It is well known that each of the Neapolitan Seggi erected its own small Seggio building in the city of Naples where they held their meetings, and it is generally assumed that this was the only architecture they patronized. This chapter argues that the Seggi might usefully be regarded as indirect architectural patrons on a far more ambitious scale, with significant consequences for the spiritual profile of the city of Naples as a whole. I suggest here that the Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro (fig. 1), one of the most important buildings of baroque Naples, established by the eletti in 1527 and build in the cathedral from 1608, can usefully be understood as an architecture of the Seggi. This may seem a surprising claim: the idea that the Seggi, overwhelmingly secular and administrative institutions, might have played a significant role in the production of what remains one of Naples’ most spectacular religious buildings demands examination – after all, the Treasury Chapel held the relics of Naples’ protectors, especially the miraculously liquefying blood of San Gennaro (St. Januarius).

That examination, