a short-list of Naples' most identifiable features. San Gennaro, via his relic, ranked high on this register. While this saint maintained his previous, ecclesiastical characteristics, as noted above, these texts demonstrate how he was increasingly crafted into an emblem of civic pride.

Together, these texts and the pig-game point to a broader development in the history of the cult: its increasingly public orientation. Where previously, we have no evidence that any Neapolitan leader – secular or ecclesiastical – sought to export the cult, the circulation of the humanistic texts in local and foreign courts demonstrates a deliberate effort on the part of the Aragonese monarchs to publicise the saint and his miraculous relics. Furthermore, the pig-game points to a widening field of engagement at the local level, specifically between the laity and the saint, demonstrating a slight, but prevalent, turn from the cult's traditional ecclesiastical connotations. Yet, this reorientation did not displace the cult's localisation; devotion to San Gennaro remained anchored within Naples. This dynamic – expanding publicity, increased lay engagement, and persistent localism – will shape our investigation of the final years of the fifteenth century in Chapter Six.

⁵⁷¹ Bentley has established that civic pride was just as critical to Neapolitan thinkers as it was to those in the centre and north of Italy, though its expressions differed. See: Jerry H. Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

⁵⁷² In this way, these texts are a precursor to early modern guidebooks. Starting in the mid-sixteenth century, these guidebooks characterised the blood as a uniquely Neapolitan wonder. Those traveling into the city were encouraged to view the relic with their own eyes. For a selected bibliography: Stefano, *Descrittione*; Mormile, *Descrittione dell'amenissimo distretto*; Caracciolo, *Napoli sacra*.

Part Three: Reconfiguring an Episcopal Cult

Chapter Five: St. Januarius of Montevergine

Introduction

On 27 July 1480, the monks at the Monastery of Montevergine made a surprise discovery. To their great astonishment, 30 relics were found within their main altar, ciborium, and sanctuary floor. Among the collection was the body of St Januarius and two of his companions, Festus and Desiderius. For seventeen years, Januarius' relics rested peacefully at the monastery. However, Alessandro Carafa, archbishop of Naples, personally travelled to Montevergine to collect Januarius' body in January 1497. The monks attempted to thwart the archbishop, barricading the monastery and even hiding the sacred matter in the snowy woods. The archbishop, wasting no time, mustered 200 infantrymen to storm the Verginian stronghold. Fearing the destruction of their home, Montevergine was forced to concede the bones to Naples. Archbishop Carafa thus transported his patron's bones back to the Neapolitan cathedral where they would be properly venerated – or so the story goes.

The above summary is the traditional retelling of the discovery and translation of Januarius' relics as found in the so-called *Vita of San Gennaro*, a poem written by Fra Bernardino of Sicily by 1503.⁵⁷³ The earliest evidence of the translation, this melodramatic account hinges on two key details: (1) the accidental nature of the relic discovery and (2) Alessandro Carafa's heroic efforts to retrieve Naples' patron saint. As we will see further in the next chapter, both motifs reflect the ambitions of its commissioner, Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, Alessandro's elder brother and episcopal predecessor. By suggesting that the monastery failed to safeguard the sacred remains, the poem effectively legitimised Naples' claim to the body and elevated, if not sanctified, the Carafa family legacy. These points have become a conventional wisdom in histories of the monastery and of the translation. Historians have hitherto offered a one-dimensional approach to Montevergine's sacred objects. In this reading, the relics are little more than incidental casualties of a renovation project. Such a viewpoint appears in the work of Giovanni Mongelli, for example, whose scholarship remains the foundation for any modern investigations into the monastery.⁵⁷⁴ Compounding this issue, large gaps in source material, particularly relating to the community's devotional life, has left several important questions unresolved, thereby making it difficult to challenge pre-established narratives, a problem we will return to further below.⁵⁷⁵ Subsequently, Januarius' Verginian chapter has been largely overlooked; it is only mentioned fleetingly during larger investigations into the

⁵⁷³ We will investigate this source in more detail in Chapter Six. In both chapters, I use Nadia Ciampaglia's transcriptions. Translations are my own. Nadia Ciampaglia, "'La Vita di S. Gennaro' di Fra Bernardino Siculo alias Bernardino de Renda de Pactis Siciliano," *Contributi di Filologia dell'Italia Mediana* XXII (2008): 77–158.

⁵⁷⁴ Giovanni Mongelli is renowned as the father of modern Verginian studies. Mongelli (1915-1995) worked in tandem with Mario Placido Tropeano (1921-2008) to catalogue, transcribe, and publish huge amounts of Montevergine's archives. Their archival work serves as the foundation for modern Verginian scholarship. See: Giovanni Mongelli, *Regesto delle Pergamene*, vol. I - VI (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1956–1962); *Storia di Montevergine e della Congregazione Verginiana*, vol. 1-8 (Avellino: Amministrazione provinciale, 1965–1978); Mario Placido Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte: periodo Normanno Svevo* (Naples: Arturo Berisio, 1973); Mario Placido Tropeano, *Federico II e Montevergine: documentazione archivistica, marzo 1206-luglio 1250* (Montevergine: Padri Benedettini, 1986).

⁵⁷⁵ Fires, economic decline, and war have all contributed to the destruction of Montevergine's archives. In 1611, one such fire devastated the community's holdings. See: Raffaele Colapietra, "La costruzione letteraria del mito di Montevergine dal Cinque all'Ottocento," *Lares* 56 (1990): 545–84.

succorpo, the crypt chapel built by Oliviero to house the saint's body.⁵⁷⁶ Neither its development nor its relationship to the Neapolitan cult have been properly explored.

Thus far, this thesis has traced the evolution of San Gennaro's cult in Naples. By leaving the city walls and climbing the Mount Partenio, I aim to explore the manifestation of St Januarius within a monastic context, one which differed greatly from its contemporaneous counterpart in Naples. To distinguish between the two competing cults, I will refer to our Verginian protagonist as Januarius, rather than the Neapolitan Gennaro, in this chapter. In this study, I propose an alternative understanding of the relic horde unearthed in 1480 and its subsequent use at the monastery. I contend that this collection, which included Januarius, played a critical role in reestablishing the monastery's spiritual authority and network of benefactors during an era of economic decline. In doing so, this chapter demonstrates how the saint was integrated into Montevergine's liturgical and devotional life, thereby crafting him as a member of the Verginian community. To do this, I have split this chapter into three parts. In the first, I recount a history of the monastery and its relic collection. The second part reevaluates the traditional retelling of the discovery by integrating a new architectural analysis provided by Francesco Aceto and Paola Vitolo.⁵⁷⁷ Building on their scholarship, I posit that this event was not collateral damage, as previously conceived, but instead an anticipated consequence of a remodeling project.

Before proceeding, there is a distinction to be made here. While I explore the detection of the remains, this chapter does not treat the question of their journey to the monastery. The circumstances surrounding the relics' arrival to the mountaintop remain a persistent source of vexation for historians of Naples and Montevergine alike as evidence regarding their translation is scant.⁵⁷⁸ From the debate, three theories emerge: (1) in 1156, following the Treaty of Benevento, as suggested in MS 3970⁵⁷⁹; (2) around 1240, amid the violent campaigns of Emperor Frederick II, as argued Fra Bernardino of Sicily by 1503;⁵⁸⁰ (3) in the early fourteenth century, linking the translation to ongoing renovations to the monastic church altar.⁵⁸¹ In the absence of more substantial evidence, however, none of these theories has secured consensus.

In the third section, I survey the surviving liturgical evidence, to demonstrate how Montevergine's relics were utilised to (1) rebuild Montevergine's patronage network and (2) cultivate an antique, localised form of sanctity at the monastery. This includes Januarius' sacred remains which, along with several other local heroic figures, formed the basis for Montevergine's reinvigorated spiritual power. Susan Boynton and Charles Hilken have helpfully modelled this

⁵⁷⁶ For example: Diana Norman, "The Succorpo in the Cathedral of Naples: 'Empress of All Chapels'," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 49 (1986): 323–55. We will hear more about the *succorpo* in Chapter Six.

⁵⁷⁷ Aceto and Vitolo, eds., *L'Abbazia di Montevergine*.

⁵⁷⁸ The date of the translation remains highly contested: Giovanni Mongelli, *Storia di Montevergine e della congregazione Verginiana*, vol. 1 (Avellino: Amministrazione provinciale, 1965), 688–89; Aceto and Vitolo, eds., *L'Abbazia di Montevergine*, 11–12.

⁵⁷⁹ MS 3970. This interpretation was especially favored by early modern Verginian historians, who likely had access to the manuscript. For example: Tommaso Costo, *Istoria Dell'origine Del sagratissimo luogo di Montevergine* (Venice: Barezzi Barezzi, 1591), 29; Amato Mastrullo, *Monte Vergine Sagro: del quale si descrive il sagro tempio, e real monasterio di Monte Vergine, come capo, ch'è della congregazione, detta di Monte Vergine, dell'ordine di S. Benedetto, istituita da S. Guglielmo da Vercelli* (Naples: Luc' Antonio di Fusco, 1663), 26.

⁵⁸⁰ I delve further into this source in Chapters Five and Six. See: Ciampaglia, "'La Vita di S. Gennaro'," 147; Tutini, *Memorie*, 86–87; Girolamo Maria di S. Anna, *Istoria della vita, virtù, e miracoli di S. Gennaro, vescovo e martire, principal padrone della fedelissima città e Regno di Napoli* (Naples: Stefano Abbate, 1733), 107–09; Aceto and Vitolo, eds., *L'Abbazia di Montevergine*, 11–12.

⁵⁸¹ Aceto and Vitolo, eds., *L'Abbazia di Montevergine*, 11–12.

complex relationship between saint, monk, and even patrons in their works on the imperial abbey of Farfa and the monastery of Santa Maria Del Gualdo Mazzocca, respectively.⁵⁸² By applying their frameworks here, I am able to illuminate how Montevergine claimed Januarius' cult, among others, as their own to reinvigorate their economy *and* communal identity. I then conclude with a few words about Januarius' sanctity at Montevergine more specifically. By claiming the bishop's cult as their own, Montevergine thus placed themselves in direct competition with the proprietors of San Gennaro's cult in Naples, that is, archbishop Alessandro Carafa and Cardinal Oliviero Carafa. This chapter will thus form the foundation for our discussion of the translation, which will continue in Chapter Six.

I. Montevergine: A Brief History

To inform our discussion, it would be helpful to begin with a brief history of the monastery and the extant evidence for its relic collection.⁵⁸³ The Monastery of Montevergine was founded by William of Vercelli, an itinerant hermit, in the first quarter of the twelfth century.⁵⁸⁴ En route to the Holy Land, William arrived at the top of Monte Partenio, a mountain in the Apennine range near the town of Mercogliano, in 1118. In brief, William forwent his plans and built a hermitage onsite which then transformed into an all-male Benedictine community.⁵⁸⁵ The first church at the site was built in 1126. In 1182, the congregation had expanded so that a second, much larger, church was built with adjoining monastic buildings including a priory and cloister.⁵⁸⁶ This church, which Aceto refers to as "Montevergine II" was ultimately expanded in the late thirteenth century.⁵⁸⁷ It is this gothic church - "Montevergine III" – which serves as our setting for this chapter.

Throughout its history, Montevergine was positioned alongside a series of competing political and ecclesiastical borders. In the twelfth century, the community was placed under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Benevento.⁵⁸⁸ At that time, the city of Benevento was under papal control, a unique island of papal power in the centre of the Kingdom of Sicily and then

⁵⁸² Susan Boynton, *Shaping a monastic identity: liturgy and history at the Imperial Abbey of Farfa* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 161–80; Charles Hilken, *Memory and Community in Medieval Southern Italy: The History, Chapter Book, and Necrology of Santa Maria Del Gualdo Mazzocca* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2008), i–x.

⁵⁸³ The works of Giovanni Mongelli and Mario Placido Tropeano remain the preeminent scholarship on the monastery. See: Mongelli, *Storia di Montevergine*, vol. 1-8; Tropeano, *Federico II e Montevergine*.

⁵⁸⁴ Francesco Guinta, "I Normanni in Irpinia e la Fondazione di Montevergine," in *La Società Meridionale nelle pergamenie di Montevergine, relazioni e comunicazioni del primo convegno internazionale* (Montevergine: Edizioni Padre Benedettini, 1984), 52–81; Isabelle Bolognese, "The Monastery of Montevergine: Its foundation and early development (1118-1210)" (Phd Dissertation, The University of Leeds, 2013). For the context for William's foundation more generally: Loud, *The Latin Church in Norman Italy*.

⁵⁸⁵ For more on eremitical communities: Henrietta Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism: A Study of Religious Communities in Western Europe 1000-1150* (London: Macmillan, 1984); Cosimo Damiano Fonseca, "Monachesimo ed Eremitismo in Italia nel XII secolo," in *Studi in onore di Giosuè Musca*, eds. Cosimo Damiano Fonseca and V. Sivo (Bari: Dedalo, 2007), 173–87.

⁵⁸⁶ Bolognese, "The Monastery," 31–32.

⁵⁸⁷ For Montevergine II and III, see chapters one and two of Aceto's edited volume, respectively. Aceto and Vitolo, eds., *L'Abbazia di Montevergine*, 17–40, 41–62.

⁵⁸⁸ Montevergine formally fell under Benevento's jurisdiction in 1153. Nevertheless, its relationship with the Beneventan bishop, and other local bishops, was not always clear. This is especially true after the monastery was placed in the commendatory abbot system in the early fifteenth century. Bolognese, "The Monastery," 71–74.

Naples until 1442 at which time Alfonso V took the city for his own.⁵⁸⁹ Benevento, its archdiocese, and its surrounding territories thus switched allegiances between the pope, the Holy Roman Emperor, the Angevins and the Aragonese numerous times during the later middle ages. As a result, the monastery was of great interest to secular and ecclesiastical powers. By the fourteenth century, Montevergine was favoured by the Angevin royal family who commissioned chapels and were buried on site, including Catherine of Valois and her son, Louis I of Naples.⁵⁹⁰

Montevergine's surviving charters boast of a healthy web of benefactors from the twelfth through fourteenth centuries.⁵⁹¹ However, after the Western Schism ended in 1417, Montevergine entered a lengthy period of economic decline, like other monasteries across Europe, and its numbers increasingly diminished.⁵⁹² In 1430, the pope appointed a commendatory abbot to oversee the governance of Montevergine in all matters *except* those pertaining to the community's internal rule. Montevergine was not unique in this regard; by 1430, numerous monastic communities across Europe had been placed in the commendatory system.⁵⁹³ Unsurprisingly, Verginian histories speak poorly of Montevergine's commendation phase especially when Cardinal Oliviero Carafa held the position (1485 - 1511).⁵⁹⁴ However, Cardinal Giovanni D'Aragona was a notable exception. D'Aragona, the son of King Ferdinand I of Naples, was appointed to the role in 1468 and held the position at the time of the relics' discovery in 1480.⁵⁹⁵ Verginian histories speak highly of the Aragonese cardinal, underlining his commitment to the financial health of the community.⁵⁹⁶ We will return to D'Aragona's efforts later in this chapter.

By the late fifteenth century, the monastery's economy was in a particularly precarious position. Its patronage network had eroded considerably; as demonstrated in the monastic archives, Montevergine experienced a steep decline in land concessions and other donations during the reign of Ferdinand I (1458-1494).⁵⁹⁷ The reductions to Montevergine's land holdings, and thus revenue, was a direct result of the feudal policies implemented by Ferdinand I, and his father, Alfonso I. Building off of Alfonso's previous policy, King Ferdinand replaced numerous local lords with Neapolitan elites, usually friends of the crown, across the Kingdom of Naples.⁵⁹⁸ Attempting to consolidate control and weaken the power of the barons, Ferdinand ushered in an era of economic

⁵⁸⁹ For Papal rule in Benevento: Loud, *The Latin Church in Norman Italy*, esp. 135-180.

⁵⁹⁰ Ilaria Pagani, "Il Santuario di Montevergine. Monumenti funebri di età angioina tra cultura francese e centro italiana," *Storiomondo* 32 (2005): 1-8.

⁵⁹¹ Mongelli, *Regesto delle Pergamene*, I - VI.

⁵⁹² Mongelli, *Storia di Montevergine e della congregazione Verginiana*, vol. 3 (Avellino: Amministrazione provinciale, 1968), 3-10.

⁵⁹³ There is no comprehensive history of the commendatory system. For individual case studies in Western Europe: William Telesca, "The Problem of the commendatory monasteries and the order of Cîteaux during the abbacy of Jean de Cirey, 1474-1501," *Cîteaux* 22 (1971): 154-77; D.M. Lunn, "Benedictine Reform Movements in the Later Middle Ages," *The Downside Review* 91 (305) (1973): 275-89; Mark Dilworth, "The Commendator System in Scotland," *Innes Review* 37 (1986): 51-72; Carlos Reglero de la Fuente, "Cluny and its priories in fifteenth-century Castile," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2 (2017): 261-79.

⁵⁹⁴ Mongelli, *Storia*, 3, 58-59.

⁵⁹⁵ For a biography: Edith Pásztor, *d'Aragona, Giovanni*, in *DBI*, III (1961), 697-698; Leone Mattei-Cerasoli, "Tre Registri del Card. Giovanni D'Aragona Commendatario di Montecassino," in *Montecassino nel quattrocento: studi e documenti sull'abbazia cassinese e la "Terra S.Benedicti" nella crisi del passaggio all'età moderna*, ed. Mariano dell'Omo (Montecassino: Monaci di Montecassino, 1992), 585-600.

⁵⁹⁶ Costo, *Istoria Dell'origine Del sagratissimo luogo di Montevergine* 36; Mongelli, *Storia*, 3, 56.

⁵⁹⁷ Mongelli, *Storia*, 3, 3-93.

⁵⁹⁸ Luciana Petracca, *Le terre dei baroni ribelli: poteri feudali e rendita signorile nel Mezzogiorno Aragonese* (Rome: Viella, 2022), 62-64.

instability across his domain, which ultimately led to the Conspiracy of the Barons in 1485.⁵⁹⁹ The constant changing of baronial leadership was paired with the reorganisation of feudal lands, leading to legal disputes over land ownership rights and appropriate taxation.⁶⁰⁰ Montevergine was not exempt from these disputes. In 1476, for example, the inhabitants of the city of Solofra appointed an attorney to represent them in Naples to prove their legitimate ownership of properties held by the monastery.⁶⁰¹ The case suggests that the title of Montevergine's land grants were under scrutiny during this period, thus threatening the vassals' livelihoods and the monastery's revenue. While this discussion is only a snapshot, recognising the region's economic instability and the monastery's fraught patronage network will be critical for the investigation that follows below.

Almost immediately after its twelfth-century foundation, Montevergine became a popular destination for pilgrims, attesting to its spiritual authority.⁶⁰² Thanks to its location along pilgrimage routes to Jerusalem, travellers often stopped at the monastery while enroute to the Holy Land.⁶⁰³ As Giovanni Vitolo has demonstrated, pilgrimage was critical to the economic and spiritual life of the monastery.⁶⁰⁴ A large assortment of icons was also fostered by an extensive patronage network and thereby constituted an important source of income.⁶⁰⁵ Though most of these icons no longer survive, the archival evidence points to their popularity and multitude.⁶⁰⁶ As attested in the charters, local benefactors often offered monetary and land-based donations on behalf of one particular icon of the Virgin.⁶⁰⁷

Throughout the Middle Ages, sacred matter, including images and relics, played a pivotal role in the cultivation and management of a monastery's patronage network and thus its revenue. As Hilken and Boynton illustrate, a community's survival depended on benefactors for gifts of

⁵⁹⁹ For its lead up to and consequences, see: Giovanni Vitolo, *Città e contado nel Mezzogiorno tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Salerno: Laveglia, 2005); Giuliana Vitale, *Percorsi urbani nel Mezzogiorno medievale* (Battipaglia: Laveglia & Carone, 2016).

⁶⁰⁰ Petracca, *Le terre dei baroni ribelli*, 24–26.

⁶⁰¹ Mongelli, *Storia*, 3, 43.

⁶⁰² Giovanni Vitolo, "Santuari e pellegrinaggi nella Campania medievale: l'esempio di Montevergine," in *Per una storia dei santuari cristiani D'Italia: approcci regionali*, ed. Giorgio Cracco (Bologna: Società Editrice Il Mulino, 2002), 388–92.

⁶⁰³ Montevergine's charters attest to the presence of pilgrims, and their offerings, as early as 1132: G. Andenna, "Guglielmo da Vercelli e Montevergine: note per l'interpretazione di una esperienza religiosa del XII secolo nell'Italia meridionale," in *L'esperienza monastica benedettina e la Puglia*, ed. C.D. Fonseca (Galatina: Congedo 1983), 87–118.

⁶⁰⁴ Vitolo, "Santuari e pellegrinaggi," 388–89.

⁶⁰⁵ Pietro de Leo, "Aspetti di vita quotidiana e forme di pietà nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia attraverso il Codice Diplomatico Verginiano," in *La Società Meridionale nelle Pergamene di Montevergine, Relazioni e comunicazioni del primo convegno internazionale, 28-31 Ottobre 1980*, ed. P. M. Tropeano (Montevergine: Edizioni Padre Benedettini, 1984), 131–45.

⁶⁰⁶ For example, the monastery had a dedicated "custodian of icons" to care for the collection, as seen in the *Statute of Abbot Donato* (c. 1210): Teresa Colamarco, "Il cosiddetto 'Statuo dell'Abate Donato'," in *Virtute et labore: studi offerti a Giuseppe Avarucci per i suoi settant'anni*, eds. Rosa M. Borraccini and Giammarco Borri (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2008), 689.

⁶⁰⁷ From the twelfth to sixteenth centuries, this referred to the Madonna of St William, which hung directly in front of the choir at the "People's Altar." Its popularity was surpassed by another, the Madonna of Montevergine, in 1490 when Cardinal Oliviero Carafa declared it had been painted by Saint Luke. For the surviving charters, see: Mongelli, *Regesto delle Pergamene*, I–VI; *L'archivio storico dell'Abbazia Benedettina di Montevergine: inventario*, vol. I–III (Roma: Centro di Ricerca, 1974–1980). For the St William icon: Tropeano, *Montevergine nella storia e nell'arte: periodo Normanno Svevo*. For the other Marian icon: Francesco Muollo and Giuseppe Gandolfo, eds. *La Maestà di Montevergine: Storia e Restauro* (Rome: Casa Editoriale Artemide SRL, 2014).

monetary value, land, or even objects.⁶⁰⁸ In return, benefactors requested prayers for their souls after their deaths. Consequently, monks would pray for their donors, living and dead, during the Office and mass.⁶⁰⁹ These donations were not only transactional, but also an acknowledgement of trust. A donor had to believe in the efficacy of the monks' prayers. It was crucial, therefore, that a monastic community maintained its spiritual authority, whether through holy relics or images. These sacred objects often spurred donations: the more efficacious the image or relic was, the more likely a monastery was to receive a gift.

We can see such a system at work at medieval Montevergine. Based on the archival evidence, and previous scholarship, the icons clearly facilitated the monastery's patronal network, encouraged broader pilgrimage, and formed the basis of its spiritual authority. The role of its relics, however, remains ambiguous. Evidence regarding any saintly remains is extremely limited and concentrates in the thirteenth century. In this handful of records, they are always referred to as a nameless collection.⁶¹⁰ According to one charter, for example, in 1225 a certain Roane, the Count of Conza, donated a mill in thanksgiving for the bodies of saints which rested at Montevergine.⁶¹¹ Evidently, Roane was keen on securing the collective prayers of these intercessors, whoever they might be. While evidence remains scarce, these charters suggest that the assortment of holy remains successfully encouraged benefactors to donate gifts, albeit less so than its sacred images. It also implies that the monastery's spiritual authority rested on the collective identity of the saints, rather than one in particular.

Our understanding of the monastery's devotional life is greatly assisted by three other critical pieces of evidence that I might briefly survey here. First, a thirteenth century relic inventory, scrawled on the final page of a Verginian ritual, reports that over 50 sacred objects were interred within the monastic church (Montevergine II) upon its dedication in 1182 [see Table 6].⁶¹² It has been suggested that this list was utilised during the monks' prayers for the dead.⁶¹³ The second is a deathbed confession by a Verginian monk as transcribed in MS 3970.⁶¹⁴ According to the text

⁶⁰⁸ Hilken, *Memory and Community*; Boynton, *Shaping a monastic identity*.

⁶⁰⁹ This patronage system was commonplace for monasteries across Europe, including at Montevergine. For a selection of studies with a focus on patronage and the cult of saints, see: Stephen D. White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints: The Laudatio Parentum in Western France, 1050-1150* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Barbara H. Rosenwein, *To be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909-1049* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); Karen Stober, *Late Medieval Monasteries and their Patrons: England and Wales, c.1300-1540* (Rochester: The Boydell Press, 2007).

⁶¹⁰ For more examples: Mongelli, *Storia*, 1, 689.

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² For the list, and the historical problems it creates, see: *ibid.*, 688-738; Francesco Aceto, "Topografia Sacra e Allestimenti liturgici (secoli XII-XVII)," in *L'Abbazia di Montevergine dalle origini alla ricostruzione barocca: Architettura, topografia sacra, arti figurative*, eds. Francesco Aceto and Paola Vitolo (Naples: Editori Paparo, 2023), 68-69.

⁶¹³ As proposed by one of Montevergine's archivists, Anna Battaglia. She believes that the inventory was once a part of an earlier necrology (now lost) and the folio was inserted into the ritual for safekeeping. Its original location in the necrology suggests the monks were praying for the dead through the intercession of the saints housed at Montevergine. Anna Battaglia, "Le reliquie dei santi attraverso i secoli nei documenti di Montevergine," (2013), <https://bibliotecastataledimontevergine.cultura.gov.it/blog/le-reliquie-dei-santi-attraverso-i-secoli-nei-documenti-di-montevergine/>.

⁶¹⁴ MS 3970; For a partial transcription, see: Giovanni Mongelli, *Regesto delle pergamene: Abbazia di Montevergine*, vol. I (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1956), 25.

in 1403, the monastery's custodian of icons, Antonello de Candida, testified that Montevergine housed the bodies of several saints - but he neither knew their locations nor their identities. Furthermore, he claimed that the relics were translated from Benevento, after King William I besieged the city around 1156. As Mongelli has demonstrated, this testimony was likely recorded to preserve Montevergine's history during a moment of institutional crisis.⁶¹⁵ The account further claims that Antonello's memory was recorded during a broader effort to restore and reinvigorate the monastery's spiritual identity. In previous scholarship, it has widely been assumed that de Candida's long-lost collection was the very same assortment found in 1480. However, this narrative is complicated by several issues with the manuscript tradition, including its dating, which have yet to be explored.⁶¹⁶ Such issues, however, are not our purpose here.

Third and finally, MS 4412 is an inventory of the relics uncovered in 1480. We will explore this text in detail below, but it is worth mentioning here that this catalogue differs *entirely* from the thirteenth century iteration mentioned above. Historians have yet to explain the disparity between these two lists due to the scarcity of evidence, demonstrating the difficulty in reconstructing the history of Montevergine's relics.⁶¹⁷ The sources I have expounded upon here are all that is left of this distant past. What we do have attests to a lack of institutional memory. De Candida's confession, for example, illustrates that the legacy of the monastery's relics had long waned within the community. This would have negatively impacted its spiritual authority and subsequently their ability to garner donations. The Verginians were unable to encourage pilgrims to climb on the mountain on the relics' behalf or tempt benefactors with the presence of, and thus intercession of, the saints. Both, as we will see below, were crucial components of a monastery's revenue and sense of identity. This waning spiritual authority compounded by the economic decline of the fifteenth century thus serves as the jumping off point for this investigation.

II. A Relic Discovery

Having established the patchy evidence which preceded the relic discovery of 1480, we can finally turn to the event itself. The inventory of these sacred remains is preserved in a singular, unbound parchment in Mercogliano, known as MS 4412.⁶¹⁸ Our scribe, who identifies himself as Antonio de Vico, notary, sets the scene: the date is 27 July 1480, and Cardinal Giovanni D'Aragona

⁶¹⁵ The second half of the fourteenth century was especially difficult for the community. The Black Death had devastated the region and thus, like at other monasteries, culled Montevergine's income. The Western Schism produced two abbots at Montevergine which led to a twenty-year internal schism within the community from which Abbot Pandullo emerged as its sole governor. Facing an almost abandoned monastery, Pandullo commissioned several new liturgical texts, reorganised the monastery's donations (with papal assistance) and seemingly ordered the transcription of Antonello's memories. See: Mongelli, *Storia*, 2, 451- 512.

⁶¹⁶ Based on several paleographic features, I suspect that this parchment was not written in 1403, as it is dated, but is instead a copy of an earlier text. The scribe's handwriting is difficult to read and inconsistent, suggesting this text was not intended for regular consultation but was, perhaps, made as a copy. He also makes several spelling errors, as if he was having trouble reading an original text. It is more likely that the extant manuscript was transcribed in the second half of the sixteenth century, during which time several monks produced histories of the monastery. It is plausible that during their research and use of archival materials, this transcription was made as an act of historical preservation.

⁶¹⁷ Previous historians have yet to account for the discrepancies between these two lists - a topic which falls outside the scope of this chapter. We can blame this on the scarcity of the evidence. For example, neither the archives nor any early modern histories speak of any thefts, architectural projects, or spiritual renewal programs that might account for a relic-swap.

⁶¹⁸ MS 4412. Also see: Mongelli, *Storia*, 3, 70-75.

is commendatory abbot. De Vico then reports that "many bodies of saints" were found under and around the main altar, within the ciborium and in the *scabellum*.⁶¹⁹ The use of the term *scabellum* in this text is puzzling; it is not immediately clear which space the scribe is referencing. We can theorise that this referenced altar chairs or stools located directly behind the altar for clerical use.⁶²⁰ The relics were contained in marble vessels with lead lids upon which the names of each saint were inscribed. Finally, de Vico lists the names of the relics in sections according to where they were discovered [see Table 3]. In total, the catalogue consists of the remains of 30 individuals.

Montevergine's relic horde boasted of several local figures, attesting to a popular form of sanctity in Southern Italy which, as Paul Oldfield has established, was distinctly "marked by its linkage to Christianity's distant sacred past."⁶²¹ For example, over half of the relics belonged to early Christian martyrs.⁶²² Many of the relics had immediate connections with nearby Benevento; the relics of Barbatus, Januarius, Sesto, Desiderio, Mercurius, Modestus, Deodatus and Potitus were all documented in Benevento during the central Middle Ages.⁶²³ This collection also presents strong geographic ties to southern Italy. Most of the saints in this collection were either born in southern Italy or had long-standing cults in that region. Some represented the Bay of Naples, such as Constantius of Capri and Deodatus of Nola. Others came from the city of Naples, namely Potitus and Juliana. Eleutherius and Secundinus, neither of whom were born in southern Italy, had historic cults in Apulia.⁶²⁴ Not one of these holy persons lived past the late seventh century. As we will see later in this chapter, the ancient and local characteristics of this relic horde was a critical component in the reconstruction of Montevergine's spirituality during the late fifteenth century.

De Vico only alludes to the circumstances of the relics' detection.⁶²⁵ De Vico states that the bodies were found where the main altar previously stood, insinuating that the structure had been destroyed.⁶²⁶ Later, Fra Bernardino of Sicily fleshed out this point, stating that D'Aragona planned to relocate the altar from the nave into the elevated tribune [see Figures 2 and 3].⁶²⁷ Until recently, the commendatory abbot's plans for his beneficiary have not been well understood. However,

⁶¹⁹ "...inventa erunt multa corpora Sanctorum subtus ubi prius exciit altare maius et intus et supra Tabernaculum et intus Scabellum..." MS 4412. Transcription and translation my own.

⁶²⁰ A survey of Latin dictionaries (Lewis and Short, Du Cange, and Blaise) all translate *scabellum* as a low stool or footstool. In Stelten's Dictionary of Ecclesiastical Latin, *scabellum* refers to a stool or an altar step. Its nature in a fifteenth century context is not clear. Our understanding is slightly aided by a later phrase, "supra altare," which suggest that this stool or step was above (or directly behind) the altar. It could be related to the Italian equivalent, *sgabello*, which refers to a wooden stool or armchair usually used in heraldic contexts. Database of Latin Dictionaries, "Scabellum," accessed 15 February 2024, <https://about.brepolis.net/database-of-latin-dictionaries/>; Collins Dictionary, "Sgabello," accessed 09 March 2024, <https://collinsdictionary.com>

⁶²¹ Oldfield, *Sanctity and Pilgrimage*, 275.

⁶²² Those saints include: Mercurius, Hermolaus, Barbatus, Januarius, Sesto, Desiderius, Nicandrus, Secundus, Potitus, Juliana, Maurice, Modestus and Victor.

⁶²³ While St Barbatus' remains were always interred in Benevento, the other six saints were translated as follows: Mercurius, 768; Modestus, 785; Potitus, c. ninth century, Januarius, Sesto and Desidero, 831; and Deodatus, 839. For an overview of these saints: Oldfield, *Sanctity and Pilgrimage*, 21–51; Iadanza, *Principi*.

⁶²⁴ Their relics rested in the Cathedral of Troia. Oldfield, *Sanctity and Pilgrimage*, 57.

⁶²⁵ Aceto has proposed they could have gone back into the new altar or perhaps placed in the reliquary-sacristy. Archival evidence attests to a publicly accessible reliquary chapel, but it is unclear exactly when this chapel was built. It is not impossible that the relics of 1480 were kept in this chapel for public veneration at that time - or some combination of both. Aceto, "Topografia Sacra," 75.

⁶²⁶ "subtus ubi prius exciit altare maius," MS 4412.

⁶²⁷ "...Regnante don Johanne de Aragona, cardinal digno de regali nao, el dicto altare spense in la tribona qual era in menczo el templo situate." Ciampaglia, "La Vita di S. Gennaro", 148.

recent scholarship by Aceto has furthered our understanding. As he has noted, it had become popular to move altars out of the nave and into a raised tribune during this period to avoid overcrowding.⁶²⁸ For example, Nicholas V designed a similar layout for Old St Peter's Basilica in Rome during this period, though his plans were never realised.⁶²⁹ D'Aragona implemented this raised tribune style not only at Montevergine but also at the monastery of Montecassino in 1484, which he also held *in commendam*. From these two examples, it is evident that D'Aragona desired to update both the monastic churches in line with contemporary architectural trends.⁶³⁰

Thus far, our investigation has only upheld the traditional interpretation of the relics' discovery. At this stage, there is nothing to suggest that their detection was anything more than an accidental consequence of ongoing renovations. To offer an alternative perspective, I would like to look more closely at the Monastery of Montecassino where, as mentioned, D'Aragona enacted a similar remodel.⁶³¹ While relocating the altar in 1484, as per D'Aragona's orders, the Cassinese community uncovered the relics of St Benedict, St Scholastica, Charlemagne, and Charles Martel.⁶³² Their invention was recorded by the monastery's notary Cristoforo Perone in 1486.⁶³³

Unlike at Montevergine, the renovations at Montecassino have been understood as dual purposed. On the one hand, the commendatory abbot intended to align the church's nave with Renaissance architectural design. On the other, he deliberately sought out the remains of Benedict and Scholastica, which were purportedly hidden beneath the altar.⁶³⁴ Such a discovery would serve several purposes. First, the *inventio* authenticated Montecassino's hagiographic tradition and negated conflicting claims to the saints' relics. Since the seventh century, the monastery was actively engaged in a relic competition with the Abbey of Fleury which claimed to be in possession

⁶²⁸ We can see this, for example, at the Basilica of the Annunziata in Florence which completed its tribune, consisting of a new altar, choir, and ambulatory, in 1476. Joanne Allen, *Transforming the Church Interior in Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 72. For other examples: Sible de Blaauw, "Innovazioni nello spazio di culto fra basso Medioevo e Cinquecento: La perdita dell'orientamento liturgico e la liberazione della navata," in *Lo spazio e il culto: Relazioni tra edificio ecclesiale e uso liturgico dal XV al XVI secolo*, ed. J. Stabenow (Marsilio: Venezia, 2006), 25–51; Francesco Caglioti, "I pergami donatelliani nel contesto," in *L'Ultimo Donatello: I Pulpiti di San Lorenzo: studi e restauro*, ed. Maria Donata Mazzoni (Florence: Edifir, 2022), 39–90.

⁶²⁹ Joanne Allen, "Nicholas V's Tribuna for Old St. Peter's in Rome as a Model for the New Apsidal Choir at Padua Cathedral," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 72 (2013): 166–89.

⁶³⁰ Rosanna de Gennaro has further theorised that the tribune altars reflected new liturgical trends, namely the position of the priest during the consecration. Rosanna de Gennaro, "L'altare Maggiore dal 1480-1629," in *L'Abbazia di Montevergine dalle origini alla ricostruzione barocca: architettura, topografia sacra, arti figurative*, ed. Francesco Aceto and Paola Vitolo (Naples: Editori Paparo, 2023), 299–300.

⁶³¹ Cardinal D'Aragona held several monasteries *in commendam*, including the Monastery of Montecassino, the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Cava de' Tirreni, and Santa Sophia in Benevento. During his short career, D'Aragona restored and patronised many of these beneficiaries, though his efforts were not limited to architectural remodels. D'Aragona was also a renowned patron of the arts and humanist, commissioning several illuminated manuscripts and chapels for non-beneficiaries in Rome and Hungary. For D'Aragona's career as commendatory abbot, see: Mongelli, *Storia*, 3, 39–56; Peter Farbaky, "The Role of John of Aragona (1456-1485) in the Art Patronage of Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary," *Acta historiae artium Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 62 (2021): 63–104; Maria Senatore, "I registri del Cardinale Giovanni d'Aragona: un progetto di Digital Curation," *Schola Salernitana-Annali* 23 (2018): 63–104.

⁶³² For the relic *inventio*, see: Paul Meyvaert, "L'Invention des Reliques Cassinennes de Saint Benoit en 1484," *Revue Bénédictine* 69 (1959): 287–336.

⁶³³ Tommaso Leccisotti, "Sul documento che ricorda l'invenzione delle ossa di s. Benedetto e s. Scolastica, avvenuta nel 1484," *Benedictina* 9 (1955): 113–26; Meyvaert, "L'Invention des Reliques Cassinennes," 321–22.

⁶³⁴ As seen in Leccisotti and Meyvaert's analyses, see the footnote above.

of Benedict's body.⁶³⁵ Second, the sacred matter would reinvigorate the monastery's spiritual authority and economy during an era of institutional decline. Like Montevergine, Montecassino was not exempt from the widespread economic woes plaguing the Benedictine monasteries during this period. The presence of its famed founder could reinvigorate its spiritual prestige and subsequently its patronage network. In this light, D'Aragona had not merely intended to revamp Montecassino's architectural design; he had intentionally hunted for its famed, yet lost, relic collection to restore the community's spiritual *and* economic life.

I contend that Cardinal D'Aragona pursued the Verginian relic collection when he ordered the removal of the main altar, as he had done at Montecassino. Montevergine's liturgical furnishings serve as key evidence for this hypothesis. By describing the layout of the monastic church in 1480, it will become clear that the Verginian community anticipated finding a trove of sacred objects during the renovations. Whether the monks knew precisely *which* objects, however, remains unclear. Before D'Aragona's project, a wooden choir, a ciborium, and an altar were located in the centre of Montevergine's central nave [see Figure 1].⁶³⁶ As Paola Vitolo has demonstrated, the choir stalls were installed during the church's founding in 1182.⁶³⁷ Reconstructing the main altar, however, proves more difficult. Though it is possible that the original, twelfth century altar (Montevergine II) was still standing, Aceto has theorised that Queen Mary of Hungary, wife of Charles II, commissioned a new, gothic altar in the early fourteenth century.⁶³⁸ Without further evidence, this remains conjecture.

We know far more about the monastic ciborium which survives today in pieces.⁶³⁹ The ciborium (also known as a tabernacle) was also contracted by Queen Mary, around 1310.⁶⁴⁰ The marble canopy was built in the Roman-Apulian style, that is, four large columns with a two-tiered, cage-like dome [see Figure 4]. It was a reliquary-ciborium; as seen in parchment MS 4412, eight relics were stored within.⁶⁴¹ Such structures were common in the later Middle Ages. While not all ciboria contained relics during this period, we have several examples of those that did, including that of Old Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome which contained the Veil of Veronica.⁶⁴² Based on

⁶³⁵ This debate is not our purpose here, for a summary see: Paul Meyvaert, "Peter the Deacon and the tomb of Saint Benedict: A Re-examination of the Cassinese Tradition," *Revue Benedictine* 65 (1955): 3–70.

⁶³⁶ For more on the gothic church (Montevergine III): Aceto, "Topografia Sacra," 68–70.

⁶³⁷ Paola Vitolo, "Arredi liturgici e sepolture monumentali due-trecenteschi," in *L'Abbazia di Montevergine dalle origini alla ricostruzione barocca: architettura, topografia sacra, arti figurative*, eds. Francesco Aceto and Paola Vitolo (Naples: Editori Paparo, 2023), 214–17.

⁶³⁸ Aceto, "Topografia Sacra," 68.

⁶³⁹ Queen Mary's ciborium was ultimately removed by Abbot Danuscio around 1628. Intending to clear the nave, Danuscio leveled the floors, took the ciborium apart, and transferred the wooden choir into the tribuna. Marble pieces of the ciborium were then repurposed in other side chapels, thus ensuring their survival into the modern day. See: Alessandra Perriccioli Saggese, "Il coro ligneo," in *L'Abbazia di Montevergine dalle origini alla ricostruzione barocca: architettura, topografia sacra, arti figurative*, eds. Francesco Aceto and Paola Vitolo (Naples: Editori Paparo, 2023), 313 – 21.

⁶⁴⁰ Vitolo's dating is based on the queen's coat of arms, depicted on a piece of surviving marble. Vitolo, "Arredi liturgici," 220–30.

⁶⁴¹ Nine saints are listed, but one (Crispin) is listed twice. The full list included: Deodatus, Constantius, Pope Mark, Maximus, Crispin, Priscus, Jason, Crispin, Maurice.

⁶⁴² Claudia Bolgia, "The Tabernacle's War' II, c. 1400: New Light on the Competition between Icons and Relics in Late Medieval Rome," in *Tributes to Paul Binski: Medieval Gothic: Art, Architecture and Ideas*, ed. Julian Luxford (London: Brepols, 2021), 110–23; Antonella Ballardini, "L'altare del Volto Santo nell'antico San Pietro," in *Da San Pietro in Vaticano: La Tavola di Ugo da Carpi per L'altare del Volto Santo*, eds. Simona Turriziani and Pietro

contemporary Roman-Apulian models, Vitolo hypothesised that the relics were stored in a cupboard installed within the interior of the canopy. This was the case, for example, in the ciborium of the cathedral of Velletri.⁶⁴³

Given conventional uses of ciboria during this period, I posit that both D'Aragona and the Verginian monks anticipated finding sacred objects within the monastery's ciborium. Moreover, if the relics were stored in a cupboard, as Vitolo suggested, such a structure would have been visible to any person standing beneath it, such as a priest saying mass. We might even consider that this cabinet had its own inscriptions or visible inventory.⁶⁴⁴ Therefore, it is very difficult to believe that the holy remains kept here was a surprise to anyone, whether monk or commendatory abbot. We can make similar presumptions about the relics within the altar, though we know little of its design. Interring sacred matter within main altars had been customary in monastic churches for centuries and was required by canon law.⁶⁴⁵ We can therefore say with some certainty that D'Aragona anticipated finding the Verginian relic horde beneath its altar when he ordered its destruction - like he did at Montecassino in 1484.

What D'Aragona expected to find is a different matter entirely. As established earlier, the history of the monastery's relic collection is difficult to reconstruct. It is likely, however, that institutional memory of the assortment had long waned by 1480. Furthermore, MS 4412 states that the names of the saints were inscribed on the lids of their reliquaries. Unless there was a written inventory stored elsewhere, and now lost, the identities of these saints were otherwise sealed beneath the floor. So, while the Verginian community was likely aware that they possessed sacred remains, it remains unclear what anyone expected to find. Whatever the case, now that we have established the dual-purposed nature of D'Aragona's project, the question becomes: what did he intend to do with them?

III: Why Relics?

Thus far, we have established how Montevergine's relic discovery was an anticipated consequence of D'Aragona's renovation project. Reframing the events of 1480 as an intentional act rather than an accident forces us to reconsider their intended function at Montevergine. In the following sections, I will outline how the relics were meant to reinvigorate a monastery in decline.

Zander (Genova: SAGEP, 2022), 20–49. For further examples in use during the fifteenth century: Meredith J. Gill, "The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," in *Artistic Centers of the Italian Renaissance: Rome*, ed. Marcia Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 63–64; Adriano Amendola, "Santi in prigione. I reliquiari dei santi Pietro e Paolo nella Basilica Lateranense e una proposta per Cesare Nebbia autore del rotole della Lupa simbolo di Giustizia," in *Reliquie e Sacre Custodie in Chiese e Musei*, ed. Antonello Ricco (Rome: De Luca Editori d'Arte, 2022), 109–24. The Lateran Basilica also had a second reliquary altar canopy for the relics of Mary Magdalen: Marthine Bø Ragnhild, "The Iconography of the Gothic Ciborium in Rome, c. 1285-1370," *Medievalista* 4 (2007): 1–13.

⁶⁴³ Vitolo, "Arredi liturgici," 224. There are several Byzantine/Orthodox examples of reliquary-ciboria, though most examples are of early medieval origin. See: Jelena Bogdanovic, *The Framing of Sacred Space: The Canopy and the Byzantine Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁶⁴⁴ Philippe Cordez, "Gestion et médiation des collections de reliques au Moyen Age. Le témoignage des authentiques et des inventaires," in *Reliques et sainteté dans l'espace médiéval*, ed. Jean-Luc Deuffic (Saint Denis: Pecia, 2006), 33–63.

⁶⁴⁵ The Second Council of Nicaea in 787 ordered that all altars must contain sacred relics. For a helpful overview on relics in altars: Janet Ellen Snyder, "Relics and Pilgrimage in Western Europe." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. 22 May 2024; Accessed 28 Sept. 2025.

<https://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-790>

Our discussion will be limited to two points: (1) Montevergine's patronage network and (2) the monastery's spiritual identity. This investigation hinges on two surviving Verginian liturgical manuscripts, a martyrology and a necrology. Taken together, these manuscripts also establish how the cults of the saints discovered in 1480 formed the basis for Montevergine's late fifteenth century spiritual identity and crafted a vibrant community of both the living and the dead. Consequently, this newfound spiritual authority encouraged the restoration of Montevergine's patronage network and, subsequently, its economy. To fully explore these points, I will first introduce the martyrology and necrology, briefly explaining their texts and functions. Then, I will establish how the 1480 relic collection reinvigorated Montevergine's sense of spiritual identity and rooted the monastery's legacy in the regions' ancient sacred past. Finally, I will consider the role the newfound relics had in rebuilding the monastery's system of benefactors which had significantly eroded by the late fifteenth century.

Montevergine's archives contain a limited number of medieval liturgical texts. From the extant collection, only two were in use during the late fifteenth century: a necrology and a martyrology.⁶⁴⁶ The necrology, MS 21, was in use from at least 1403 through the late sixteenth century.⁶⁴⁷ As typical for this kind of manuscript, MS 21 listed the names of deceased monks, benefactors and other friends of the monastery, including royal figures, on each day of the year. Thanks to the efforts of Matteo Villani this manuscript has been well-studied.⁶⁴⁸ The martyrology, on the other hand, has not received any scholarly treatment. Written in a gothic script, MS 18 was completed in May of 1492 at the Monastery of Montevergine, as per an inscription on the manuscript's first folio. The folios contain several stains and tears, suggesting it was regularly used. There are also several notes and markings in the margins attesting to the martyrology's continuous use through at least the end of the sixteenth century.⁶⁴⁹ As expected for a martyrology, the manuscript is a catalogue of saints' feast days. For each day of the year, the text lists the appropriate celebration and a few lines from the saint's legend, where possible. Along with the Rule of St Benedict and a Ritual, these manuscripts once formed Montevergine's chapter book.⁶⁵⁰ These texts were utilised daily. After singing the morning Office (Matins), the community would assemble for their chapter meeting during which a passage from the Rule of St Benedict was read.⁶⁵¹ If a saint's feast was celebrated at the monastery, then their *vita* was read in place of the Rule. Then, the names of the dead, contained in the necrology, and of the saints of the day, as in the martyrology, were recited aloud.

We can take Januarius' as an example [See Image Six]. Under 19 September, Januarius' *dies natalis*, MS 18 offers a highly abbreviated version of Januarius' *passio*. The entry for 19 September reads as follows:

“At the Monastery of Montevergine, Saint Januarius, Bishop of the city of Benevento, with the deacon Festus, the lector Desiderius and the deacon Sossius of the city of Messina, who, after chains and

⁶⁴⁶ MS 18; MS 21.

⁶⁴⁷ MS 21.

⁶⁴⁸ Matteo Villani, *Monachesimo e mondo dei laici nel Mezzogiorno medievale: Il necrologio di Montevergine* (Montevergine: Edizioni Studi Storici Meridionali, 1990).

⁶⁴⁹ At least one of the marginalia scribes included a date: 1554. See: MS 18, 3v.

⁶⁵⁰ The extant Rule and the Ritual are dated to the mid-sixteenth century. They likely replaced earlier versions which would have accompanied the martyrology and necrology in the late fifteenth century. These original versions are now lost.

⁶⁵¹ For another critical work on southern Italian liturgical texts: Virginia Brown, *Terra sancti benedicti: studies in the palaeography, history and liturgy of medieval southern Italy* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2005).

imprisonment, was decapitated at the city of Pozzuoli under Emperor Diocletian. Beheaded with him was the deacon Proculus of the city of Pozzuoli and two lay persons, Eutichus and Acutius. In Palestine: the saints, bishops and martyrs Peleus and Nilus: who, during the time of the Diocletian persecutions, were burned alive for Christ with many clerics. And, at that same time, Saint Eustochius. At Nuceria, the saints and martyrs Felix and Constantia, in the time of Nero.”⁶⁵²

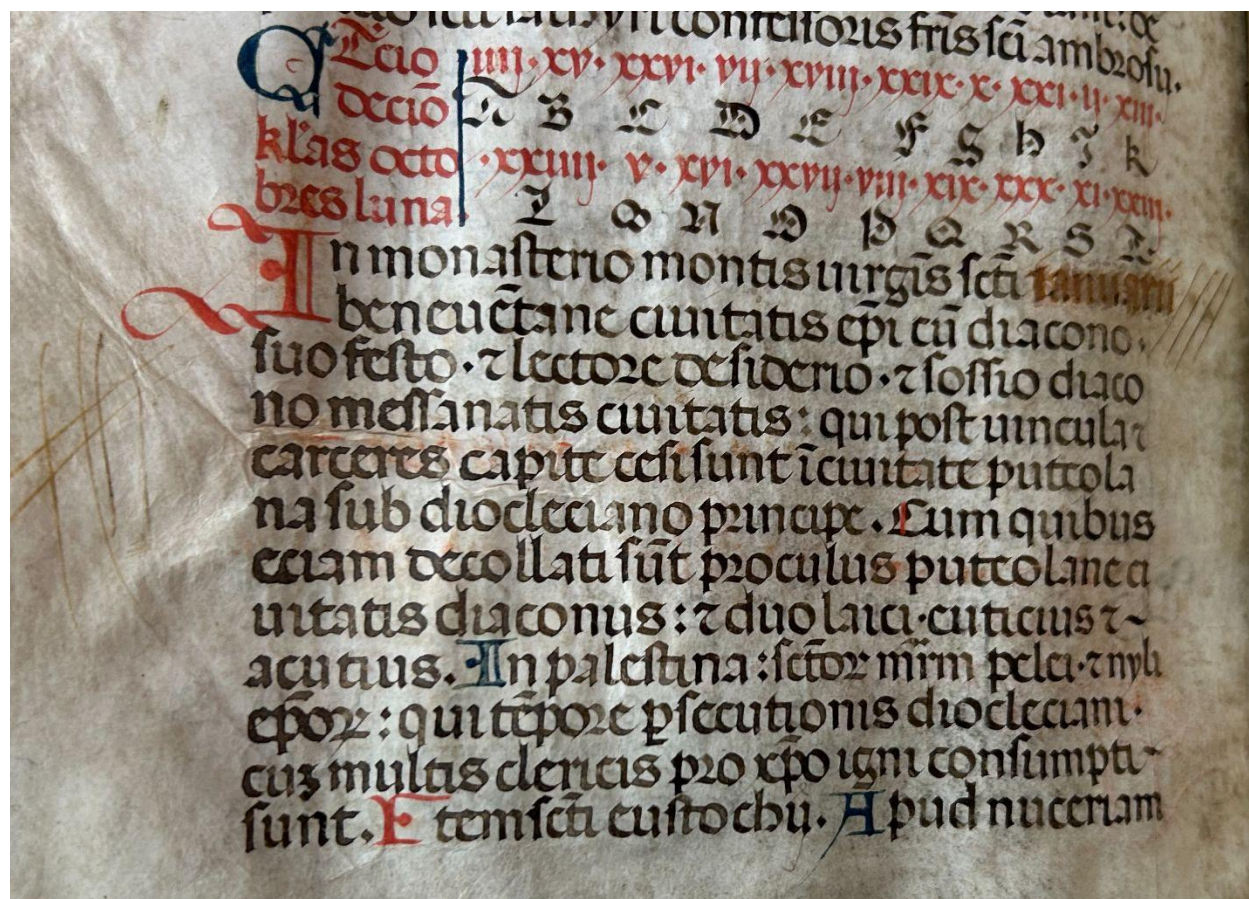


Image Six: 19 September; The Feast of St Januarius. 83v. MS 18.⁶⁵³

First and foremost, this entry proves that Januarius' cult was commemorated at Montevergine at least by 1492, if not earlier. This is not too surprising, given the discovery of his relics only twelve years earlier. As we will see momentarily, several of the saints unearthed in 1480 were similarly inserted into this martyrology. However, the saint's presence in this text challenges our previous understanding of the cult at the monastery. As mentioned in the introduction, it has previously been assumed that Januarius' cult was of little significance, if not non-existent, within the Verginian

⁶⁵² “[83v] In monasterio Montis Virgis Sancti Ianuarii Beneventane civitatis episcopi cum diacono suo Festo et lectore Desiderio et Sossio diacono Messanatis civitatis: qui post vincula et carceres caput cesi sunt in civitate Puteolana sub Diocleciano principe. Cum quibus etiam decollati sunt Proculus Puteolanae civitatis diaconus: et duo laici Euticius et Acutius. In palestina: sanctorum martyrum Pelei et Nyli, Episcoporum: qui tempore persecutionis diocleciani. cum multis clericis pro xpo igni consumpti sunt. Eodem tempore sancti Eustochu. Apud nuceriam [84r] sanctorum martyri Felicis et Constancie: tempore Neronis” MS 18, 83v - 84r.

⁶⁵³ Image by Clare Whitton, September 2023. With the permission of the Biblioteca Statale di Montevergine.

community. At the very least, as this martyrology attests, Januarius' feast was celebrated annually at Montevergine and his *passio* was recited aloud. At most, his relics were displayed for veneration, assuming they were not re-interred beneath the altar. Perhaps most significantly, however, this entry also demonstrates how Montevergine claimed Januarius' as a *Verginian* feast. This is noted in the phrase "at the monastery of Montevergine," found at the beginning of the entry.

As several historians have established, medieval monastic martyrologies placed a strong emphasis on place.⁶⁵⁴ As seen here in Montevergine's martyrology, each saint is linked with a particular location, often designating the place of martyrdom. At times, as is the case here, such a marker reflected where the feast was commemorated. However, these labels could also function as an acknowledgement of ownership or belonging.⁶⁵⁵ In some cases, this could refer to the possession of relics. In others, it was a claim that a specific place hosted a saint's cult. Januarius' case reflects both options. Of course, custody over holy figures, or their remains, was not restricted to a single location. Competing relic cults were commonplace in the medieval period, as exemplified in this ancient martyr. The monastery's claim of ownership over Januarius was a direct challenge to Naples which, as we have seen, perceived itself as the locus of his cult. We will return to this point towards the end of this chapter.

Januarius was not the only saint to be claimed by the Verginian community. In this martyrology, 22 feast days were said to be celebrated "at the monastery of Montevergine." There is a strong correlation between these celebrations and the relic collection. In fact, 17 of the 22 Verginian feasts in this text referred to the holy persons whose remains were uncovered in 1480 [see Tables 4 and 5]. This is not particularly novel; monastic liturgical calendars often reflected the sacred matter entrusted to their care. For our purposes, identifying the core programme of Montevergine's liturgical life allows us to better understand what kind of spiritual identity it hoped to curate and, in turn, attract pilgrims and benefactors.⁶⁵⁶ Like the wider relic collection, we could characterise these feasts by their antiquity and their historical connection to early Christianity in southern Italy. These liturgical commemorations and sacred remains thus worked in tandem to transform the mountaintop into a locus for the region's historical memory.

As established earlier, a monastery's spiritual identity – and the authority it conferred – was critical in cultivating and sustaining relationships with benefactors. Given Montevergine's stalled patronage network, I contend that its relic collection functioned as a deliberate strategy to revive ties with nearby donors as well as pilgrims. Having outlined the form of local, antique spirituality promoted through the relics, we can now ask whether this renewed spiritual profile indeed restored its stalled network of patrons. As I have lamented several times in this chapter, the evidence base is a limiting factor in this investigation.

Nevertheless, as Boynton and Hilken have modeled in their respective studies, the tandem use of martyrologies and necrologies can help us visualise this entangled web of spiritual and economic patronage. Briefly, these texts would be used by a monastic community to pray for their deceased patrons, as found in the necrology, through the intercession of the saint of the day but also, most crucially, those holy entities which they claimed as their own. To attain these prayers,

⁶⁵⁴ Jean-Loup Lemaitre, "Calendriers et Martyrologes," in *Tempo dei Santi tra Oriente e Occidente*, eds. Anna Benvenuti Papi and Marcello Garzaniti (Rome: Viella, 2005), 55–77; Samantha Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past: Hagiography and Power in Early Normandy* (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 2007).

⁶⁵⁵ For martyrologies and cult ownership: Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past*, 10–12.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 11; Katherine Allen Smith, "Monastic Narrative Practices," in *The Oxford Handbook of Christian Monasticism*, ed. Bernice Kaczynski (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 282.

benefactors offered donations to a monastery. The scale and nature of these offerings, as I mentioned earlier, were often shaped by the community's spiritual authority, itself rooted in its collection of sacred objects. Applying this approach to the surviving Verginian liturgical manuscripts allows us to glimpse how Montevergine articulated and maintained these connections into the sixteenth century.

Montevergine's martyrology originally formed part of a larger chapter book, which also consisted of the Rule of St Benedict (MS 19), a Ritual (MS 20) and a necrology (MS 21).⁶⁵⁷ Together, these texts structured the community's choral prayer, particularly during the office of Prime. At this hour, monks would read a chapter of the Benedictine rule, commemorate the saint of the day as recorded in the martyrology, and often hear an excerpt from the relevant hagiographic text. Here, they would also pray for deceased benefactors and patrons, invoking the intercession of the saint of the day, as portrayed in the martyrology, as well as those associated with the Verginian community. This included, as we saw earlier, several holy entities whose remains resided at the monastery.

Of these four, the necrology has received the most scholarly attention.⁶⁵⁸ As per standard use for such texts, MS 21 is a chronological register of the deaths of key figures in the monastery's history, including its donors. As Matteo Villani has demonstrated, it was in use between 1525 and 1761.⁶⁵⁹ As per an inscription towards the beginning of the text, it was compiled to replace an earlier necrology, begun in 1403 and now lost. As Villani has theorised, this predecessor had likely become too full and therefore difficult to use in prayer. MS 21 records both long-standing and contemporary relationships. Its entries include ancient abbots, Angevin monarchs, popes, and commendatory abbots, reflecting the community's continued commemoration of its historical past. Lay donors feature heavily in this text; their entries usually only refer to their names, though some also include the type of donation.

While it remains difficult to reconstruct its precise economic situation, this necrology points to a change in Montevergine's fortunes. By the second quarter of the sixteenth century, the monastery boasted a healthy cohort of engaged lay supporters. Together, the Verginian martyrology and necrology suggest that these benefactors sought the intercession of the local and ancient saints associated with the mountaintop shrine. It would seem, therefore, that D'Aragona's initiative to reinvigorate the monastery's spiritual character, and thereby stimulate a renewed flow of donations, was successful.

While these liturgical texts only imply this dynamic, later Verginian histories make the connection explicit. In 1585, for example, Verginian monk and historian Tommaso Costo published a history of the monastery. Within it, he stated that the monastery's relic collection actively generated revenue from local donors. He also praised Cardinal D'Aragona for ensuring that these funds remained within monastic control.⁶⁶⁰ Though writing with the benefit of hindsight, Costo's account confirms that the assortment of sacred objects served as the impetus - or at least, one

⁶⁵⁷ MS 19, MS 20, MS 21, Mercogliano, *Biblioteca Statale di Montevergine*

⁶⁵⁸ See the work of Matteo Villani: Villani, *Monachesimo e mondo dei laici nel Mezzogiorno medievale*.

⁶⁵⁹ In 1761, this chapter book was dismantled and then stored in Montevergine's archives, where they remain today. *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁶⁰ "...ma parendo al preallegato Cardinale gran disordine questo mal distribuire d'entrate, ordinò, che quanto venisse per offerta all'altare, e tutti I beni...s'applicassero à beneficio de I luoghi: per lo qual'ordine cominciò questa Religione à sentir un poco di rilevamento." Costo, *Istoria Dell'origine Del sagratissimo luogo di Montevergine*, 38. The latter half of the sixteenth century saw a flurry of new histories of the monastery. For an overview of these developments, including Costo's role, see: Bolognese, "The Monastery," 6–7.

impetus – for the renewal of local patronage. It also directly links these donations with the efforts of D’Aragona, further confirming the cardinal’s intentions.

Furthermore, the later existence of a reliquary chapel suggests that these sacred remains attracted pilgrims. Though little is known of its origins, the monastery’s charter collection boasts of several donations for the chapel’s upkeep in the sixteenth century, beginning as early as 1540. In this case, an anonymous beneficiary offered the monks 16 *carlini* per year to maintain the chapel, which included a cupboard of relics and reliquaries.⁶⁶¹ The donation document further states that these objects were to remain visible for the veneration of the faithful. Whether this donation reconfigured the chapel’s original design, or sustained it, is difficult to say without further evidence. While it may have taken several decades, this space nevertheless testifies to the existence of pilgrims travelling to view this collection of sanctity. It was ultimately expanded in 1619 due to demand.

Though this evidence is modest, and at times implicitly links the relics to the monastery’s economic life, it does suggest that these sacred objects did reinvigorate the spiritual identity – and authority – of the Verginian community, thereby attracting new donors and pilgrims. Of course, the reasons for its change in fortunes cannot be attributed solely to these sacred remains. The early sixteenth century saw several key historical developments which effected the monastery, the most critical being the end of the commendation period. In 1515, Montevergine was placed under the jurisdiction of the lay governors at the Hospital of the Annunziata in Naples.⁶⁶² Even so, these liturgical and archival texts illustrate a vibrant community of holy intercessors, monks, and benefactors – those both living and dead – operating together in a shared sacred economy. Unfortunately, the evidence only affords us a snapshot of this dynamic, and prioritises later developments across the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, it is evident that, for however short a period, St Januarius played a pivotal role as one of several holy figures who encouraged donors and pilgrims to return to Mount Partenio.

Conclusions:

As Paul Oldfield has established, a saint’s insertion into the liturgy established him or her as a “conduit for expressing authority, and communal memory and identity.”⁶⁶³ This was most certainly the case at the Monastery of Montevergine in the late fifteenth century. In a period where rapidly transforming political and feudal boundaries led to conflicting allegiances and intense violence, Montevergine’s relic collection and feasts recollected and memorialised the region’s ancient Christian past. To support this collective ancient and local identity, Januarius had to remain in his most ancient form, as bishop of Benevento. The cult of St Januarius at Montevergine, however short lived, attested to a version of the saint which was independent of Naples’ contemporary needs. At Montevergine there was no miraculous blood, no pigs hanging from the rafters, and no garlanded priests. Instead, he was one of many, a member of a community of local holy persons who collectively testified to the region’s earliest Christian origins. When Archbishop Alessandro Carafa came to collect the saint’s remains in 1497, he found a time capsule - one which the Verginians refused to relinquish.

Acknowledging that Fra Bernardino may have embellished his tale for dramatic effect and was writing years after the event, he depicts a Verginian community devastated at the loss of

⁶⁶¹ For the record of this donation: Aceto, “Topografia Sacra,” 94.

⁶⁶² For this period, see: Mongelli, *Storia*, 3.

⁶⁶³ Oldfield, *Sanctity and Pilgrimage*, 56.

Januarius remains.⁶⁶⁴ Once Carafa reached the mountaintop, he describes how the Verginian monks barred him entry from the monastery. To ensure the failure of the archbishop's mission, one member of the community grabbed Januarius' relics, ran into the woods in the dead of night, and buried the sacred objects in the snow. Only when the prior demanded the relics' return did the monk collect his patron's remains. Ultimately, as we know, Alessandro was successful, and the saint was taken to Naples. However, the memory of Januarius' presence at the monastery outlasted the translation. In the mid-sixteenth century, Montevergine commissioned a bust of the saint, which was then placed underneath the high altar, exactly where Januarius' relics had been uncovered in 1480. The plaque reads: "The statue of St Januarius, bishop and martyr, that you see, records that his body was buried under this altar for three centuries and then transferred to Naples in 1497."⁶⁶⁵ Coincidentally, or perhaps by design, the Verginian community now commemorated Januarius in the same manner Naples commemorated San Gennaro *prior* to the translation: with an anthropomorphic depiction of the saint's head.

This bust materialised a community's mourning. While not explicitly stated, its tone implies a level of resentment towards Naples; though the body rested *here* for three centuries, the plaque argues, it was nevertheless removed. Retroactively applying 300 years of the saint's holy presence at Montevergine, this plaque testifies to the power of oral and historical tradition at the monastery. For this Verginian community, this cult was not a fleeting blip on the radar. Rather, St Januarius had amalgamated into the very fabric of the monastery. Januarius witnessed some of the darkest moments in its history, the Black Death, the Western Schism, and its commendatory phase. He - along with several other local martyrs - revived the monastery's spiritual and historical identity, thus saving a dying monastic community. Though his relics were only acknowledged at the monastery for 17 years, we cannot discount the significance of Januarius' cult upon this process of reconstruction. Here at Montevergine, St Januarius, bishop of Benevento and early Christian martyr, was an integral member of Montevergine's community of patronal saints.

⁶⁶⁴ Ciampaglia, "'La Vita di S. Gennaro'," 148–49.

⁶⁶⁵ "La statua di S. gennaro, vescovo e martire, che tu vedi, ti ricorda che il suo corpo fu sepolto sotto quest'altare per più di tre secoli, prima che nel 1497 fosse trasferito a Napoli," Mongelli, *Storia*, 3, 75. Translation my own.

Chapter Six: San Gennaro of the Carafa Brothers

Introduction

"With great delight [Alessandro Carafa] took San Gennaro, leaving Montevergine celebrating. He quickly made his way to Naples on horseback with his companions, often praising that divine name, joyful and cheerful along the way. At that hour, the plague had not abated, death touched Naples. For this reason, the people did not go out to honour that excellent saint... instead, late that evening, the prelate cautiously carried [the relics] inside a small case. On his chest, he introduced that patron in Naples."⁶⁶⁶

Fra Bernardino of Sicily, '*La Vita di San Gennaro*' (1503)

By 1503, Fra Bernardino of Sicily, a Franciscan friar living in Naples, completed a poem dedicated to San Gennaro. Recounting the saint's life and the history of his cult, the friar offers a triumphant portrayal of the translation from Montevergine, which occurred only five years earlier. As we saw in the last chapter, the Verginian community begrudgingly relinquished Gennaro's relics to Alessandro Carafa after the archbishop threatened to siege the monastery. Having verified the relics' authority, the archbishop packed the bones into a small box, as described in the quote above, and carried San Gennaro back to Naples on horseback. The poem closes with a lengthy description of the saint's new home, the *succorpo* chapel, commissioned by Cardinal Oliviero Carafa. As we will see further below, all three of these protagonists – Oliviero, Alessandro, and San Gennaro himself – were interred within this crypt.

In previous scholarship, the 1490s have been understood as a key turning point in San Gennaro's cult - and rightfully so.⁶⁶⁷ First, the translation seemingly resolved the nearly 600-year separation of the body from the city; as mentioned in the Prologue, Gennaro's bodily relics had been stolen from the Catacombs of San Gennaro by the Lombards and taken to Benevento in 831. This decade also saw the birth of the *succorpo*, Oliviero Carafa's triumphant marble tomb that doubled as a saint's shrine and private funerary chapel. Scholarship on this period of San Gennaro's cult overwhelmingly concentrates on the design of this chapel within a Renaissance context, as seen in the works of Franco Strazzullo, Nicholas Bock, Bianca de Divitiis, and Diana Norman.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁶ "Con gran dilecto prese san Jennaro lassando Montevergine preclaro/In Napoli fe' presto suo cammino ben a cavallo con sua compagnia/laudando spesso quel nome divino/lieti et iocundi per tutta la via/El morbo alhora non veneva mino/in Napoli toccava la moria/per tale via non uscio la gente per honorare quel sancto eccellente/... però la sera tardo quel prelate/lo porta cauto dentro d'un scrignetto/Innante al pecto, in Napoli introdusse quel patrone." Transcription by Nadia Ciampaglia, translation my own. Ciampaglia, "'La Vita di S. Gennaro'," 151.

⁶⁶⁷ As identified first by: Vitale, "Il culto ianuario," 327–56. Then later reaffirmed in: de Ceglia, *The Natural History*.

⁶⁶⁸ Franco Strazzullo, *Saggi storici sul duomo di Napoli* (Napoli: Istituto Editoriale del Mezzogiorno, 1959); "La Cappella Carafa del duomo di Napoli in un poemetto del primo cinquecento," *Napoli Nobilissima* 5 (1965): 1–31; Bianca de Divitiis, "Memories from the Subsoil: Discovering Antiquities in Fifteenth-Century Naples and Campania," in *Remembering Parthenope: The Reception of Classical Naples from Antiquity to the Present, Classical Presences*, eds. Jessica Hughes and Claudio Buongiovanni (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 205–

Norman, in particular, remains the leading expert on Oliviero's patronage; I especially rely on her theories regarding the cardinal's unfulfilled plans.

There are two dominant theories regarding the function for this space. The first, and more dominant strand, argues that the Carafa brothers intended the *succorpo* as a family funerary chapel, thus allowing them to prioritise San Gennaro's cult and secure the Carafa legacy.⁶⁶⁹ Helen Hills later expanded on this notion, arguing that the Carafan privatisation of the devotion ultimately led to the construction (c.1608-1646) of the *Tesoro di San Gennaro*, a more public chapel built to display Gennaro's blood and skull.⁶⁷⁰ Indeed, there is no doubt that the *succorpo* was built as a Carafa family tomb; this stipulation is recorded in Oliviero's last will and testament and, as mentioned, both brothers are interred within. Furthermore, a life-sized marble statue of Oliviero kneeling in front of San Gennaro's relics testifies to the cardinal's desire to intertwine his own legacy with that of Naples' patron. While acknowledging this reality, however, Norman also offered a second, less prevalent, hypothesis. Identifying several features of designs for the space which indicate its suitability for as a shrine for pilgrims, Norman argued that the *succorpo* was intended as a funerary chapel, saint's tomb, *and* a space for pilgrims. This chapter builds upon this second theory. However, I do not intend on repeating her well-founded hypothesis; instead, I wish to investigate the consequences a pilgrim-oriented shrine which have yet to be explored.

More broadly, this chapter seeks to situate the *succorpo* in the Carafa brothers' larger plans for the cult. To do this, I identify and analyse their further efforts, including a new vita, liturgical texts, feast day, and an indulgence, which have been overshadowed by continuous fascination with the crypt chapel. These interventions reveal a complex, multi-faceted plan, prepared by high-ranking ecclesiastical figures, to update the saint's cult along fifteenth century norms and introduce the saint to foreign audiences. By amending our vantagepoint away from privatisation, I aim to recast Oliviero and Alessandro's intentions for San Gennaro's translation and, subsequently, his entire cult. While I do not deny the brothers' efforts to secure their own legacies, I wish to explore the brothers' seemingly paradoxical boundaries between the private and public aspects of San Gennaro's cult, which were not necessarily oppositional, at the turn of the fifteenth century.

Of critical significance to this chapter is the *Vita of San Gennaro*.⁶⁷¹ Originally hailing from Sicily, as his title suggests, Fra Bernardino relocated to Naples to pursue a degree in canon law, which he was awarded in 1492. He was also a member of the Observant Franciscans. During his lifetime, Bernardino penned several hagiographic poems, of which Gennaro's was the third.⁶⁷² The text is difficult to date; although the friar notes the year as 1503, he later refers to events which took place in 1505, the death of Alessandro, and 1506, the episcopal election of Vincenzo Carafa,

08; Bock, "Neapolitan Bishops," 135–73; Norman, "The Succorpo," 323–55; Norman, "The Patronage of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, 1430-1511"; Norman, "Cardinal of Naples and Cardinal in Rome: The Patronage of Oliviero Carafa," in *The Possessions of a Cardinal: Politics, Piety, and Art, 1450-1700* ed. Mary Hollingsworth and Carol Richardson (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 77–91.

⁶⁶⁹ See especially: Daniela Del Pesco, "Oliviero Carafa e il Succorpo di San Gennaro nel Duomo di Napoli," in *Donato Bramante: ricerche, proposte, riletture* ed. Francesco Paolo di Teodoro (Urbino: Accademia Raffaello, 2001), 143–205; Angela Dressen, "Oliviero Carafa Committente 'All' Antica' Nel Succorpo del Duomo di Napoli," *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 46 (2004): 165–200.

⁶⁷⁰ Hills, *The Matter of Miracles*, 270-316.

⁶⁷¹ Bernardino identifies the year as 1503 in the text, but there is some evidence to suggest it was composed in stages, beginning no earlier than 1498. For Bernardino's biography, an analysis of this poem, its manuscript tradition, and its transcription in full: Ciampaglia, "La Vita di S. Gennaro'."

⁶⁷² He also composed poems in honour of San Giacomo della Marca, a fellow Observant Franciscan, and of Queen Ippolita Maria Sforza, first wife of King Alfonso II of Naples.

Oliviero's nephew. It has thus been suggested that Bernardino originally completed the poem in 1503, and then returned to insert these developments.⁶⁷³ Following on this hypothesis, I will refer to the date of its composition as by 1503. The later supplements highlight the poem's dual objectives: to honour the saint and to pay homage the illustrious episcopal legacy of the Carafa family. Such aims likely reflect the ambitions of Oliviero, who probably commissioned the work. The poem was not only dedicated to the cardinal, but the friar also demonstrates an intimate knowledge of his plans for the *succorpo*, including those that were never realised. This suggests that the cardinal helped curate the friar's work. We will continue to expand upon this point in the paragraphs below. As an analysis of the *vita* will demonstrate, Oliviero clearly envisioned this poem as an opportunity to reshape facets of Gennaro's legend, and subsequently his cult.

To do this, this chapter is broken into four parts. After introducing the brothers in the first, I turn our attention to the *succorpo*. Here, I demonstrate how the chapel was built to accommodate pilgrims. Section three continues this discussion by incorporating analyses of the indulgence, new translation feast, liturgy, and *vita*. As part of this investigation, I position these efforts within the broader context of fifteenth century pilgrimage, indulgences and jubilee years. In the fourth and final section, I explore how successfully the brothers' plans were implemented, and question what their uneven reception can tell us about the evolution of this civic cult at the turn of the sixteenth century.

I. Introducing the Carafa Brothers

Prior to turning to the translation itself, it will be helpful to first introduce Oliviero and Alessandro Carafa. Oliviero (1430 - 1511) and Alessandro (c. 1432 - 1503) were born in Naples into the wealthy and influential Carafa family.⁶⁷⁴ The brothers were destined for ecclesiastical careers; at the age of seven, Oliviero was made a canon in the chapter of the Neapolitan cathedral and Alessandro followed his elder brother a few years later.⁶⁷⁵ They grew up during the archiepiscopate of Gaspare de Diano who sought to reform Naples' festive practices. However, it is also worth noting that de Diano greatly expanded San Gennaro's veneration by the cathedral chapter. In the same reforms of 1440, this archbishop required the daily recitation of the saint's collect, elevated his feast from a single to a double office, and added several new dates on which his office was to be prayed.⁶⁷⁶ As these prescriptions dictate, Oliviero and Alessandro thus grew up in an environment which prioritised the veneration of San Gennaro. Furthermore, their earliest episcopate model, Archbishop de Diano, demonstrated that responsibility for the cult fell to Naples' archbishop. Both brothers eventually considered this duty fundamental to their own positions, as we will continue to see below.

⁶⁷³ Ciampaglia, "La Vita di S. Gennaro," 108–11.

⁶⁷⁴ Franca Petrucci, *Oliviero Carafa*, *DBI*, XIX (1976), 588–596; Franca Petrucci, *Alessandro Carafa*, *DBI*, XIX (1976), 472–473. While individual members of the Carafa family have been well-studied, there is no one, contemporary monograph on this family's impressive history. For a range of works, both old and contemporary: Biagio Aldimari, *Historia genealogica della famiglia Carafa* (Napoli: Antonio Bulifon, 1691); Alfred von Reumont, *The Carafas of Maddaloni* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854); T. Persico, *Diomedea Carafa uomo di stato e scrittore del secolo* (Naples: Luigi Pierro, 1899); J.D. Moore, "New Light on Diomedea Carafa and his 'perfect loyalty' to Ferdinand I of Aragon," *Italian Studies* 26 (1971): 1–23; Miles Pattenden, *Pius IV and the Fall of the Carafa: Nepotism and Papal Authority in Counter-Reformation Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁶⁷⁵ For Alessandro: Aldimari, *Historia genealogica della famiglia Carafa*, 28–33.

⁶⁷⁶ *Rituum archiepiscopalis*, 82–84.

After briefly leaving Naples for law studies, Oliviero was made archbishop of Naples in 1458. Little is known about his episcopal career, though he is credited with restoring the Basilica of San Gennaro and building an adjacent plague hospital (or *lazzaretto*).⁶⁷⁷ His career shifted decisively in 1467, when he was made a cardinal and moved permanently to Rome, where his activities are far better documented. In the first place, Oliviero juggled several diplomatic and ecclesiastical roles, including admiral of the papal fleet and apostolic legate to Naples, and rose quickly through the ranks of the Papal Curia. As one of its esteemed members, he was considered *papabile* in several conclaves.⁶⁷⁸ Importantly for this chapter, the Neapolitan cardinal maintained an intimate relationship with several popes, especially Alexander VI (who was elected in 1492).⁶⁷⁹ As has been well-explored in previous scholarship, he was also a renowned patron of the arts and a collector of antiquities, commissioning and restoring several chapels in Rome and nearby monasteries.⁶⁸⁰ As we will continue to see in this chapter, Oliviero demonstrated a sophisticated awareness of late fifteenth century devotional culture, especially in the Roman context, and gained direct experience with saint-making, having served on at least one canonisation committee.⁶⁸¹ These curial, artistic, and devotional experiences would prove critical in his later interventions into San Gennaro's cult.

In 1484, the middle of his career, Oliviero relinquished the episcopal throne to his brother Alessandro, who had effectively governed the see in his absence for over two decades.⁶⁸² Having advanced through the ranks of the chapter, Alessandro had served as *cimiliarch*, that is, the treasurer, vicar, and the custodian of the cathedral's "sacred things,"⁶⁸³ including Gennaro's blood

⁶⁷⁷ Today, the hospital is known as the Ospedale San Gennaro dei Poveri. During the seventeenth century, it was known as the Ospedale SS Gennaro e Pietro. Unfortunately, we know very little about the origins of the hospital as the confraternity did not maintain an archive. For the hospital's historiographical issues, see: Alida Clemente, "Per 'particular voluntaria oblatione': Il Real Hospitio di S. Gennaro de' poveri e la centralizzazione dell'assistenza nella Napoli di Antico Regime," in *Assistenza e solidarietà in Europa Sec. XIII-XVIII*, ed. F. Ammannati (Florence: Florence University Press, 2012), 152–53. For Neapolitan hospitals broadly: Salvatore Marino, "The Urban Impact of Hospitals In Medieval Naples," in *The Medieval and Early Modern Hospital: A Physical and Symbolic Space*, eds. Antoni Conejo da Pena and Pol Bridgewater Mateu (Rome: Viella, 2023), 165–90.

⁶⁷⁸ Kenneth Meyer Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204-1571*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1978), 433–35.

⁶⁷⁹ This relationship is perhaps best displayed in the *Liber Notarum* of Johannes Burckhardt, papal master of ceremonies. Oliviero appears frequently in Burckhardt's summaries of the pontiff's daily activities, whether to consult privately on political matters or to assume the pope's liturgical responsibilities. For example, in 1496 the pontiff was too ill to say any Christmas mass at St Peter's Basilica and thus tapped Oliviero. Johannes Burckardi, *Liber Notarum: Ad Anno MCCCCLXXXIII Usque ad Annum MDVI*, vol. 1 (Castello: Editrice S. Lapi, 1900), 652.

⁶⁸⁰ Bianca de Divitiis has argued that Oliviero's artistic patronage was heavily influenced by that of his uncle; Diana Norman remains the expert on Oliviero's patronage. See fn 668.

⁶⁸¹ Oliviero was the interim head of Bonaventure's canonisation procedure. See: Finucane, *Contested Canonizations*, 55–57.

⁶⁸² Oliviero conceded the throne on one condition: if Alessandro should die before him, the seat would be returned to him. As several historians have noted, Alessandro's appointment was the beginning of Oliviero's efforts to monopolise the episcopal see with Carafa archbishops. Ultimately, Oliviero's efforts kept a member of the Carafa family on the episcopal throne from 1458 through 1576, with one short exception between 1544 and 1549. Oliviero personally mentored the next two archbishops including his nephews Gianvincenzo (b. 1477- d. 1541) and Gian Pietro (b. 1476 - d. 1559), the future Pope Paul IV. Norman, "The Patronage," 74–75; Hills, *The Matter of Miracles*, 275–85; Pattenden, *Pius IV and the Fall of the Carafa*.

⁶⁸³ As defined in 1313, in the *Chronicon di Santa Maria del Principio*: Lucherini, "Il Chronicon," 527.

and skull relics housed in the sacristy.⁶⁸⁴ This role also comprised of several ceremonial responsibilities, as outlined in the Orsini Constitutions of 1337, such as performing key liturgical duties, and, crucially, presiding over major feasts in the archbishop's absence, which included that of San Gennaro.⁶⁸⁵ Given Oliviero's prolonged residence in Rome, and the infrequency of his visits, we can safely assume that Alessandro's leadership was not occasional but regular, making him the primary steward of the cathedral, if not also the saint's cult, well before his formal elevation.⁶⁸⁶

Unlike his absentee brother, Alessandro was an active and engaged prelate. He completed repairs to the cathedral's apse and sanctuary, both of which were damaged by the earthquake in 1456.⁶⁸⁷ He also re-ratified the Orsini Constitutions, including de Diano's later reforms, without modification. While we cannot be certain how much of these instructions were enacted, Alessandro's ratification suggests a desire for continuity in the cathedral's liturgical life. It may also hint at his own efforts to clean up the city's sacred spaces, as de Diano did before him, and perhaps even rid the cathedral of the pig-game. However, this younger Carafa is most famous for carrying out the translation of San Gennaro's body from Montevergine in 1497.⁶⁸⁸ Alessandro's prominence in this event, later cast into silver and depicted on the main altar in the *Tesoro di San Gennaro* (c. 1695), underscores his episcopal authority and his close collaboration with his brother [See Image Seven].⁶⁸⁹ Alessandro remained archbishop of Naples until his death in 1503.



*Image Seven: Detail of Silver Paliotto of the main altar in the Tesoro di San Gennaro.*⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁴ This duty is attested in a sacristy register from 1390 wherein the cimiliarch is also referred to as the vicar of the archbishop and the treasurer of the sacristy. Domenico Ambrasi, "La Più Antica Testimonianza sul Tesoro Vecchio della Cattedrale di Napoli," *Campania Sacra* 2 (1971): 131–39.

⁶⁸⁵ For more on these responsibilities: Domenico Mallardo, "Cimiliarchio e cimiliarchi della Chiesa Napoletana sino al sec. XIV," *Asprenas* 5 (1958): 47–70.

⁶⁸⁶ There are a few reports of Oliviero's visits which usually accompanied important events such as the wedding by proxy of Beatrice of Aragon to Matthias Corvinus in 1476. Norman, "The Patronage," 50–60.

⁶⁸⁷ Bruno Figliuolo, *Il Terremoto del 1456* (Salerno: Studi Storici Meridionali, 1989).

⁶⁸⁸ Ciampaglia, "'La Vita di S. Gennaro,'" 150–51.

⁶⁸⁹ Hills, *The Matter of Miracles*, 295.

⁶⁹⁰ Image: "The Chapel: Altar and Tabernacle," *Cappella di San Gennaro*, Accessed 6 August 2026. <https://cappellasangennaro.it/en/the-chapel/altar-and-tabernacle/>.

Taken together, these careers reveal a collaborative partnership that was decisive for the late fifteenth-century reshaping of San Gennaro's cult. Both Oliviero and Alessandro were highly educated and well-trained ecclesiastics, both extremely knowledgeable in the history and functioning of Gennaro's cult, as well as its broader, devotional context. Oliviero's Roman formation equipped him with the conceptual and artistic tools to reimagine the cult on an ambitious scale. While Alessandro's role is often relegated to the act of translation, his tenure as *cimiliarch* and then as archbishop suggests a more central involvement. In contrast to his brother, Alessandro critically provided the local governance required to implement their interventions into the cult, especially those pertaining to the cathedral complex. Together, the brothers bridged both theory and practice: Oliviero articulated a programme shaped by a humanist and Roman context, while Alessandro ensured its concrete realisation.

Our investigation into these efforts begins with the moment of the translation itself. As mentioned, Fra Bernardino's poem represents the earliest evidence of this event; his account was subsequently inserted into and adapted by later Neapolitan writers.⁶⁹¹ While Bernardino dramatically recounts the discovery and transfer of the remains, several questions relating to its circumstances remain unanswered. For example, how the news of the relic discovery was disseminated to or received by Oliviero or Alessandro remains unknown. The reason for the translation's apparent seventeen-year delay is not well understood, though in part, the papacy was likely to blame.⁶⁹² Papal permission for such an undertaking was required, but proved difficult to acquire.⁶⁹³ It seems that King Ferdinand I was the first to attempt this endeavour; in 1490 the monarch wrote to Oliviero, who was then a close confidant of Pope Innocent VIII, seeking his assistance in persuading the pontiff to permit the transfer.⁶⁹⁴ As Strazzullo has demonstrated, the letter was almost certainly a bid for papal absolution; a few months earlier, long-standing tensions between the king and the papacy had boiled over into the former's excommunication.⁶⁹⁵ Although Oliviero's response has been lost, we can say with some certainty that these efforts failed on behalf of Ferdinand's poor relations with the pontiff. It remains unclear precisely what plans the monarch had for the body and the extent to which the Carafa brothers were involved.

According to the extant evidence, this letter represented the only formal attempt to win the pope's permission until the cardinal revived the project in 1496. According to Bernardino's poem, together with a further sixteenth-century account, Oliviero acquired the necessary permissions from Pope Alexander VI that autumn.⁶⁹⁶ Given the pair's amiable relationship, and by then

⁶⁹¹ Such as: Stefano, *Descrittione*; Romeo, *Septem*; Tutini, *Memorie*. See pp. 154-155 for more on these adaptations.

⁶⁹² Ciampaglia, "La Vita di S. Gennaro", 149.

⁶⁹³ As per the Fourth Lateran Council, which stipulated that any newly discovered remains could not be moved without explicit approval from the pope. For the prescription: *CODG*, 239-240.

⁶⁹⁴ The original letter has been lost, but its transcription can be found in: Tutini, *Memorie*, 83.

⁶⁹⁵ The poor relations between Ferdinand I and Innocent VIII are too complicated to explain here. In short, Innocent VIII, encouraged the barons of southern Italy to revolt against Ferdinand I. This prompted the Barons Revolt which lasted from 1485 through 1487. For summaries and bibliographies: Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples*, 172-74; Paul M. Dover, "Royal Diplomacy in Renaissance Italy: Ferdinand ID' Aragona (1458-1494) and His Ambassadors," *Mediterranean Studies* 14 (2005): 57-94. For Strazzullo's analysis: Franco Strazzullo, "La Politica di Ferdinand II nei riflessi della traslazione della ossa di San Gennaro," *Atti dell'Accademia Pontaniana* XV (1965): 73-89.

⁶⁹⁶ Between 1510 and 1513, in a larger discussion on the legality of relic translations, the Neapolitan jurist noted that Oliviero attained papal permission in the autumn of 1496. He also claimed that this approval was attested in the

Oliviero's illustrious career, it is not difficult to imagine the pope conceding his permission to the Neapolitan cardinal. As we will continue to see below, this stamp of approval extended beyond the immediate transfer and was applied to the cardinal's larger plans for San Gennaro's cult and the cathedral.

In the quotation which opened this chapter, we saw how Alessandro Carafa carried the saint's relics into the city of Naples on 13 January 1497. Where he immediately deposited the remains is unclear. At that time, the crypt chapel had yet to be constructed, so the bones were either deposited at the main altar for veneration or in the sacristy for safekeeping. Notably, there is no one to receive him; according to the poem, the plague prevented any pomp and circumstance upon Alessandro's arrival, and thus he appears to enter the cathedral alone. Only the following day, Bernardino claims, did the city's inhabitants amass at the church to venerate their patron.⁶⁹⁷ This muted reception is surprising. Given the popularity of Gennaro's cult by this phase, the return of his sacred body after centuries of absence would seem to warrant an orchestrated communal celebration, even in the midst of plague. Such gatherings required logistical planning; either a member of Alessandro's party needed to ride ahead to announce the saint's approach or a later public event, such as a liturgical procession, would be organised. Yet, it seems that neither occurred. Even allowing for the constraints imposed by the epidemic does not fully account for the absence of a structured reception. Although Bernardino loosely ties the translation to the end of the plague, Alessandro did not use the relics to publicly bless the city, thereby invoking the saint's intercession over the city's ongoing distress. Instead, his actions resemble a quiet, almost secretive operation rather than a public triumph.

The muted reception of the body prompts us to further question how the archbishop's plans were received by the cathedral chapter. These clergymen are conspicuously missing from this narrative, perhaps indicating that they were not alerted to their archbishop's arrival. This hypothesis would further support the notion that Alessandro's return was executed in secret. As feuds between cathedral canons and ecclesiastical authorities were certainly not uncommon during this period, this may suggest members of the chapter were not in agreement with their archbishop's larger plans. This theory provides an early indication that the Carafas' agenda was not universally accepted by those around them. Such uneven responses recur throughout the implementation of their plans, especially during the construction of the *succorpo*.

II. The *Succorpo*

Though Oliviero commissioned several chapels throughout his lifetime, the *succorpo* is his crowning achievement. Because the chapel has already been subjected to numerous art-history studies, I will briefly describe the space and its original design in the following section. Only then, can we turn our attention to its function. The *succorpo* was built between 1497 and 1506.⁶⁹⁸ Though the chapel likely opened in 1503 for liturgical use, Gennaro's bones were not translated into the space until 1506.⁶⁹⁹ The chapel was designed with a dual-purpose. The chapel is located

cardinal's letters. Whatever this paperwork entailed, it has since been lost. For the relevant passage: Matteo d'Afflitto, *In utriusque Siciliae, Neapolisque sanctiones et constitutiones*, vol. III (Lyon: Antonio Batus, 1556), 221v.

⁶⁹⁷ Ciampaglia, "'La Vita di S. Gennaro,'" 151.

⁶⁹⁸ Norman, "The Succorpo," 352.

⁶⁹⁹ This date comes from an inscription located on the cathedral sacristy door. These inscriptions no longer exist for reasons unknown. They are only mentioned in secondary literature from the early modern period, see: Riccardo Carafa, "Il Succorpo di S. Gennaro," *Napoli Nobilissima* 1 (1892): 14.

directly underneath the cathedral sanctuary and main altar, accessible by two staircases each with a bronze entrance door. Designed by Tommaso Malvito, the space consists of an apse, a nave and two side aisles which were separated from the nave by five marble columns.⁷⁰⁰ There are five niches on each wall containing a small altar. A *cathedra* sits within the apse. The chapel is covered entirely by white marble except for the flooring which is made of interlocking white, red, and green marble. The ceiling of the chapel is divided into 18 equal squares each containing a frieze of a different saint including the Madonna, the Evangelists, and five saints with direct ties to Naples including Gennaro, Aspren, Severus, Agrippinus, and Angellus [see Image Eight]. A marble statue of Oliviero kneeling perpetually in prayer was placed, as it is today, underneath the image of the Neapolitan bishop, St Severus [See Image Nine].⁷⁰¹ This was not accidental; in the early modern period, it was believed that Severus translated San Gennaro from Pozzuoli to Naples.⁷⁰² The placement of this statue thus emphasised the historic role of Naples' bishops as protector of Gennaro's relics and specifically situated Oliviero within this proud episcopal legacy [see Image 9].

The placement of the saint's body in this sub-terranean crypt evoked a well-established model of saintly burials, especially those of the early martyrs, found in churches in Rome and southern Italy. In Rome, the martyrs were frequently interred in crypt chapels located beneath the main altar in the tribune. This dedicated space facilitated the interaction between pilgrim and saint; after descending into the chapel, pilgrims could offer their intentions, leave votive offerings and perhaps view the sacred remains through a *confessio*. The most famous example, and the model for future crypts, was that of St Peter's Basilica.⁷⁰³ Similar arrangements can be found at the Basilica of San Lorenzo outside the walls which housed the bodies of St Laurence and St Stephen the protomartyr, as well as sites in Salerno (St Matthew), Amalfi (St Andrew) and Bari (St Nicholas).⁷⁰⁴ Among these, San Lorenzo is especially relevant. In the 1480s, Oliviero served as its commendatory abbot and commissioned the renovation of its crypt. There are several similarities between the two spaces; both crypts were located beneath the church's high altar and accessed by two flights of stairs, where the saint's tomb lay underneath a coffered ceiling. As Norman has demonstrated, the crypt in San Lorenzo likely served as inspiration for the *succorpo*, highlighting Oliviero's engagement with Roman precedents while designing Gennaro's final resting place. This connection will be explored further below, as we continue to synthesise the cardinal's broader intentions for the cult.

⁷⁰⁰ We do not have time to treat the lengthy debate regarding the architects behind the *succorpo*. For more, see: Roberto Pane, *Il Rinascimento nell'Italia meridionale*, vol. 2 (Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1977), 101–06; Norman, "The Succorpo," 352–55; Yoni Ascher, "Tommaso Malvito and Neapolitan Tomb Design of the Early Cinquecento," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 63 (2000): 111–30.

⁷⁰¹ The statue's placement in the cathedral changed a few times throughout its history. In particular, the statue was moved between the original location underneath St Severus and a second location in the apse of the chapel. Strazzullo has tracked the statue's movements in: Strazzullo, *Saggi storici*, 96; Dressen, "Oliviero Carafa Committente 'All'Antica' Nel Succorpo del Duomo di Napoli," 200.

⁷⁰² Tutini, *Memorie*, 93. For alternative translation traditions: Prologue, pp. 25–26.

⁷⁰³ Alfredo Maria Pergolizzi, ed. *La Confessione nella basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editore, 1999).

⁷⁰⁴ Vitolo, *Pellegrinaggi e itinerari*; Marco Leo Imperiale, "I Signa Peregrinorum della Basilica di San Nicola A Bari," in *Viaggio Verso Gerusalemme: Culture, Economie, e Territori*, eds. M. Leo Imperiale, A. Trono, G. Marella (Galatina: Congedo Editore, 2014), 169 – 84; Daniela Mondini, *San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura* (Rome: Viella, 2016).



Image Eight: Ceiling Frieze depicting San Gennaro (St Ianuarius), Succorpo, Cathedral of the Assumption, Naples⁷⁰⁵



Image Nine: Statue of Oliviero Carafa Succorpo, Cathedral of the Assumption, Naples⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰⁵ Photo by Clare Whitton, September 2023.

⁷⁰⁶ Photo by Clare Whitton, September 2023.

As mentioned, the *succorpo* was constructed as a Carafa family funerary chapel. Oliviero and his brother Alessandro were buried on either side of the apse. Though no other Carafa family members were interred here, it has been suggested that Oliviero intended this space as a family mausoleum.⁷⁰⁷ Such ambitions can be seen in his efforts to prioritise the chapel. As attested in his will, composed in 1509, Oliviero had received exceptional permission from Pope Alexander VI to maintain possession of the chapel and pass down ownership rights to his heirs, his brother Ettore and nephew Vincenzo, who currently served as Naples' archbishop.⁷⁰⁸ As part of the agreement, the Carafa family held the right to appoint all chaplains, sacristans and priests to the chapel - at an enormous expense. The purpose of such rights was threefold: first, it ensured that this space continued to operate as an active chapel, with all the clerics necessary for liturgical activity. Second, it guaranteed that this crypt remained solely within the control of the Carafa family. Third, it made certain that the Carafas maintained custodianship over Gennaro's relics. This ambition was especially intertwined with the cardinal's broader plans to create a dynastic episcopal lineage. Oliviero was the first of eight Carafa men to hold the office of archbishop of Naples; the seat was held by a Carafa from 1458 through 1576, with one short exception.⁷⁰⁹ As several historians have noted, such succession underscores the Carafa family's deliberate attempts to keep a hold on the Neapolitan archbishopric. Maintaining control over the remains of the city's patrons was integral to this process. Though Oliviero's efforts to privatise this chapter have dominated previous studies of this space, there is good reason to believe that it was originally designed as a pilgrim's shrine – as we will continue to see below.

The *succorpo* was thus designed so that the brothers were interred alongside their patron. This space was intended not only for the newly translated body, but also the skull and blood, underscoring the brothers' efforts to reunite the body in its entirety.⁷¹⁰ In this way, the advent of the *succorpo* also solved a logistical problem: before this crypt, there was no liturgical space in the Neapolitan cathedral dedicated to San Gennaro. This is in stark contrast with Naples' other ancient, bishop saints. As we saw in chapter one, the bodies of Athanasius, Aspren, Agrippinus, Eutichus and Acutius were all interred within altars in the transept of the cathedral.⁷¹¹ While Gennaro was visually represented within the cathedral, his cult was not anchored to the cathedral by way of a permanent architectural space. Instead, as we have seen throughout this thesis, his portable reliquaries facilitated the movement of his sanctity within - and without- the cathedral complex. Gennaro's absence from the floorplan of the cathedral is especially striking given his status as its patron.

⁷⁰⁷ Alessandro was buried there first in 1503. As stipulated in his will, upon his death in 1511, Oliviero was first interred in his chapel in Rome, and then reburied within the *succorpo* shortly thereafter. The funerary aspects of the chapel have been well-researched: Pesco, "Oliviero Carafa"; Ascher, "Tommaso Malvito."

⁷⁰⁸ Such rights were originally authorised by Alexander VI, then reconfirmed by Pope Paul III in 1534, during the episcopate of Francesco Carafa. Evidence of Alexander VI's original agreement survives in Oliviero's will and Paul III's later bull. These rights were relinquished in 1964 by Duke Riccardo Carafa D'Andria and given to the Archbishop of Naples. Chioccarelli, *Antistitum*, 317–19; Norman, "The Succorpo," 351; Norman, "The Patronage," 24, 73.

⁷⁰⁹ The Carafa Archbishops of Naples are as follows: Oliviero Carafa (1458-1484; 1503-1505); Alessandro Carafa (1484-1503); Vincenzo Carafa (1505-1530); Francesco Carafa (1530-1544); Gian Pietro Carafa (1549-1555); Alfonso Carafa (1557- 1565); Mario Carafa (1565-1576); and Decio Carafa (1613-1626). Ranuccio Farnese, Pope Paul III's illegitimate son, was appointed administrator of the archdiocese from 1544 until 1549. Oliviero personally mentored at least two of these archbishops including Vincenzo and Gian Pietro, the future Pope Paul IV.

⁷¹⁰ As designated in Oliviero's will. Norman, "The Succorpo," 351.

⁷¹¹ Chapter One, pp. 42-43.

The translation of San Gennaro's body in 1497 allowed Oliviero to rectify this issue. Like the Orsini Altar and the chapels of Athanasius and Aspren, the *succorpo* would consolidate Gennaro's remains in a single location, thus providing clergy and pilgrims alike with a fixed destination at which to venerate the saint. In doing so, it provided unprecedented access to the saint's unified remains, as Oliviero intended to unite the body, blood and skull within the chapel. Although this reunion proved temporary, it represented a pivotal shift in the presentation of the relics. As far as the evidence suggests, the blood and skull had only ever been stored within the cathedral's sacristy. Their installation in the *succorpo* not only reunited them with the body for the first time since the ninth-century theft, but also made them accessible as a unified ensemble.

It is not clear where Gennaro's body was first interred. Fra Bernardino describes an intricate sarcophagus, complete with angels at its head and harpies near the saint's feet, set below an open-sided altar table and behind a metal grill.⁷¹² However, as Norman has explored, there is no evidence that this sarcophagus ever existed. Instead, early modern historians only reference the saint's remains within a stone altar.⁷¹³ The contradictory reports have caused Norman, among others, to speculate that Fra Bernardino was describing a plan for the *succorpo* that was never completed.⁷¹⁴ The sarcophagus is one of several plans for the space which were either unexecuted or retracted later. For example, it seems that the skull and blood were not kept within the chapel as originally prescribed by Oliviero; by 1542, both had been returned to the cathedral's sacristy.⁷¹⁵ Other plans were completely disregarded, for reasons not entirely clear. For example, as noted by seventeenth century historian Carlo de Lellis, Oliviero intended to translate the relics of Naples' most important saints into the *succorpo*'s side altars.⁷¹⁶ For unknown reasons, wooden statues of the saints were placed in each niche instead. Strazzullo and Norman have thus argued that Oliviero wished to centralise Naples' sanctity within this one space, with San Gennaro taking the most prominent position.⁷¹⁷ Their hypothesis was further substantiated by the existence of a new set of mass texts commissioned by Alessandro shortly after the translation. More specifically, the archbishop requested a new *proprium* for 18 Neapolitan saints, including Gennaro, Severus, and Restituta, among others.⁷¹⁸ It has thus been suggested that the new liturgy was meant to cultivate Neapolitan sanctity in tandem with the relocation of the relics.⁷¹⁹

As Norman has argued, Oliviero's plans for the *succorpo*, finished or otherwise, suggest that this space was not only intended as a private family mausoleum, but also as a pilgrim's shrine. As she has demonstrated, Bernardino's description the saint's sarcophagus suggests that it was meant to be visible for visitors and thereby attract pilgrims. Moreover, the flanking staircases on either end of the chapel suggest that the crypt was built specifically with pilgrims' access in mind, like those built for St Peter and San Lorenzo in Rome. The two staircases facilitated an easy flow of traffic. Norman suggests that the marble inscriptions hanging above the bronze entry doors serve

⁷¹² Ciampaglia, "La Vita di S. Gennaro", 78.

⁷¹³ For example: Stefano, *Descrittione*, 10–11; Caracciolo, *Napoli sacra*, 271.

⁷¹⁴ For a full discussion of the original altar and its subsequent replacements, see: Strazzullo, *Saggi storici*, 99–104; Norman, "The Succorpo," 339–41.

⁷¹⁵ Norman, "The Succorpo," 352.

⁷¹⁶ Carlo de Lellis, *Aggiunta alla Napoli Sacra del D'Engenio* (Napoli: Fiorentino, 1977), 49–50.

⁷¹⁷ Strazzullo, *Saggi storici*, 73, 84; Norman, "The Succorpo," 343.

⁷¹⁸ Those saints include: Januarius, Severus, Restituta, Athanasius, Aspren, Agrippinus, Agnellus, Eusebius, Patricia, Candida, Sossus, Eutichus and Acutius, Gaudiosus, Gregorius Armenus, Juliana, Potitus and Proclus. Norman, "The Succorpo," 343.

⁷¹⁹ Strazzullo, *Saggi storici*; Norman, "The Succorpo."

as further evidence of pilgrimage activity. Although the inscriptions no longer exist, their text was preserved by early modern historians, including De Stefano and Caracciolo.⁷²⁰ One door attested to the daily liturgies performed in the chapel as required by a perpetual endowment established by Oliviero. The second spoke to pilgrims directly, saying:

"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 and powerful will, purges Naples from every crime committed. Hasten, since the royal door of the heavenly kingdom gives strength."⁷²¹

This target audience of this inscription, "you," continues to reveal the chapel's function as a shrine. This generic invitation invited any person to enter through the doors. Furthermore, the repetitive allusions to the remission of sins underscores the purpose of chapel as a sacred space for pilgrims to seek divine aid. This also alludes towards the plenary indulgence attached to this chapel, which I will return to momentarily. Of course, the heart of the *succorpo* remains San Gennaro; enter these doors, the inscription promises, and - through the intercession of this saint - your sins will be forgiven.

Expanding on Norman's hypothesis, I posit that these Neapolitan doors were meant to emulate the Jubilee Holy Doors in Rome.⁷²² Originally located at St John Lateran, and then expanded to all four major Roman basilicas, the Holy Doors were similarly a penitential practice. While meditating on God's pardon from sin, pilgrims would enter through the threshold, and, after a contrite confession, they would earn a plenary indulgence.⁷²³ These doors were only open during Jubilee years; they were otherwise walled up behind bricks. At the time of the *succorpo*'s construction, these doors were a relatively new concept; though our earliest evidence of the door at John Lateran appears in 1423, Alexander VI expanded the tradition to the other basilicas for the Jubilee of 1500, at which Oliviero was in attendance.⁷²⁴ Given the cardinal's familiarity with this practice, as well as the jubilee more broadly, we might further speculate that he was intentionally framing San Gennaro's feasts as a local jubilee, that is, a dedicated period during which Neapolitans could seek repentance. Local jubilees were becoming increasingly common in late fifteenth-century Europe; to promote local pilgrimage and increase opportunities for penance with less travel, the papacy began approving bishops' requests for lengthy penitential periods - which included plenary indulgences - which were advertised as 'jubilees'.⁷²⁵ It is perfectly plausible, therefore, that the *succorpo* was constructed with a similar practice in mind. Oliviero's original

⁷²⁰ Stefano, *Descrittione*, 7-8; Caracciolo, *Napoli sacra*, 6.

⁷²¹ "Currite, qui cupitis Coelestis praemia vitae, Et castas huc ferte preces, haec Ianua Coeli. Pandit iter votis Deus, hic lacrymisque praecantum, mitis adest, qui martyrio, precibusque Beati Ianuarii, totam commisso crimine ab omni Parthenopen nutu, ac praesenti numine purget: Currite vim patitur divini Regia Regni." Caracciolo, *Napoli Sacra*, 6. For the English translation: Norman, "The Succorpo," 350.

⁷²² The Holy Doors of Rome are an understudied component of fifteenth century piety and pilgrimage. For a helpful summary, see: Eva Jung-Inglessis, "La Porta Santa," *Studi Romani* 23 (1975): 472 - 93.

⁷²³ The first record of an indulgence attached to these doors appears in a pilgrim's testimony by Nuremberg nobleman Nikolaus Muffel, in 1452. Nikolaus Muffel, *Beschreibung der Stadt Rom* (Tubingen: Gedruckt auf Kosten des Litterarischen Vereins, 1876), 18-20.

⁷²⁴ Johannes Burckhardt narrates how the pontiff, carried on his litter, approached the door at St Peter's followed by his curia, including Oliviero, in procession with candles. Upon arrival, the pontiff knocked three times and opened the doors and began the *Te Deum*. See: Burckardi, *Liber Notarum: Ad Anno MCCCCLXXXIII Usque ad Annum MDVI*, 1, 180-91.

⁷²⁵ Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage, c. 700-c. 1500* (London: Red Globe Press London, 2002), 30.

intention to create - as Norman calls it - a pantheon of Neapolitan sanctity would only bolster this process.⁷²⁶ During these quasi-jubilees, pilgrims' sins would thus be forgiven specifically through the intercession of Naples' communion of saints, consolidated in one sacred space.

The penitential components of Oliviero's *succorpo* thus complicates our previous understanding of this sacred space. Building upon Norman's prior research, it is clear that the chapel was not purely a private family funerary chapel. Instead, it was built for access. Encouraging pilgrims to visit, and venerate, the saint's unified remains in this fixed chapel, the Carafa brothers' expanding public access to the relics, and thus reoriented the cult in a more public-facing model. Like with saw with the advent of Gennaro's bust, however, we must take care to note the difference between access and control. These sacred objects remained firmly under the control of the cathedral clergy, who were responsible for access to the *succorpo*. Subsequently, these clergymen, and the members of the Carafa family, continued to mediate when and how the laity could encounter the saint's remains.

III: An Indulgence, a Feast, and a Vita

The *succorpo* represented only a portion of the brothers' strategy to enlarge the cult's accessibility. A plenary indulgence, to which we now turn, further advanced these aims. According to Fra Bernardino, Pope Alexander VI granted a plenary indulgence to any pilgrim visiting the saint's crypt chapel.⁷²⁷ It was redeemable twice a year: on the First Sunday after the Epiphany and the First Sunday in May. These dates reflected the saint's dual translation feasts, including the traditional *fešta dell'inghirlandati* as well as a newly instituted celebration, meant to commemorate the Verginian translation in January. We will return to analyze the latter later in this chapter. Although it is not clear when it was promulgated, it must predate the pontiff's death in August of 1503. The original bull or brief has not survived, but its existence is attested by Fra Bernardino, d'Afflitto, and later historians.⁷²⁸ At the very least, this shrine would be open for pilgrims on the two dates stipulated in Alexander VI's indulgence. Based on contemporary precedent, it was likely opened on other local feasts as well as major religious solemnities, such as Easter.

The Januarian pardon of sins was part of an active and well-established devotional economy. During the fifteenth century, and especially during Alexander VI's papacy, promises of the remission of sin proliferated across Europe. While pontiffs retained the right to offer plenary indulgences, which canceled out the entirety of a penitent's iniquities, local bishops could remit sins for a fixed amount of time, either 40 days or one year, depending on the circumstances, through partial indulgences.⁷²⁹ Such benefits could be obtained in several ways, including visiting a saint's tomb, almsgiving, or, notoriously, via payment.⁷³⁰ They were especially popular with pilgrims

⁷²⁶ Norman, "The Succorpo," 351.

⁷²⁷ "Doe volte l'anno el cardinal prudente ottenne da Alexandro papa Sexto, vicario di quel summo Omnipotente, como già canta la sua bulla in testo: dominica la prima te sia a mmente, da po' la epiphania maggiore festo. Non resto dir la causa e la ragione: se fa del sancto la translacione." Ciampaglia, "'La Vita di S. Gennaro'," 156.

⁷²⁸ For example, Giuliano Passero notes that Alexander VI offered a plenary indulgence to celebrate the successful translation. Giuliano Passero, *Storie in forma di Giornali* (Naples: Vincenzo Orsino, 1785), 112.

⁷²⁹ Carlos Eire, *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450-1650* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 148; Robert W. Shaffern, "The Medieval Theology of Indulgences," in *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits: Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Robert Swanson (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 30.

⁷³⁰ For a basic overview of tombs and indulgences: Robert Shaffern, "Indulgences and Saintly Devotionalisms in the Middle Ages," *The Catholic Historical Review* 84 (1998): 643–61. For papal indulgences generally: Robert

heading to Rome and even more so during Jubilee Years.⁷³¹ The emergence of a new literary genre in the mid-fifteenth century, the *Libri Indulgentiarum*, exemplifies their prevalence and popularity in the devotional zeitgeist. These texts functioned as guidebooks, streamlining where pilgrims could find, and thus gather, these spiritual benefits.⁷³² In the case of Rome, for example, indulgences were most often affixed to saints' tombs or relics, such as those of Peter and Paul.⁷³³ Of course, this system of devotion was not unique to Rome. The promise of forgiveness fueled all sorts of pilgrimages across Europe to popular sites such as Santiago de Compostela, Canterbury, and the Holy House of Loreto, as well as those in the Mezzogiorno, including that of St Matthew in Salerno, St Andrew in Amalfi, and St Nicholas in Bari.⁷³⁴

While Naples itself lacked a holy site as prominent as those listed above, it nevertheless participated in this salvific economy. For example, the city boasted of famous sacred objects, including the arm bone of St Thomas Aquinas and the rib of St John the Baptist, both of which would have encouraged local pilgrimage during their annual ostentation during their respective feasts.⁷³⁵ Relatedly, papal indulgences were scattered across the city. For example, those attending the feast of Corpus Domini at the Church of Santa Chiara received an indulgence of 100 days, as established by Pope John XXII in 1318.⁷³⁶ Sins could similarly be remitted before the altar of St Anastasia, located in the cathedral, on her feast as well as that of St Peter.⁷³⁷ A perpetual indulgence was offered to those at the altar of St Restituta in the basilica of the same name. The indulgence, allegedly instituted by Pope Sylvester I, is recorded in several late medieval liturgical and historical

Swanson, ed. *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Stuart Jenks, *Documents on the Papal Plenary Indulgences 1300-1517, Preached in the Regnum Teutonicum* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

⁷³¹ Initiated first by Boniface VIII in 1300, the Jubilee was a year-long period of spiritual renewal, penance, and pilgrimage. These celebrations were originally meant to be celebrated once every 50 years but their popularity prompted Sixtus IV to abbreviate this timeline to every 25 years. Jill E. Blondin, "Power Made Visible: Pope Sixtus IV as 'Urbis Restaurator' in Quattrocento Rome," *The Catholic Historic Review* 91 (2005): 1–25.

⁷³² For a helpful overview of these texts and a case-study: Nerida Newbignin, "Del grasso di Lorenzo un'ampolletta," *Relics and Representations in the Quest for Forgiveness in Renaissance Rome*, *The Journal of Religious History* 28 (2004): 50–63.

⁷³³ Alfredo Maria Pergolizzi, ed. *La confessione nella basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editore, 1999); Erik Inglis, "Inventing Apostolic Impression Relics in Medieval Rome," *Speculum* 96 (2021): 309–66.

⁷³⁴ Michael Costen, "The Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Medieval Europe," in *Pilgrimage in Popular Culture*, eds. Ian Reader and T. Walter (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993), 137–54; Eamon Duffy, "Pilgrimage and Cathedrals in the Later Middle Ages," in *Pilgrimage and England's Cathedrals*, eds. Dee Dyas and John Jenkins (Cham: Palgrave, 2020), 49–74; Francesca Coltrinari, "Gli schiavoni e la Santa Casa di Loreto fra '400 e '500," *Ars Adriatica* 7 (2017): 181–94; Amalia Galdi, "Lo Specchio del 'Sacro': La costruzione dell'identità cittadina in Campania dal Medioevo all'età moderna," in *Italia Sacra: Le raccolte di vita dei santi e l'invenzione delle regioni (sec. XV-XVIII)*, eds. Maria Duranti, Tommaso Calio and Raimondo Michetti (Rome: Viella, 2014), 297–314; Saverio Russo, *Pellegrini e 'casalini' a Bari in età moderna* (Bari: Epipuglia, 1996).

⁷³⁵ Aquinas' arms was housed in the Dominican convent at San Domenico from 1372 to 1605, when it was translated to the cathedral (where it still remains): Marika Räsänen, *Thomas Aquinas's Relics as Focus for Conflict and Cult in the Late Middle Ages: The Restless Corpse* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 299. The Baptists' rib was housed at San Gregorio Armeno: Caracciolo, *Napoli Sacra*, 304. The rib was later critical in the liquefaction of the Baptist's blood which, not unlike Gennaro's, would only melt when in proximity to the bone. Marino, "The Zodiac," 205. It remains difficult to compile a list of relics present in Naples during the fifteenth century. It is far easier in the seventeenth: Marcella Campanelli, "Traveling among the Bodies of Saints in Naples and the Kingdom of Naples in the Seventeenth Century," in *Souls of Naples: Corporeal Ghost and Spiritual Bodies in Early Modern Naples* (Rome: Viella, 2024): 23–34.

⁷³⁶ Bruzelius, *The Stones of Naples*, 43.

⁷³⁷ Parascandolo, *Memorie*, vol. 3, 27.

accounts, suggesting that it was well-known in late medieval Naples.⁷³⁸ Any Januarian pilgrimage site or indulgence, therefore, would sit squarely within this broader network. However, the Carafas' plans for the *succorpo* – including its attached indulgence – far surpassed any existing site in the city both in scale and grandeur. This is especially true since the *succorpo* was the only sacred space constructed intentionally as a pilgrims' destination during this period. Whether it was intended for foreign or local visitors, or perhaps both, is a question I return to later in this chapter. At this stage, it is enough to note that the *succorpo* and the pardon represented a dramatic expansion of Naples' pre-existing pilgrimage and indulgence networks.

Beyond their popularity as a form of religious piety, indulgences served several purposes. As I alluded to earlier, whether sold for money or garnered through pilgrims' tithes, these pardons constituted a revenue stream for the church, one which was utilised for building projects and maintenance, charity, or even personal gain.⁷³⁹ That indulgences often paid for new liturgical spaces or objects, and encouraged wider devotions to certain cults, is critical for our investigation. An example from late medieval Bruges is illustrative of this dynamic. In 1474, the parish of Our Lady of Bruges received a relic of the True Cross. After a decade of veneration at the church, a new tabernacle was commissioned to house the sacred object and later, in 1487, a partial promise was affixed to the procession accompanying the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.⁷⁴⁰ This indulgence was dual-purposed. On the one hand, it paid off the cost of the reliquary from the tithes collected during the feast; on the other, it incited devotion amongst the people towards this particular cult. While this sacred matter was venerated at the parish for over a decade, it was the indulgence that cultivated a communal and festive procession, attended by all walks of life, and ultimately increased the feast's popularity. As this example demonstrates, these promises of the remission of sin were thus an integral tool in shaping the devotional culture of the late fifteenth century.

From this brief analysis, it is not difficult to determine the intended benefits of Alexander VI's indulgence. On the one hand, it allowed the Carafa brothers to tend to the souls of their flock, as Naples' former and current archbishops, and to integrate a well-founded form of piety into Gennaro's cult. On the other, the pardon was likely meant to help pay for the *succorpo* chapel, as was the case for several building initiatives during this period. Critically for this chapter, it also assisted the brothers in reshaping the cult more broadly. Their efforts are perhaps best seen by comparing this indulgence to an earlier iteration.

Alexander VI's grant was not the first affixed to San Gennaro's cult. In 1440, Archbishop de Diano proclaimed a partial indulgence of forty days for all "truly penitent and confessed" persons attending Gennaro's *dies natalis* at the cathedral, or wherever his office was celebrated.⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁸ The indulgence is noted in the *Cronaca di Partenope* which was written at the turn of the 15th century but published for the first time in 1486. See: Kelly, *The Cronaca*, 219-221. For its subsequent printed editions: Curt Bühler, "The Thirteenth Recorded Manuscript of the Cronaca Di Partenope," *PMLA* 4 (1952): 580-84. The indulgence is also included in early modern histories, such as *Napoli Sacra*. See: Caracciolo, *Napoli Sacra*, 633.

⁷³⁹ H.M. Lepicier, *Indulgences: Their Origin, Nature, and Development* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1928); Jenks, *Documents on the Papal Plenary Indulgences 1300-1517*; Robert Rusconi, "Predicazione penitenziale, ascolto delle confessioni e prassi indulgenziale. Italia, 1470 ca. -1520 ca.," in *Ablaskampagnen des Spätmittelalters. Luthers Thesen von 1517 im Kontext*, ed. Andreas Rehberg (Berlin: Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom, 2017), 63-77.

⁷⁴⁰ Brown, *Civic*, 123-24.

⁷⁴¹ "...omnibus vere penitentibus & confessis ipsam..." *Rituum archiepiscopalis*, 80r. This prescription was a part of the cleric's broader reform initiatives, which we saw in Chapter Four, pp. 104-105.

As a partial pardon issued by a local prelate, it was only valid for the subjects of the archdiocese of Naples.⁷⁴² The date to which de Diano affixed this pardon is expressive of his larger intentions; as the extant evidence suggests, the May translation feast was far more popular than that in September during this period. It is possible, therefore, that this decision reflects an effort to encourage participation in a comparatively neglected feast.⁷⁴³ It is worth noting that as members of the chapter during this archiepiscopate, Oliviero and Alessandro would have been intimately familiar with this practice, as well as the archbishop's other liturgical interventions into the cult.

The existence of this grant allows us to reconceive the purpose, and consequences, of Alexander VI's plenary indulgence. First, this pardon represents the expansion of a pre-existing devotional practice, rather than its introduction. Where the earlier iteration offered a limited remission of forty days, the pontiff extended the promise to a full pardon of sins, thus greatly enhancing the spiritual incentives associated with participating in the saint's feasts. Furthermore, unlike its predecessor, this grant was available to both local and foreign pilgrims, marking a significant broadening of the cult's intended audience. Second, this indulgence redirected attention away from the September celebration and towards the newly instituted January observance, alongside the already prominent *festa dell'inghirlandati*. This effort was especially important for the viability of the January feast; as a newly instituted celebration, Oliviero needed to entice the city's inhabitants to participate in the festivities. The pontiff's decision to offer the indulgence on the Sunday after the Epiphany, rather than the precise date of the translation feast, further supported this plan, as pilgrims would have found it easier to visit the *succorpo* on a non-working day. Overall, the pontiff's intervention thus represents a targeted strategy, one likely devised by Oliviero, to entice both local and foreign pilgrims to the cathedral, elevate the status of the January feast, and underscore the significance of the traditional May celebration.

We know very little relating to the liturgical and festive procedures of the new January feast. Based on later evidence, it is evident that Oliviero enlisted the aid of his cousin-in-law, Neapolitan jurist Matteo d'Afflitto, in shaping its liturgical celebration. In one of his legal treatises, written between 1511 and 1513, d'Afflitto offered a humble brag that he had written the office for the new celebration.⁷⁴⁴ This brief note is our only evidence of this text; it has otherwise been lost. Subsequently, we can say very little about it. This feast appears infrequently in the historical record, with one major exception. In 1527, the city's inhabitants flocked to the cathedral to participate in the procession of the saint's relics within the church. For months, Naples had suffered from the plague; the January translation feast afforded the city an opportunity to interact with the saint's relics and, subsequently, pray for Gennaro's intercession. As we will see towards the end of this chapter, the epidemic eventually receded and in thanksgiving, the city promised to build the saint a brand-new chapel.⁷⁴⁵ Otherwise, the infrequency by which the feast appears in the evidence suggests it was not popular, especially in comparison to the May celebration, except during moments of crisis.

⁷⁴² As per the prescriptions of the Fourth Lateran Council, and per mid-fifteenth century practice. Diana Webb, "Pardons and Pilgrims," in *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits: Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Robert W. Shaffern (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 242.

⁷⁴³ I am referring to the papal bull of 1268, which moved the *dies natalis* to May, due to lack of attendance in September. Prologue, 31.

⁷⁴⁴ d'Afflitto, *In utriusque Siciliae*, vol. III, 221v.

⁷⁴⁵ Strazzullo has treated this promise in detail, arguing that this moment jumpstarted the saint's civic cult: Strazzullo, *San Gennaro 'defensor civitatis'*.

Otherwise, we can make some general insights into the feast's procedures based on contemporary precedent. As was standard practice for the feasts of civic patrons, the cathedral chapter likely prayed the saint's office. We can imagine that on this date, d'Afflitto's now-missing text was utilised for this purpose. As archbishop, Alessandro would have been instrumental in enforcing this practice. Furthermore, the saint's hagiographic texts would have been read aloud. Since this feast was meant to celebrate the Verginian translation, we can imagine that Fra Bernardino's poem was performed, especially the portions pertaining to Alessandro's efforts. Lastly, Gennaro's relics were accessible on this date, as per the function of the *succorpo* and its attached indulgence.

The institution of this feast represented a significant and calculated intervention into the lived experience of Gennaro's cult. First, this date represented a deliberate form of self-commemoration by the Carafa brothers, whose roles in the translation process were now memorialised in the liturgy as well as the poem. Second, it reoriented the cult toward a more public audience. By expanding Gennaro's feast from two to three, the brothers' increased the annual display of his relics, and subsequently the public's access to them.

Thus far, this chapter has demonstrated how the *succorpo*, indulgence, and new translation feast effectively broadened access to the saint's cult and relics. At this stage, I wish to further explore the final intervention into the cult: Fra Bernardino's *vita*. In previous scholarship, Fra Bernardino's poem has been utilised as evidence either for the construction and design of the *succorpo* or for Oliviero's desire to create an episcopal family lineage. While both approaches have proven valuable, its potential as a hagiographic text remains comparatively underexplored. The following analysis seeks to reconsider its function as a *vita*, asking what representations of Gennaro – whether traditional, adapted, or brand-new – it advances, and, in turn, what version of the saint the Carafa brothers intended this broadened audience to encounter.

Fra Bernardino's *vita* preserves much of the contents of the *AB* and *AV*: San Gennaro is the bishop of Benevento who, after surviving a fiery furnace and an amphitheatre of wild beasts, is beheaded during the Diocletian persecutions alongside six companions. His finger, *orarium*, and his body are recovered shortly after his death, and the latter was translated to Naples, as commemorated on the First Saturday in May. Such continuity is to be expected; these facets represent the most fundamental components of the saint's legend, many of which were ritually reenacted on his feast days and thus familiar to the city's inhabitants, both lay and clerical.

At the same time, Bernardino's account includes several embellishments of the legend, as well as brand-new components. For example, the poet takes a few stanzas to elucidate upon the venerability of Gennaro's episcopate, a characterisation which was implied, but not explicitly illustrated, in the *AB* and *AV*. We can imagine that by highlighting such qualities, Fra Bernardino sought to provide a model for saintly bishops, one which contemporary clergymen ought to emulate. He also lists a collection of miracles attributed to the saint, including those recurring in the hagiographical *dossier*, such as Gennaro's intercession against volcanic eruptions, as well as those yet to be introduced, including an ability to heal the disabled, the blind, the mute, those with leprosy, and those possessed by demons.⁷⁴⁶ The friar also insists that the epidemic receded in Naples on account of the translation, demonstrating that the martyr was also a plague-intercessor.⁷⁴⁷ Accounting for some poetic exaggeration, this text illustrates suggests that Fra Bernardino – and likely Oliviero – particularly wanted to cast the saint as a healer of bodily

⁷⁴⁶ Ciampaglia, "La Vita di S. Gennaro", 146.

⁷⁴⁷ A notion expanded upon here: Nichols, "Plague."

ailments, a characterisation we have yet to encounter in the later Middle Ages. This likely reflected the cardinal's broader social initiatives; like many other bishops of this period, Oliviero had founded and patronised several hospitals in Naples.⁷⁴⁸ This *vita* thus framed the saint as heavenly reinforcement for such efforts.

Even more crucially, this *vita* provided historical origins for San Gennaro's relics, especially that of the blood. Once Gennaro had been beheaded, the friar claims, the local Christian community raced to collect his shed blood from the ground on which it was spilled. It was ultimately brought to Naples, along with the skull, in a manner which Bernardino does not describe nor date. This account represents the first written attempt to account for the blood's origins. He also recounts the provenance of the bodily relics in considerable detail, including their translation to Naples, theft by Duke Sico, Beneventan sojourn, transfer to Montevergine, and finally, their rediscovery.⁷⁴⁹ Like the blood, the friar offers an overtly polished history of the remains, leaving no questions regarding their authenticity. Given this emphasis, this poem may suggest that the origins of these remains were queried, or even contested, during this period.

Subsequently, the friar goes to great lengths to authenticate them. In the case of the body, Bernardino describes how Alessandro counted and measured each bone at Montevergine. For the blood, the friar employed a well-known hagiographical trope found in other accounts of early Christian martyrs.⁷⁵⁰ In doing so, he provides the sacred matter with a history, one anchored in the city's early Christian past. This *vita* was therefore a critical tool in establishing the authenticity of these sacred objects, and most especially of the blood. As we saw in Chapter Four, this miraculous relic was increasingly considered an emblem of civic identity. To invalidate such a potent symbol not only threatened the city's devotional life, but also its shared identity. Finally, this poem made a decisive claim: after the translation of 1497, all of San Gennaro's remains were now consolidated within the Cathedral of the Assumption. In effect, this narrative eliminated any competing *loci* of the saint's power – including Montevergine – and asserted Naples as the sole centre of his sanctity and authority.

Such claims are perhaps better understood when we consider the *vita*'s target audience. As demonstrated by Ciampaglia, who situated the text within the Sicilian canto tradition, Bernardino's poems were likely composed as sacred songs and thus meant for public performance.⁷⁵¹ It is likely, therefore, that this *vita* was sung aloud, probably at the Aragonese court if not elsewhere. We can imagine that this poem was especially useful in introducing foreign visitors to the saint, as it traced the entire history of the cult. At the same time, the claims made in this text suggest it was intended as a teaching device, and therefore for a broader circulation. In

⁷⁴⁸ Oliviero worked in tandem with the Aragonese monarchs, who sponsored several public health initiatives, including the founding and expansion of Naples' hospital system. San Gennaro's link with such efforts likely began in 1464, when Oliviero founded the Hospital of San Gennaro adjacent to the Basilica of San Gennaro. For Neapolitan hospitals: Marino, "The Urban Impact of Hospitals In Medieval Naples," 165–90. As Nichols further establishes, Gennaro's intercessory abilities over plague are increasingly documented over the course of the early modern period, reflecting the transformation of the role of the archbishop into a social patron, dedicated to his flock's spiritual *and* physical health. Nichols, "Plague."

⁷⁴⁹ Bernardino claims that the relics were brought to Montevergine in the mid-thirteenth century for safekeeping. Ciampaglia, "'La Vita di S. Gennaro'," 145–147.

⁷⁵⁰ Early Christians mopping up and preserving saint's blood featured commonly in early hagiographic texts. For some examples: Gritje Hartmann, "Paschal I and Saint Cecilia: The Story of the Translation of Her Relics in the Liber Pontificalis," in *Relics Identity and Memory in Medieval Europe*, eds. Marika Rasanen, Gritje Hartmann, and Earl Jeffrey Richards (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 53 – 90.

⁷⁵¹ Ciampaglia, "'La Vita di S. Gennaro'," 121.

the wake of the translation, the Carafa brothers not only needed to introduce the saint's body to Naples, but also to explain its provenance. After all, it had been missing for over six centuries, well beyond any living memory. How such an ambition was realised, however, remains difficult to determine. No explicit evidence survives to confirm that this poem was read – or sung – aloud.

Nevertheless, its subsequent influence is clear. Bernardino's composition served as the foundation for several future adaptations of the legend into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His influence can be seen acutely in their treatments of the blood; starting with de Stefano's Neapolitan travelogue (1560), these accounts argue that this relic originated in the amphitheatre at Pozzuoli. Rather than collected by a group of Christians, however, de Stefano (and subsequent writers) attribute this act to an older woman, who was occasionally identified as the saint's wetnurse.⁷⁵² Others cite the friar directly, especially his theory relating to the relics' translation to Montevergine.⁷⁵³ These later reworkings not only indicate the sustained accessibility of the text, perhaps in the library of the Spanish Viceroy, but also its enduring impact on the development of the saint's legend, a point I will return to towards the end of this chapter. For now, it is enough to note how Oliviero critically reshaped San Gennaro's legend through this *vita*, consolidating the history of the relics into a single, controlled vision that not only affirmed their authenticity, but also presented Naples as the unquestioned epicentre of the saint's cult.

Furthermore, the *vita*'s attempt to explicitly link the contemporary relics with the saint's martyrdom speaks to the Carafas' larger attempts to redirect the cult towards its early hagiographic foundations, foregrounding his identity as an early Christian martyr. We can see this, for example, in the design of the *succorpo*. As established, this was highly influenced by Roman models, especially those which included a *confessio*. More than an aesthetic choice, the placement of Gennaro's remains in such a crypt chapel deliberately evoked his identity as a martyr of the early church, comparable to figures such as St Lawrence, whose relics were likewise enshrined within fixed and accessible *confessiones*. Although this dimension of Gennaro's identity was not lost over the centuries, by the later fifteenth century it faced increasing competition from other aspects of his cult. As demonstrated in Chapter Four, this period witnessed both a rise in the frequency of the blood miracle and growth in its popular appeal. It also saw the pig-game; based on *Charon* and the fisherman's testimony, there is a good chance that this competition overlapped with the presence of the saint's body in the *succorpo*, even if for a short period. Oliviero's efforts to underscore Gennaro's status as a martyr should therefore be understood in light of this transformative shift. While he remained a civic patron and a victim of decapitation, Gennaro was increasingly defined by the miracle of his blood. While as far as we are aware, Oliviero made no attempts to quell devotion to the miraculous relic, we might question whether the cardinal sought to harness its popularity within the practices prescribed by the institutional church.

To reorient the cult towards a more recognisably Roman model of early Christian sainthood, without effacing its local character, Oliviero thus employed the translation, *succorpo*, indulgence, and *vita* in tandem. The indulgence incentivised pilgrimage to his Neapolitan *confessio*, while the arrival of the body furnished the cardinal with a body to enshrine within it. By keeping the skull and blood in close proximity to the tomb, the cardinal integrated these highly venerated relics into a single, coherent devotional system, one which directly linked their

⁷⁵² For example: De Stefano, *Descrittione*, 8; Romeo, *Septem*, 52-53; Tutini, *Memorie*, 36, 92-94.

⁷⁵³ As in: Tutini, *Memorie*, 86-87.; Girolamo Maria di. S. Anna, *Istoria della vita, virtù, e miracoli di S. Gennaro, vescovo e martire, principal padrone della fedelissima città e Regno di Napoli* (Naples: Stefano Abbate, 1733): 107-109.

miraculous efficacy to the saint's identity as a martyr. Fra Bernardino's *vita* put this devotional framework into writing; by explicitly tying the origins of the blood to Gennaro's beheading, he anchored this contemporary devotion within a much earlier, and thus well-established, hagiographic tradition.

IV: The Afterlives of the Carafa Project

As we have seen, Oliviero and Alessandro Carafa attempted a highly ambitious transformation of this saint's cult – but it has been difficult to gauge its implementation, reception, or success. At the very least, it is evident that such intentions were not unilaterally enacted or, at times, abandoned altogether, as was the case of the sarcophagus. At this stage, we will evaluate the broader efficacy of their project. As we have seen, the *succorpo* was clearly envisioned as a pilgrim's shrine and the plenary indulgence suggests it was intended for both local and foreign visitors. However, direct evidence for pilgrimage is scant; we have no pilgrims' badges or related paraphernalia, for example, nor any testimonies, as we might expect from a shrine. Of course, it is possible that such visitors have flown under the radar; as Webb has demonstrated, it is often difficult to track pilgrims at more localised sites such as the *succorpo*.⁷⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the extant evidence suggests that the Neapolitan cathedral did not become a flourishing pilgrimage site for foreign visitors. Rather, it seems to have functioned primarily as the focal point of local devotion, drawing Neapolitans particularly on feast days.

Instead of attracting large numbers of religious pilgrims, the *succorpo* appears to have drawn a different kind of visitor: non-Neapolitan travellers interested in the city's cultural history. From the mid-sixteenth century, such audiences were encouraged by printed guidebooks.⁷⁵⁵ Beginning with Benedetto di Falco's *Descrittione dei Luoghi Antichi* in 1535, these works sought to present Naples' history, culture, and identity to foreign readers.⁷⁵⁶ While di Falco references the *succorpo* only fleetingly, Pietro de Stefano's *Descrittione dei Luoghi Sacri della Città di Napoli*, published in 1560, delves into its design in great detail.⁷⁵⁷ Notably, Oliviero's *succorpo* is the first entry in this text, testifying to its civic significance. To entice visitors, de Stefano describes the beauty of the chapel, even translating its Latin inscriptions into the vernacular for easier reading. However, he does not mention the indulgence. From there, he swiftly moves on to the *Tesoro di San Gennaro*, which now hosted the miraculous blood and skull, along with several other relics of local figures.⁷⁵⁸ His treatment of this space is telling; whereas de Stefano considers the *succorpo* an impressive artistic achievement, he clearly frames the *Tesoro* as the locus of San Gennaro's cult. In doing so, he displaces the *succorpo* as a centre of religious activity and instead promotes the *Tesoro* as the locus of living devotion.

Later seventeenth-century works, such as Giuseppe Mormile's *Descrittione dell'amenissimo distretto della città di Napoli* (1617), demonstrate this dynamic even more explicitly. While promoting the *succorpo*, the saint, and the blood as defining features of Naples,

⁷⁵⁴ Webb, "Pardons and Pilgrims," 267–68.

⁷⁵⁵ There is a great deal of work to be done on early modern Neapolitan guidebooks. Harald Hendrix's work on these texts, and their uses, is particularly helpful. See: Harald Hendrix, "City Branding and the Antique: Naples in Early Modern City Guides," in *Remembering Parthenope: The Reception of Classical Naples from Antiquity to the Present*, eds. Jessica Hughes and Claudio Buongiovanni (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 217–41.

⁷⁵⁶ Benedetto di Falco, *Descrittione dei luoghi antichi di Napoli* (Naples: Giovanni Battista Cappelli, 1535).

⁷⁵⁷ De Stefano, *Descrittione*, 6–10.

⁷⁵⁸ Strazzullo, *San Gennaro 'defensor civitatis'*; Hills, *The Matter of Miracles*.

these texts frame the crypt chapel as a momentous architectural achievement, not necessarily a site of religious pilgrimage.⁷⁵⁹ In this respect they extend earlier humanist efforts to frame the cult, especially the blood relic, as a cornerstone of civic identity, as we saw in Chapter Four.

At the same time, they point to an even greater broadening of interest in the cult beyond the city walls. Fascination with the liquefaction particularly attracted sustained attention across the Baroque and Enlightenment periods, as de Ceglia has demonstrated, especially from European aristocrats and Chemists.⁷⁶⁰

Yet – there are several distinctions to be made here. In both the guidebooks and in de Ceglia's research, interest in the cult was often cultural or scientific rather than devotional. Although these early modern texts were not devoid of religious language – de Stefano, for example, praised the saint's intercessory powers – they do not primarily address pilgrims or seek to cultivate penitential practices. Underscoring this point is the lack of attention to the indulgence, which is largely absent from these texts. Instead, they frame the *succorpo*, and the cult, as components of Naples' historical patrimony. At the same time, while these works increased the visibility of the cult, they did not necessarily encourage its veneration. This brings us to a critical point: despite growing external curiosity, the cult of San Gennaro remained confined especially to Naples. We do not see, for example, shrines to the saint popping up elsewhere in Europe nor were the relics disassembled and distributed to encourage wider veneration. Instead, devotion to the saint remained fundamentally local, as it had been for centuries.

The events of 1527 are also demonstrative of the Carafas' varied success. As discussed earlier, on 13 January, the urban populace congregated within the Cathedral of the Assumption for the procession of the saint's skull and blood amid a severe outbreak of the plague. Desperate, the city turned to its patron, or, more precisely, to his blood. The reunion of the relics during the liturgy sparked a liquefaction, and thus the subsequent cessation of the epidemic was attributed to the saint's intervention. In thanksgiving, the Neapolitans vowed to construct a new chapel in the saint's honour, the *Tesoro di San Gennaro*.⁷⁶¹ This episode both confirms and complicates the Carafas' vision. On the one hand, it demonstrates how the January feast could mobilise large-scale participation, thus preserving the memory of the translation as well as the Carafa legacy. It also attests to San Gennaro's characterisation as a plague-saint, one which Fra Bernardino heavily emphasised in his poem.⁷⁶² On the other hand, this celebration exposes several divergences. Other than 1527, references to this feast are rare in the extant evidence, making it difficult to determine whether this celebration reflects an established tradition or an exceptional response to crisis. Given the infrequency of the feast in the historical record, I suggest the latter.

There are several reasons why the Carafas' plans were not evenly implemented in this period. First, we might consider tensions between the Carafa brothers and the cathedral chapter. The construction of a pilgrim shrine, together with the indulgence, significantly increased the chapter's workload. Indulgences were not achieved merely by passing through a shrine; they required a contrite confession, as well as acts of devotion and charity and fasting, much of which required clerical oversight. Clerical staff were also enlisted to facilitate other acts of devotion, such as organised prayer, as well as charitable opportunities, often by collaborating with local

⁷⁵⁹ Mormile, *Descrittione dell'amenissimo distretto*. For another lengthy praise of the chapel: Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *Il forastiero* (Naples: Giovanni Domenico Roncagliolo, 1634).

⁷⁶⁰ de Ceglia, *The Natural History*.

⁷⁶¹ This chapel would not be completed for several decades. For its history, see: Hills, *The Matter of Miracles*.

⁷⁶² A characterisation that followed him well through the early modern period, as outlined in: Nichols, "Plague."

confraternities.⁷⁶³ Furthermore, there were more mundane points to consider, including who was to lock and unlock the chapel. In this sense, the indulgence introduced substantial logistical demands and hard work, labour which the Carafa brothers evidently deemed necessary to advance their plans. Such measures, however, were unlikely to have enjoyed unanimous support. Friction between the chapter and the archbishops might further explain why the skull and blood were ultimately removed from the *succorpo* and returned to the sacristy. These relics were portable and thus required supervision whenever the chapel was open to visitors. Over time, the responsibility to safeguard these objects likely transformed into a burden, and thus they were whisked away into the sacristy, where their protection could be guaranteed with less effort.

At the same time, these practice constraints cannot explain the outcome of the Carafa project entirely. The 1527 episode, for example, demonstrates how devotional practice remained oriented around the power of the liquefaction, thereby reinforcing the primacy of the blood relic - despite the brothers' best efforts to incorporate the body into the cult. In fact, there is a striking lack of veneration towards the body during this period; we have no evidence that any miracles were attributed to this tomb, for example.

This tension points to a broader problem with the Carafa project: while Oliviero and Alessandro viewed the reunification of Gennaro's remains as paramount, and subsequently sought to refocus the cult on the unity of the body, this vision was not required by the inhabitants of Naples, who continued to prioritise the blood and, by extension, the skull. It seems, therefore, that in an ironic twist, San Gennaro's body sat neglected and overlooked in the *succorpo* - just as Fra Bernardino claimed it had while at Montevergine. Notwithstanding the difficulties in competing with a blood miracle, the uneven veneration of the saint's remains points to the difficulties in reconciling two divergent, yet related, saintly identities: St Januarius, early Christian bishop and martyr, and San Gennaro, the distinctly Neapolitan figure whose cult had accrued layers of civic, ritual, and devotional meanings over the centuries. While these two figures shared a hagiographic past, they were not completely compatible. The body of St Januarius had been missing for centuries and therefore lacked an established repertoire of interaction with the Neapolitan people. The Carafa brothers' efforts attempted to bridge the gap between these two iterations, to varied degrees of success. While the *vita*, for example, successfully constructed one, synthesising the history of these remains, their other initiatives lacked the necessary devotional uptake.

Ultimately, the Januarian figure entombed within the *succorpo* lacked the attributes which had come to define San Gennaro for Neapolitan devotees. This thesis has explored the advent of many of these characteristics, including the liquefying blood, the *inghirlandati*, the pig, his patronage, especially over the cathedral and episcopate, and, more recently, his status as a civic emblem. In this respect, this relative failure of the Carafas' plans demonstrate that the cult of San Gennaro was not constructed merely by the ambitions of the city's archbishops but was instead guided by a much broader devotional culture and the collective and historically conditioned practices of the faithful.

Conclusions:

In the wake of the 1497 translation, Oliviero and Alessandro Carafa attempted several impressive and wide-ranging interventions into the cult of San Gennaro. Such initiatives are not to

⁷⁶³ Giovanna Casagrande, "Confraternities and Indulgences in Italy in the Later Middle Ages," in *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits: Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Robert Swanson (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 37–63.

be taken in isolation, but instead represent a unified effort to reorient the cult towards a public-gaze, one fitting for the devotional context of the late fifteenth century. This primarily included constructing the *succorpo* as a pilgrim's shrine, but it also consisted of the plenary indulgence, to incite visitors both near and far, and the new saint's vita, which was to be performed in front of an audience. At the same time, Oliviero and Alessandro nevertheless ensured that it remained firmly within the grasp of the Neapolitan archiepiscopate. Here, we find the intersection of private, episcopal, and public interests, operating in tandem, not necessarily in competition with one another. Perhaps the best example of this dynamic can be found in the events of 1525.

In that year, substantial changes were made to the *festa dell'inghirlandati*. In May of that year, Geronimo Pellegrino, the elected leader of the *popolo*, asked Archbishop Vincenzo Carafa if the processional route could be amended. Rather than ending in the cathedral, as was custom, Pellegrino requested that the procession cease in the Piazza della Sellaria, the seat of the *popolo*.⁷⁶⁴ In doing so, Pellegrino simultaneously relocated the liquefaction. By 1525, it was well understood that the blood miracle was activated by bringing the saint's head and blood together.⁷⁶⁵ This action would normally occur within the cathedral at the end of the procession. By readjusting the procession, Pellegrino repositioned the miracle itself to the *Piazza della Sellaria*. Archbishop Vincenzo acquiesced to this request, beginning a new tradition of rotating the processional route amongst the six *seggi*: Popolo, Capuana, Montagna, Nido, Porto, and Portanova. As we saw above, in 1527 the city then vowed to build the *Tesoro di San Gennaro*, after the saint saved the city from plague. This promise has been understood as an unprecedented intervention by the laity into San Gennaro's cult – and rightfully so.⁷⁶⁶ It also reflects a pattern observable across the Italian peninsula, if not elsewhere in Europe, as lay communities increasingly sought greater access to relics and a more active role in shaping cultic and devotional practices.⁷⁶⁷

The reforms of 1525 have received a great deal of attention in Januarian studies. As we saw in the introduction of this thesis, this key historical development, along with that of 1527, has been understood as the birth of San Gennaro's patronal sanctity in Naples.⁷⁶⁸ Hills has also interpreted this moment as a reaction to the privatisation of the cult at the hands of Oliviero Carafa. Pellegrino's attempts, she argues, represented a backlash against the *succorpo* and the Carafa family's hold on Gennaro's relics.⁷⁶⁹ Relatedly, Vitale has pointed out how the increased regularity of the liquefaction triggered the *seggi*'s desire to host - and thereby control - the blood miracle.⁷⁷⁰ Indeed, 1525 represented a pivotal transition in the control over the saint's liturgies and relics away from the archbishop and towards the Neapolitan *seggi*.

However, in contrast to Hills and Vitale, I do not see these developments as contrasting the Carafas' broader plans for the cult. Though indeed, Oliviero sought to prioritise the chapel and the relics, thereby bolstering his family's illustrious lineage, he equally intended to expand public access to the cult, demonstrating that private legacy and public devotion are not necessarily oppositional. Taking the *succorpo*'s purpose as a shrine into account, alongside the brothers' other

⁷⁶⁴ Hills, *The Matter of Miracles*, 78–80; Dauverd, *Church and State in Spanish Italy*, 119–25.

⁷⁶⁵ Vitale, "Il culto ianuariano."

⁷⁶⁶ Helen Hills, "The Neapolitan Seggi as Patrons of Religious Architecture: Urban Holiness and the Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro," in *Ordnungen des sozialen Raumes*, eds. Grit Hiedemann and Tanja Michalsky (Berlin: Reimer, 2012), 159–87.

⁷⁶⁷ As surveyed in: Palmieri, "Religion: Institutions, Devotion, and Heresy," 94–114.

⁷⁶⁸ Introduction, p. 5.

⁷⁶⁹ Hills, *The Matter of Miracles*, 78.

⁷⁷⁰ Vitale, "Il culto Ianuariano," 350–353.

efforts, it becomes clear that the events of 1525 were not necessarily reactions *against* the Carafas' plans, but a continuation of their efforts to orient the cult towards a more public-facing model. San Gennaro's cult, which had reemerged at the beginning of the fourteenth century as an episcopal cult, was now at a tipping point towards a more public chapter in its history.

Conclusion



Image Ten: Feast of San Gennaro in Naples, May 2022⁷⁷¹



Image Eleven: Feast of San Gennaro in Naples, September 2023⁷⁷²

Today, the commemoration of San Gennaro's *dies natalis* is a feast for the senses [See Images Ten and Eleven]. 19 September is still a civic holiday; businesses are shuttered, schools are closed, and paper posters announcing the cathedral's liturgical schedule are posted all over town. The Assumption is standing room only, teeming with all walks of life; believers, non-

⁷⁷¹ Image: Paolo Popoli, "San Gennaro, Processione Tra I Festoni Azzurri," *la Repubblica*, 6 May 2023. https://napoli.repubblica.it/cronaca/2023/05/07/news/san_gennaro_processione_tra_i_festoni_azzurri_larcivesovo_come_il_napoli_facciamo_gioco_di_squadra_per_la_citta-399059406/.

⁷⁷² Image: Photo by Clare Whitton, September 2023.

believers, and those somewhere in between, congregate in hopes of a chance of glimpsing the famed miraculous blood. Locals clamor for front row seats. A range of clergy, identified no longer by their flower garlands, but instead by their bright red vestments, mull about the cathedral, murmuring to one another and awaiting further instructions. Altar servers swing censers filled with incense outside the entrance to the *Tesoro di San Gennaro*, filling the air with smoke. Vendors sell their wares, trinkets bearing the saint's likeness, in aisles and side chapels. Older men congregate in the cathedral's threshold, with one foot on sacred ground and the other on the street, conversing and braving a cigarette. Even small dogs, constrained by their leads, arrive to partake in the festivities. Tourists, such as myself in 2023, stand meekly where we can find a place, phone cameras in hand and at the ready for a ceremony which almost certainly will not start on time. The noise inside the church is somewhere between a shout and a roar. And it is hot, at least 25 degrees. Outside, a blood drive in running in the cathedral piazza, an initiative requested by Archbishop Battaglia. A cartoonish portrayal of San Gennaro is plastered on the side of the medical tent. Across the street, the saint is depicted in a spray-painted mural alongside Diego Maradona, Naples' famed football player. The image serves as a striking, if not humorous, reminder that San Gennaro actively competes with the sports star for the title of Naples' patron saint. Local bakers sell Januarian-themed treats including a pastry in the shape of a mitre. Naples' mayor, identified by his green, white, and red sash, speaks cheerfully of the city's illustrious and historic traditions on the church steps. He doubles as the president of the Deputation of the Royal Chapel of the Treasure of San Gennaro, a lay body committed to the protection of the saint's relics and the promotion of his cult. Duke Riccardo Carafa d'Andria, a descendent of the Carafa brothers, currently serves as its vice president. Several government officials, themselves trailed by a series of journalists, follow the pair inside to take their place in the processional order. The archbishop greets them inside the *Tesoro*. And so, the proceedings begin.

The odds of a failed liquefaction are slim. As has been the case for centuries, the blood miracle occurs like clockwork on all three of the saint's feast days (September, December, and May), albeit with a handful of exceptions. Yet, there is something unforeseen and uncontrollable about what is (or is not) about to happen. A coagulated vial is still seen as a bad omen, a signal that deadly consequences are to follow.⁷⁷³ This was the case, for example, in September of 1980 when the relic refused to melt. Two months later, Naples, and the surrounding region, was struck by a devastating earthquake, which killed thousands.⁷⁷⁴ For this very reason, dozens of local volunteers, the so-called "parents" of San Gennaro, take their seats before the relics and loudly beg, if not demand, that the saint will make his presence known in his liquified blood. And eventually, if he chooses, he does. The relic is removed from its safe, located behind the main altar of the *Tesoro*, and inspected. You can hear a successful miracle before you can see it. Individual shouts of joy gradually transform into an eruption of cheers. All hands shoot up, not necessarily to gesticulate in praise, but to angle their iPhones for the right shot. The visibility of the miracle is no longer enough to confirm its occurrence: it is its recording.

Today's commemoration speaks as much to the past as it does the present. The reliquary bust and towering blood tabernacle, products of the Angevin period, are still entrusted with

⁷⁷³ De Ceglia's monograph expertly tracks the history of the miracle's regularity and its prophetic abilities: de Ceglia, *The Natural History*.

⁷⁷⁴ "40 years on, why the Irpinia earthquake is remembered as Italy's 'worst catastrophe'," *The Local Italy*, 23 November 2020, <https://www.thelocal.it/20201123/40-years-on-why-the-irpinia-earthquake-is-remembered-as-italys-worst-catastrophe>

safeguarding the sacred matter and hoisted upon men's shoulders in procession. Both emerge from hiding spots in the *Tesoro*, constructed in 1646. The remains are slowly paraded up the nave and placed upon the altar. A member of the Deputation of San Gennaro waves a white flag, a remnant from eighteenth century procedures, to signal what everyone already knows: the blood of an ancient martyr has melted. Everywhere you look, layers of accrued memory manifest themselves. Given the festivities, it is evident that, despite the efforts of the twentieth-century, the cult of San Gennaro is not going anywhere, not at least anytime soon.⁷⁷⁵

Instead, this civic patron continues to evolve. Today, social media continues to transform the experience of the feast; tourists and influencers have increased its visibility tenfold. Now, the outcome of the liquefaction spreads instantaneously to anyone in the world with a smartphone in their pocket. Not unlike the travelogues of the early modern period, influencer accounts advertise the celebration and the liquefaction as a uniquely Neapolitan experience, a 'must-see' for any foreign visitor. As tourism in Italy continues to skyrocket to unsustainable levels, the influx of sightseers will invariably force adaptations to the feast, if not the cult more broadly.⁷⁷⁶ Since the start of this dissertation in 2022, I have personally witnessed (and, as a visitor myself, likely contributed to) an increase in the crowds and the price of souvenirs.

The active development of the cult of San Gennaro in our contemporary day speaks to a long-standing process of construction and reconstruction which has been in motion for centuries. The principal aim of this thesis was to investigate a snapshot of this dynamic evolution, across the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. From this enquiry, several key themes emerge, which not only reshape our understanding of the cult, but also illuminate the broader processes through which sanctity is constructed. Such a transformation testifies to the saint's multiplicity and rejects a previous approach, which reduced the figure to little more than an anthropomorphic marvel. It also illustrates the critical role of several stakeholders, both clerical and lay, played in reconfiguring and reorienting aspects of the saint's cult. In the paragraphs which follow, I will overview their roles, question what San Gennaro's multiplicity can tell us about late medieval sainthood and then underline the significance of my findings in the context of previous scholarship. I will then conclude with a few brief thoughts on future avenues of research. But first – I turn to the stakeholders of Gennaro's late medieval cult.

I. On Stakeholders

Over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, facets of San Gennaro's cult developed at the hands of archbishops, monarchs, popes, clergymen, monks, humanists, members of the *seggi*, spectators, and even the 'rustici' from outside the city walls. Driven by diverse ambitions and aims, the efforts of these stakeholders varied in both form and function, and were often contingent upon Naples' immediate circumstances. While it would be too tedious to list the efforts of each stakeholder here, I shall instead emphasise the key themes relating to the papacy, the monarchy, the archbishops and the laity.

⁷⁷⁵ See the final chapter of: de Ceglia, *The Natural History*.

⁷⁷⁶ "Florence, Rome, Venice: Italian cities are cracking down on overtourism in 2025," *EuroNews*, 24 February 2025, <https://www.euronews.com/travel/2025/02/24/florence-rome-venice-italian-cities-are-cracking-down-on-overtourism-in-2025>; Nick Squires, "Disneyfication of Naples backfires," *The Telegraph*, 30 November 2025, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2025/11/30/disneyfication-naples-backfires-tourism-rent-airbnb-ita/>

As we have seen in previous chapters, interventions by the papacy were closely shaped by its relationship with Naples' secular and ecclesiastical leaders. At times, these relationships were strained, and the pontiff deployed the saint as a negotiating tool. This was the case in 1490, for example, when Innocent VIII denied King Ferdinand I's petition to translation the saint's remains.⁷⁷⁷ In other instances, papal engagement was more directly orientated toward asserting control over the city and its rulers, as seen during our discussion of the Western Schism.⁷⁷⁸ Other times, interventions were less overtly tied to political powers and more aligned with broader pontifical initiatives. This was the case, for example, with Pope Benedict XII's reform plans and their influence upon the Orsini Constitutions.⁷⁷⁹ In summary, papal interventions in the cult ranged considerably, from explicit political manoeuvres to indirect reform agendas. In most cases, however, they reflected the papacy's larger ambitions to maintain authority over Naples' ruling powers.

The interventions of the Angevin and Aragonese monarchs is more difficult to characterise. As others before me have noted, these rulers made very few direct interventions into the cult.⁷⁸⁰ It is clear, however, that both dynasties considered the saint a form of public authority, whose approval was necessary to legitimise their rule. This theme is exemplified in our discussion of the Western Schism. Other instances reflect the broader ambitions for the city's urban development and identity. As I established in Chapter One, King Charles II's bust not only represented a critical development in the cult, establishing him as a civic patron, but also advanced the king's plans to reconfigure Naples into an impressive capital city. In Chapter Four, we saw how the Aragonese kings employed humanist writers to craft an impressive civic identity, of which San Gennaro's relics played a pivotal role. Though modest in comparison to those of other stakeholders, these efforts challenge previous assessments of the crown.⁷⁸¹ Though they did not adopt Gennaro as a dynastic patron, nor intervene in the formation and execution of his feast days, the Angevin and Aragonese monarchs were not entirely absent in the development of his sanctity. Rather, these rulers employed aspects of Gennaro's cult to construct a shared urban identity, underscoring the saint's role as a civic patron during this period.

As this thesis has shown, the deeds of Naples' archbishops emerge as paramount in the shaping and reshaping of Gennaro's sainthood. From the extant evidence, it has become apparent that these clergymen actively fashioned the saint into an ecclesiastical and episcopal patron. The means by which they did so varied. The liturgy served as a key tool for retelling and reshaping the saint's legend, in which the archbishop assumed the critical role of initiating Gennaro's translation. As seen in Parts One and Three, architectural programmes and reliquaries anchored the intercessor to the Assumption; both reliquaries were designed to associate the saint with the episcopal office and the cathedral complex. At times, they were mobilised to legitimise the episcopal authority. Only rarely, however, did these clergymen employ hagiographic texts to forge explicit connections between the saint and the episcopal office. Fra Bernardino's poem (c.1503) stands as the sole surviving example of such an approach. Visions for the cult did not always align. For example, this thesis has demonstrated how some interventions were reversed, such as Aiglerio's attempt to

⁷⁷⁷ Chapter Six, p. 140.

⁷⁷⁸ See Chapter Two.

⁷⁷⁹ Chapter Three: pp. 79-80.

⁷⁸⁰ Vitale, "I santi," 93-128.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.; Vitolo, "Santità, culti, e strutture socio-politiche."

consolidate Gennaro's two feasts, with the assistance of Pope Clement IV.⁷⁸² Other initiatives were implemented unevenly, such as those of Oliviero and Alessandro Carafa.⁷⁸³

Selecting San Gennaro as a patron proved central in shaping the episcopate's identity. Though Gennaro was himself never a bishop of Naples, the prominent role played by the city's bishop⁷⁸⁴ in the translation legend testified to the venerable antiquity of the office and helped anchor it in a sacred, distant past. Building on this narrative, these senior ecclesiastics increasingly positioned themselves as essential mediators between the city and the saint, and thus indispensable to the city's religious and civic life. This self-representation was particularly evident during the May feast, during which the contemporary archbishop symbolically reprised his predecessor's efforts to identify the remains and translate them accordingly. This emphasised the clergyman's place within a historical episcopal lineage, one which accentuated their responsibility for the custody and care for Gennaro's relics. The ritualised recreation of the first translation also renewed the saint's patronal contract and underscored the role of the archbishop in its brokering. In effect, the responsibility for maintaining such intercessory power fell to the archbishop, whose duties included overseeing feast days, relic ostentations, processions, and other forms of devotion. In turn, the archbishop derived his authority from his patron, whose sacred remains anchored his presence within the cathedral. Although the saint could legitimise the cleric's authority, his cult was equally capable of articulating critique. As illustrated in Giovanni Pontano's *Charon*, the close association between Gennaro and the episcopal office enabled the saint to function as a vehicle for clerical criticism.⁷⁸⁵

These efforts illuminate the significant expansion of the role and responsibilities of Naples' archbishops during this period. Over the later Middle Ages, this episcopal office grew in power and significance in a territory marked by political instability and frequent papal interference. After the Angevin Conquest, the archbishops became key interlocutors among competing authorities, especially between the Angevin and Aragonese monarchs and the papacy. As the city was repeatedly reconfigured after reconquests or political crises, they acted as shrewd negotiators, balancing the ambitions of Naples' rulers, the papacy, the cathedral clergy, and the local aristocracy, while asserting their own identity and the autonomy of the Neapolitan church. This transformation demanded new articulations of episcopal authority, especially ones which emphasised its historic continuity in a particularly contested and unstable political landscape.

Consequently, whenever the Neapolitan ecclesiastical establishment was in need of an emblem by which to express its authority, the venerability of its office, and the distinct identity of the church in Naples: it turned to Gennaro. As such, key developments in the history of the cult align with acute moments of ecclesiastical crisis or transformation, which were expressed across artistic, liturgical, and material forms. The mosaic in the Basilica of St Restituta, for example, reflects ongoing negotiations of power between the archbishop and his cathedral clergy during the completion of the Cathedral of the Assumption.⁷⁸⁶ Here, Gennaro represents the distinct identity of the episcopate as well as the institutional unity of the cathedral complex. Other evidence points to moments of collaboration; the reliquary bust and the Orsini Constitutions, for instance, emerged out of broader initiatives instigated by King Charles II and Pope Benedict XII, respectively, in

⁷⁸² Prologue, p. 31.

⁷⁸³ See Chapter Six.

⁷⁸⁴ Either Bishop John or St Bishop Severus, depending on the tradition. Prologue. pp. 25-26.

⁷⁸⁵ Chapter Four, pp. 111-112.

⁷⁸⁶ Chapter One, pp. 51-52.

which the archbishop actively participated.⁷⁸⁷ In moments of crisis, seen most explicitly during the Western Schism, the saint became a potent symbol of ecclesiastical autonomy, while his blood relic articulated the heightened uncertainty surrounding episcopal legitimacy.⁷⁸⁸ Taken together, such examples demonstrate that Gennaro's cult did not only reflect ecclesiastical change but was also mobilised in response to it.

Of course, the development of the cult was not solely dependent upon the archbishops or Naples' ecclesiastical vicissitudes. In many ways, its construction mirrored, or conformed to, broader late medieval liturgical and devotional trends. As demonstrated in Part One, for example, the design of each of Gennaro's reliquaries reflected contemporary artistic conventions and their use followed established liturgical practices.⁷⁸⁹ Furthermore, the ritual reenactment of San Gennaro's translation mirrored the *depositio* rites commonly enacted on Good Friday, as discussed in Chapter Three.⁷⁹⁰ As argued in Chapter Six, Alexander VI's indulgence attached to the *succorpo*, conformed to a popular form of late medieval piety.⁷⁹¹ Taken together, these examples illustrate how prescribed institutional practices, such as the *translatio* reenactment in the Orsini Constitutions, were guided by contemporary liturgical, devotional, and even artistic conventions.

Finally, we must acknowledge an often-neglected stakeholder in Gennaro's cult: the laity. As noted in the Introduction, one of the objectives of this thesis was to explore how Naples' lay inhabitants actively participated in and shaped the cult's development, where the evidence allowed. Broadly speaking, the laity actively participated in the devotional life surrounding the saint in diverse ways. The Orsini Constitutions, for example, encourage attendance and participation across Naples' social strata. The text includes defined ritual responsibilities, such as the processional roles assigned to the representatives of the *seggi*, as well as a more collective experience, such as the crowd of spectators. More than mere observers, attendees of the feasts participated through cheers and collective prayers, by listening to sermons and public readings, and of course, through festive competitions including the pig-game. Of course, such modes of participation were not exclusively restricted to lay actors; plenty of secular and religious clergy attended the translation feast as spectators, or visited the *succorpo*, for example. Nevertheless, they represent levels of lay engagement that were critical in the evolution of the cult, often determining which aspects did – and did not – sustain themselves over the centuries. As discussed in Chapter Six, for example, the laity's preference for the blood and skull relics over that of the body crucially turned the cult away from the Carafa project, which prioritised a unified set of remains.⁷⁹² This episode is also demonstrative that the laity did not simply acquiesce to the goals of the archbishops, but participated in ways which complicated, if not conflicted with, the implementation of their visions.

Of course, the 'laity' was not a homogeneous group; it consisted of a range of social groups, including the aristocratic *seggi*, humanists, and the so-called *rustici* living outside the city walls, each of whom held distinct stakes in the cult. We have seen, for example, how the anonymous author of the *Siculum*, a member of the Capuana or Nido *seggi*, understood the blood as a legitimising force, one which could authenticate Angevin rule in Naples and subsequently advance

⁷⁸⁷ See Chapters One and Three.

⁷⁸⁸ Chapter Three, pp. 72-73.

⁷⁸⁹ Chapter One, pp. 33-34; Chapter Two, pp. 54-55.

⁷⁹⁰ Chapter Three, pp. 93-94.

⁷⁹¹ Chapter Six, pp. 147-150.

⁷⁹² Chapter Six, p. 156.

the *seggi*'s interests.⁷⁹³ Thus, this author deliberately framed the liquefaction as a sign of divine favour. In their attempts to craft a unified and illustrious civic identity, local humanists, working in tandem with the Aragonese kings, similarly mobilised their rhetorical talents to recast the blood as an emblem of civic pride, thereby reorienting the cult away from its traditional, ecclesiastical model and towards a more public-facing one. As evidenced in accounts of the pig-game, inhabitants both within and beyond the city walls appear to have understood the festivities as a space in which social tensions could be negotiated. Their participation in this event constituted a more implicit stake in the cult, one grounded in communal expression and contestation. Perhaps the clearest example of lay investment is the reforms of 1525, which, as argued in the conclusion of Chapter Six, was representative of the laity's increasing demands for access to the cult during the transition into the early modern period.⁷⁹⁴

Yet- while access to components of the cult increased over the span of this dissertation, this did not equate to control, which remained firmly with the archbishop and his clergy. This was chiefly expressed through the custody of San Gennaro's relics which were stored in the cathedral's sacristy until the construction of the crypt chapel. Tucked away from all prying eyes except those of the relevant clergymen, their care fell to the *cimiliarch*, a senior ecclesiastical official acting on the archbishop's behalf. A similar dynamic can be gleaned from the *succorpo*. Though the shrine offered visitors unprecedented proximity to the saint's consolidated remains, access was regulated by the cathedral clergy, who were responsible for opening the space. Such cases demonstrate how increased accessibility did not equate to control but were, at times, alternative expressions of clerical authority.

As this survey has demonstrated, the construction of San Gennaro's cult was thus an active process, fuelled by several parties with their own respective visions, contingent upon Naples' political, social, and ecclesiastical circumstances, and manifested across textual, material, and architectural expressions. As a result, several different 'versions' of San Gennaro emerged across the late medieval period. Identifying and exploring the interaction between these iterations greatly assists our understanding of how sanctity was constructed, and re-constructed, in the late medieval period. Consequently, I now turn to San Gennaro's multiplicity.

II. On Multiplicity

As I set out in the introduction, one of the aims of this dissertation was to reject previous reductive interpretations of the saint and explore his multiplicity. This thesis has indeed identified multiple iterations of the saint, such as San Gennaro of the skull, of the schism, and of the plague, but it would be impractical to list them all here. A more pertinent question is: how can we make sense of these many San Gennaros? Individually, they tell us a great deal about how he functioned during specific historical episodes. But can a figure as fundamental to Naples' civic and devotional life as he be reduced to a handful of identities, stacked in succession? More broadly, were saintly figures merely a sum of their parts? The following exploration invites us to reconsider how the construction of Gennaro's sainthood was a dynamic process, not the product of fixed identities or moments in time.

The many versions of San Gennaro highlight a critical thread of continuity which runs between them: the legend of his translation from Pozzuoli to the Neapolitan catacombs. This

⁷⁹³ Chapter Two, pp. 69-70.

⁷⁹⁴ Chapter Six, pp. 157.

narrative, which articulated the origins of his patronal contract, was of critical significance to Naples' sacred history. For this reason, the memory of Gennaro's martyrdom and translation were consistently reworked and adapted to accommodate contemporary devotions. This occurred first with the introduction of the saint's skull relic, as seen in the Orsini Constitutions, and then later the blood, as seen in Fra Bernardino's *vita*. Together, these San Gennaro of the skull and of the blood reimagined the *translatio*, presenting an account in which they were originally recovered from the saint's grave and execution site, respectively.

The process of remembering and rewriting strands of Gennaro's past had broader consequences for the perceived histories of Naples. At times, San Gennaro acted as a mirror through which its inhabitants recollected – and reimagined – its own shared past. This is especially true of the city's sacred antiquity. Whether read aloud, liturgically reenacted, or sung, the story of the saint's martyrdom and translation transported the contemporary city to the long-gone age of the early Christian martyrs and the foundation of its Christian community. A similar process unfolded at Montevergine where Januarius, alongside other local martyrs, bore witness to the region's venerable antique history. His ability to transmit these memories at both Naples and the monastery attests to a sustained interest in this particular chapter of local history.

San Gennaro was equally capable of memorialising a more recent history as he was the distant past. Several of his iterations testified to the Angevin era, for example, as manifested in the reliquary bust and the tabernacle. The former, adorned with the heraldic emblems of the Neapolitan House of Anjou, and the latter, a miniaturised depiction of the gothic cathedral, especially evoked the patronage of King Charles II of Anjou. While their designs maintained the relics' affiliation with the Angevin age, these objects accrued layers of meaning. By the late fifteenth century, the blood miracle was triggered by their dramatic and ceremonious reunion. Though they had been introduced independently of one another, San Gennaro of the skull and of the blood were now inseparable.

At the same time, historical memory is not always uniform, nor static. Elements of San Gennaro's cult could be employed to reshape, or even contest, historical traditions. In Part Three, for example, we saw how Montevergine employed a commemorative bust to illustrate the saint's long-standing, active presence at the monastery, while Fra Bernardino of Sicily, in collaboration with Oliviero Carafa, advanced an alternative tradition, one which emphasised the relics' neglect at this same space.⁷⁹⁵ This episode not only underscores the saint's centrality in Montevergine's and Naples' sacred imagination, but also his multiplicity. These two rival traditions successfully ran in parallel and both stakeholders, the Verginian monks and Cardinal Carafa, bolstered their arguments through textual and material means. Of course, aspects of the cult could also be deployed to reimagine memory within a local community. Fra Bernardino's assertions regarding the origins of the blood, for example, not only introduced new components of the cult, but critically influenced how subsequent generations understood the city's sacred past.⁷⁹⁶ In this way, components of San Gennaro's cult appear not as a passive repository of tradition, but as an instrument through which historical identity was negotiated and reconfigured.

This discussion draws out a key observation: the many versions of San Gennaro rarely existed independently. Instead, they were born out of, and continually reshaped through, a process of mutual interaction. San Gennaro of the *inghirlandati* and of the pig exemplify this dynamic. At first glance, their identities seem at opposition with one another. Though united under the same

⁷⁹⁵ Chapter Five, p. 134.

⁷⁹⁶ Chapter Six, p. 152.

feast day, the former articulated the saint's special patronage over the episcopate, while the latter functioned as a form of episcopal criticism. Yet, San Gennaro of the pig would not have acquired its critical connotations without the *inghirlandati*'s construction of the saint as an episcopal patron.

The interplay between these iterations is further illustrated by the conflicting interpretations of the saint's body in the later fifteenth century by the monks of Montevergine, the Carafa brothers, and the inhabitants of Naples. The discovery of this relic produced several distinct, yet related, impressions of the saint. The Verginian monks, for example, regarded Gennaro a member of their community, one who embodied the region's shared sacred antiquity. While not contesting his relationship to early Christian southern Italy, Oliviero and Alessandro Carafa instead emphasised Gennaro's role as a patron of Naples and its local church. They thus insisted that the body belonged in - and *to* - the city's cathedral. At the same time, the brothers' sought to broaden access to the saint's unified remains. Their vision, however, did not align with that of the people of Naples. Thanks to the mobility of the skull and blood relics, which circulated the saint's presence within the city, the urban populace increasingly conceived of San Gennaro as an immediate and participatory member of the Neapolitan community, not solely as an ecclesiastical patron. Over time, demands for increased access to the saint facilitated a new iteration, one we might call 'San Gennaro of the *popolo*.'⁷⁹⁷ Thus, led by the leader of the *popolo seggio*, Naples' lay members articulated a vision of the saint that differed from that of the Carafa brothers, one which did not deny Gennaro's historic ecclesiastical patronage but instead emphasised his proximity to, and special care for, the city's local inhabitants.

The example of the body also reveals the selective process through which sanctity is constructed. The emergence of 'San Gennaro of the *popolo*' required acts of prioritisation. In this case, access to the relics, and especially the liquefaction, emerged as paramount whereas the body was comparatively marginalised. From the sixteenth century onwards, this iteration of the saint enjoyed great success, so much so that the Spanish Viceroy increasingly intervened with the procedures of the May feast as a way to express their control over the *seggi* and, more broadly, Naples' residents.⁷⁹⁸ The understanding that the saint shared a special relationship with the people of Naples ultimately culminated at the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 1631.⁷⁹⁹ As the natural disaster threatened to destroy the surrounding area, the locals rushed to the cathedral to see their patron. Together, with the archbishop, they processed the relics, and the eruption purportedly ceased. This event catapulted the saint into even greater significance and cemented his special patronage over local volcanic eruptions, perhaps creating a "San Gennaro of Mount Vesuvius." More broadly, this process of selection also illustrates how facets of saints' cults were unevenly preserved. In Gennaro's case, certain manifestations - such as the pig or the garlanded priests - gradually receded into obscurity whereas others, namely the liquefaction, remained the mainstays of his veneration.

The uneven preservation of multiple elements of the cult underscores a central argument of this thesis: that the development of sanctity is neither linear nor necessarily incremental, but contingent upon shifting historical circumstances. Sainthood identities, as well as their memories,

⁷⁹⁷ Here, I refer to *popolo* as the 'people' – inclusive of the city's aristocratic and non-aristocratic lay inhabitants – not the formal *seggio*.

⁷⁹⁸ As argued in: Dauverd, *Church and State in Spanish Italy*.

⁷⁹⁹ de Ceglia, *The Natural History*, 205-206; Milena Viceconte, "The Other Hero: Viceroy Monterrey in Literary and Figurative Sources on the 1631 Eruption of Vesuvius," in *Heroes in Dark Times. Saints and Officials Tackling Disaster (16th-17th Centuries)*, eds. Gennaro Schiano, Milena Viceconte, and Domenico Cecere (Rome: Viella, 2023), 183–205.

were continually renegotiated and reconceived as social, political, and ecclesiastical contexts evolved over time. Emphasising Gennaro's multiplicity, rather than a fixed identity, has thus allowed us to explore how Naples' historic contingencies encouraged, if not necessitated, the reconfiguration of the cult. As these contingencies evolved over time, so too did the ways in which a saint was understood and manifested.

This argument challenges a previous understanding of Gennaro's sanctity which attributed the dramatic reemergence of his cult to particular historical moments attached to the blood. This thesis thus offers a new interpretation of the relic's emergence. An exploration of the previously neglected Orsini Constitutions has illustrated how the translation feast was carefully constructed to evoke the saint's physical presence and draw his hagiographic legends into the contemporary age. Through its visceral invocation of Gennaro's personhood, the blood miracle can be understood as a dramatic intensification of pre-existing beliefs relating to his presence. Subsequently, the introduction of the blood should not be understood as an isolated innovation, but a development emerging from established devotional practices. This interpretation thus demonstrates how, contrary to previous understandings, the relic was not the impetus for Gennaro's patronal cult. Instead, it constituted one phase of its ongoing construction, albeit a crucial one.

Identifying San Gennaro's multiplicity has proven a helpful tool by which to trace the construction of his sanctity and the experience of his cult during this period. The coexistence of these iterations draws our attention to threads of continuity, such as the significance of his translation legend, and change, as exemplified in the varied reception of the saint's body. Ultimately, this investigation has demonstrated that his cult was revived and reshaped across a dynamic process, rather than the product of one historical moment. This brings us to a broader historiographical conversation regarding 'saint-making' in late medieval Naples. It is to this topic I now turn.

III. On "Saint-Making" and Future Scholarship

As noted in the Introduction, in previous scholarship, the late medieval Neapolitan cult of saints is defined by its deficiencies. Vitolo once argued that, because the archbishops did not pursue causes for canonisations, there was no "saints' factory" in Naples.⁸⁰⁰ While this thesis does not protest the lack of new saintly models, it does reject this reductive account of saint-making and the role of Naples' archbishops. As this project has shown, these clergymen, in collaboration with several royal and lay shareholders, repeatedly intervened in San Gennaro's pre-existing cult to shape and reshape his sanctity for new audiences. Rather than a passive or accidental process, the transformation of the cult required foresight, vision, collaboration, and practical knowledge of liturgical practices elsewhere. It involved commissioning artisans, overseeing construction projects, enacting liturgies, and considering the city's liturgical and devotional life. This was time-consuming, expensive, and, at times, challenging. If Alessandro Carafa's wintery journey to Montevergine tells us anything, it is the great lengths Naples' archbishops were willing to go on behalf of their patron and the development of his cult.

I therefore offer an alternative characterisation of both these ecclesiastical figures and, Naples' so-called "saints' factory." I contend the active reconstruction of San Gennaro's cult constituted an act of saint-making. Although working with an inherited saint, rather than a new

⁸⁰⁰ Vitolo, "Santità, culti, e strutture socio-politiche," 36.

candidate, these clergymen made deliberate interventions which generated reimagined or new iterations of the saint and overwhelmingly transformed his cult. Likewise, I amend Vitolo's model: while Naples' archbishops did not pursue canonised saints, they did sustain a 'factory' dedicated to the continual reimagining of the city's most ancient figures. As this dissertation has demonstrated, this process not only included Gennaro but also that of his companions, Eutichus and Acutius, as well as several other historic bishop-saints, such as Agrippinus. Rather than one of lack, I thus characterise this period as one of tradition-centred renewal.

We might wonder why the bishops directed their efforts towards pre-existing cults rather than new ones. This was not for a lack of options; they could have easily championed St Louis of Toulouse, for example. Instead, they consistently vouched for the city's most ancient figures. Their adherence to this model suggests that Naples' bishops considered it their responsibility to preserve and cultivate the city's old-guard patrons, including San Gennaro. As we have seen, this was not dissimilar from the bishops of northern and central Italy who, despite the influx of newer mendicant saints, clung to their ancient episcopal models.⁸⁰¹ Yet, even these ecclesiastical authorities acquiesced to, if not promoted, newer forms of sanctity whereas those in Naples did not incorporate any recently canonised saints into their *sanctorale*, collect their relics, or sponsor their canonisations. I propose that this apparent loyalty to traditional models assisted these clerics in constructing their own distinct identity and autonomy in the face of a rapidly evolving, and often violent, political landscape, which was characterised by frequent papal interference.

Such differences bring me to a much broader historiographical problem. Scholars of southern Italy have long observed that this region remains insufficiently integrated into wider narrative of Italian religious history. This raises a fundamental question: was sainthood in the south *so* distinct from that of the centre and north that such divisions are warranted? While this project cannot address this issue entirely, it does challenge the assumptions which sustain it. As this thesis has illustrated, the development of San Gennaro's cult shares many analogies with that of patronal cults elsewhere on the peninsula. Our exploration of the May feast in Part Two is especially demonstrative of this; as north of Rome, this festivity celebrated a traditional episcopal figure, fostered a sense of communal identity, reaffirmed - and challenged - social and ecclesiastical hierarchies, and included a relic procession, obedience rituals and animal-related competitions.⁸⁰² These similarities suggest that Neapolitan sanctity was not isolated but participated in broader patterns of devotions in late medieval Italy.

Furthermore, this investigation demonstrates that, contrary to previous scholarship, which has largely failed to include southern Italian feasts in historiographic discourse relating to civic religion, San Gennaro's celebration did indeed function as a civic feast.⁸⁰³ This brings us to a larger conversation relating to civic patrons and cults. As explored in Part Two, the development of Gennaro's sainthood diverged from that of his counterparts in central and northern Italy in several ways. This departure is most evident in the involvement of Naples' local secular rulers, the Angevin and Aragonese monarchs. While several aspects of Gennaro's cult were shaped by these crowns, neither attempted to appropriate the saint as a signal of their political authority or military prowess. Subsequently, his example complicates our current model of civic patronage, suggesting that it was not necessarily reliant on the interventions of secular authorities nor was it inherently tied to articulations of political power or identity. Rather, championing a civic patron required the

⁸⁰¹ Webb, *Patrons*.

⁸⁰² *Ibid.*, 319–21.

⁸⁰³ Chapter Three, pp. 95–96.

collaborative efforts of ecclesiastical figures, lay inhabitants, and local rulers. Moreover, it was a saint's ability to embody a collective social and cultural past, even one that was, at times, reimagined and contested, that often thrust them into a position of civic significance.

These observations warrant further scholarly attention. A better understanding of how civic patrons developed and functioned in the south would greatly assist how we conceive of broader religious and devotional developments across the peninsula. As interest in the daily religious life of the laity continues to reemerge, especially in Italian scholarship, the rejection of reductive stereotypes relating to southern Italy and the outdated clergy-laity dichotomy will be essential for future research in how non-clergymen interacted with, and actively shaped, sainthood in this region.⁸⁰⁴ More specifically, a synthesis of the development of sanctity in late medieval southern Italy represents a critical future avenue for research. While a good deal of work has been done on individual cults, as I noted in my Introduction, a wider understanding of how sainthood was constructed, understood, and experienced in this region is conspicuously lacking. Even more broadly, the revitalisation and maintenance of ancient cults during this period represents a line of inquiry that has not been sufficiently integrated into the field of late medieval sanctity. An exploration which is not limited to solely the new saints produced by canonisation efforts but includes the reinvigoration of traditional models is needed to create a more textured portrait of how sainthood was constructed during this period.

Furthermore, this thesis invites a reconsideration of the methods by which late medieval sainthood is explored. As hitherto, such investigations have privileged textual sources stemming from municipal or civic archives and canonisation procedures, including those successful or otherwise.⁸⁰⁵ What do we do in territories where such evidence is not available? Were saints simply not "made" in places where canonisation procedures were not pursued? Was sanctity static where civic authorities did not intervene as readily as other locations, such as the Italian Communes?

This thesis thus acts as a case-study by which to approach the construction of sanctity in such areas. Situating a cult's key developments within specific, historical circumstances allows us to trace its broader evolution, identify its stakeholders, and recognise moments of change and continuity. Reconstructing the "overall climate" of a religious devotion in this manner, as Sodano recently articulated, is critical in avoiding fragmenting its history into individual episodes and falling into the outdated clergy-laity dichotomy.⁸⁰⁶ Liturgical sources will be especially helpful in such future endeavours, providing significant, though often underutilised, insights into the prescription, enactment and reception of religious devotion. Though prioritising clerical voices, such materials display a plurality of actors, including members of the laity. Far from presenting either the clergy or laity as homogeneous entities, this body of evidence frequently differentiates between internal hierarchies, assigning specific roles and responsibilities to specific actors. Close attention to these distinctions reveals the complex and layered experience of medieval liturgical and devotional life, across social and ecclesiastical strata.

On 19 September 2026, the Feast of San Gennaro in New York City will celebrate its 100th anniversary [See Images Twelve and Thirteen]. For two weeks, the neighborhood of Little Italy in Manhattan will shut down its streets for carnival rides, food stalls, street vendors, and two

⁸⁰⁴ As Sodano tracked recently, see his full comments: Sodano, "Miracoli e devozioni," 7–33.

⁸⁰⁵ Finucane, *Contested Canonizations*, 2–4.

⁸⁰⁶ Sodano, "Miracoli e devozioni," esp. 19–21.

processions to host over one million attendees.⁸⁰⁷ A hallmark of contemporary Italian American identity, the feast is more associated with cultural pride than religious devotion. Street performers attempt renditions of Frank Sinatra's *New York, New York*; and tourists shop for t-shirts with their favorite quotes from *The Godfather* and *The Sopranos*. Upon hearing the name 'Gennaro,' New Yorkers are more likely to think of cannoli than miraculously liquefying blood. In fact, most participants are almost certainly unaware that across the Atlantic Ocean, two small vials of centuries-old, coagulated blood are sitting in a safe, awaiting yet another opportunity to prove their thaumaturgical abilities.

Between 1853 and 1921, over four million Italians immigrated from the port of Naples to the United States, via Ellis Island in New York City.⁸⁰⁸ Fleeing economic and political hardship in their homeland, these "huddled masses"⁸⁰⁹ brought with them their respective cultural and religious traditions.⁸¹⁰ The Neapolitans brought San Gennaro. While these immigrants moved to several locations across the States, they especially localised on the lower east side of Manhattan. There, the laity, continuing a time-honoured Neapolitan tradition of chapel-building, fundraised and constructed the Church of the Most Precious Blood, which doubled as the Shrine of San Gennaro, in 1904.⁸¹¹ For the occasion, the Franciscan Order, who then oversaw the shrine, acquired a relic of the saint's blood directly from Naples.⁸¹² The space became a religious and cultural hub for the local southern Italian community, which eventually founded the feast of San Gennaro in 1926. Beyond its devotional function, the *fešta* served as a critical meeting point for Italian immigrants without fear of religious persecution, most notably by nearby Irish communities. Over the years, its attendees expanded beyond the immigrant community to encompass local New Yorkers and, in time, tourists. Nevertheless, many participants and organisers still attend the feast on account of their familial origins, seeking to maintain, and introduce their children to, their cultural identity.

While the *fešta* has distinctly New York characteristics, modern proceedings still offer a nod to its Neapolitan heritage. Today, a bust of the saint is paraded through the city's bustling streets on two separate occasions. On the first, he is placed on the bed of a flat-bed truck, which drives behind a series of ostentatious floats hosting singers, bands, and other forms of entertainment. On the second, he is hoisted upon the shoulders of men from the *Figli di San Gennaro*, the local Italian-American association. Unlike its counterpart in Naples, New York's bust stands alone. There is no blood to greet it, nor any images of Diego Maradona to compete with it. Amid the food stalls, a different statue of the saint is placed within a makeshift shrine, where children on their parent's shoulders haphazardly stick bright green dollar bills throughout the booth and on Gennaro's body. A classic sign of the United States, the money serves as a poignant reminder of

⁸⁰⁷ "Feast of San Gennaro returns to Little Italy for 99th year," *NBC New York* 2025.

<https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/san-gennaro-festival-little-italy/6391716/>

⁸⁰⁸ For an overview of this process, and the discrimination these immigrants faced: Massimo di Gioacchino, *The Ruin of Souls: A Religious History of Italian Catholic Immigrants (1853-1921)* (Dallas, Texas: Bridwell Press, 2025).

⁸⁰⁹ Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus," in *The Poems of Emma Lazarus, Volume I: Narrative, Lyric, and Dramatic*, ed. Susan L Rattiner. (Newburyport: Dover Publications, 2014), 143.

⁸¹⁰ For how such traditions evolved when placed in an American context, see the excellent case study: Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

⁸¹¹ For a history of the parish, see its website: "Shrine Church of the Most Precious Blood," <https://oldcathedral.org/shrine-church-of-the-most-precious-blood>.

⁸¹² According to its website, as in the footnote above. It is unclear how this relic is utilised, if at all.

place. We are in New York, the beating heart of America's - and indeed the world's – economy. Mount Vesuvius is several thousand miles away.

This San Gennaro is just the latest iteration of the saint, one who is actively conditioned by the circumstances he finds himself in. The import of this feast demonstrates the intense localisation of San Gennaro's cult to Naples. As we saw in this dissertation, devotion to this saint remained confined to the city limits for centuries. Only when the city's inhabitants themselves scaled its walls did San Gennaro follow behind. The endurance of his *fešta* in New York testifies to the significance that a protector, a miracle worker, and a patron saint can hold for a people in need. Threats including the plague, warfare and Mount Vesuvius preempted San Gennaro's swift recourse throughout Naples' history; in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Neapolitans imported their patron to a distant land as they grappled with the hardships of tenement housing, anti-Catholic prejudices, and racism in their newfound homes. Today, we might wonder what twenty-first century New Yorkers, many of whom claim Neapolitan ancestry, take away from their ancestors' patron. Is it the recollection of their grandparents' tables and religious devotions, or perhaps ideas relating to the 'American dream' that calls them back to the feast? Is it merely a matter of good food and good company? Or does today's feast speak to something inseparable, the amalgamation of New York, American, and Italian identities over the decades? Or is it something far less romantic and more commercial, like the success of *The Godfather*; that perpetuates the feast? Perhaps, it is not as simple as any of these questions would suggest. Nevertheless, we can say one thing with certainty: like a good patron, San Gennaro will follow the sons and daughters of Naples, wherever they might be.



[Image Twelve] Feast of San Gennaro in Manhattan, September 2019⁸¹³



[Image Thirteen] Statue of San Gennaro in Manhattan, September 2021⁸¹⁴

⁸¹³ Image: "Photo Gallery," *The Feast of San Gennaro*. Accessed 6 August 2026. <https://sangennaronyc.org/>.

⁸¹⁴ Image: Maria Teresa Zonca, "San Gennaro torna a New York in un'esplosione di sapori napoletani," *La Voce di New York*, 14 September 2021, <https://lavocedinyork.com/new-york/2021/09/14/san-gennaro-torna-a-new-york-in-unesplosione-di-sapori-napoletani/>

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Orsini Constitutions, Constitutions #35 – 38 [The Translation Feast of San Gennaro]

Transcription from: Luigi Parascandolo, *Memorie storiche-critiche-diplomatiche della chiesa di Napoli*, vol. 3, p. 133 fn. 3

“Num XXXV. Item in Festo S. Januarii de mense Maii talis ordo servetur.”

Num. XXXVI. Die Sabbati in Vigilia eiusdem Festi de mane in aurora Caput beatissimum Januarii coopertum pannis cum duobus Clericis portantibus duas torcias reverenter portari debet per Clericos, quibus... Archiepiscopus commisterit, ad unam infrascriptarum ecclesiarum Secundum dispositionem... Archiepiscopi, videlicet Sancti Apostoli, Sancto Paulus Maior, Sancta Mariae Maior, Sancta Mariae Rotundae, Sancto Andreae ad Nidum, Sancto Giorgius Maior, Sancta Mariae ad Plazzam, vel ad aliam Ecclesiam, si... Archiepiscopo videbitur...”

Num. XXXVII. Dominus Archiepiscopus...processionaliter cum Capituolo suo toto, Episcopis, Abbatibus, Clero universo, cunctis de populo ibid. congregatis, vadit ad Ecclesiam, in qua Caput beatissimum Januarii reconditum fuerat die Sabbati proxime praecedentis, de mane, ut superius exprimitur, et cum ibi fuerit Universitas civitatis Neapolis quae Caput beatissimum Januarii associare tenetur...duo de praedicta Universitate de Platea Capuana et Nidi, et inde duo de aliis Plateis, et duo de populo portare tenentur supra Caput beatissimum Januarii pallium cum hastis more solito. Quod Caput in die praedicta deferre tenentur Praelati usque ad tertium spatium viae secundum beneplacitum Domini Archiepiscopus et postea ubi fatigati essent, Capitulum Ecclesiae Neapolis deferre tenetur. Quod cum delatum fuerit ad dictam Ecclesiam, et in Altare reverenter...repositum, Dominus Archiepiscopus vadit in Sedem suam...et incipit Vesperas... Episcopis et Abbatibus suffraganeis stantibus in stallis seu locis consuetis...Et ad... Missam venire tenentur Archipresbyteri Calviczani, Afragolae, et Foris fluminis, cum Clericis suis cum coronis roseis et aliorum florum, nec non et deferre arbores ornatas floribus et avibus diversis...”

Num. XXXVIII. Antequam Dominus Archiepiscopus sit in Ecclesia, tenentur Episcopi et Abbates omnes suffraganei una cum Clero universo civitatis Neapolis esse in Choro parati, videlicet Episcopi et Abbates cum pluvialibus mitris et crociis; Capitulum autem cum cottis et pluvialibus Clerici vero omnes cum cottis, coronati coronis roseis vel aliorum florum in capitibus, nec non deferre arbores ornatas floribus et avibus diversis, etc.”

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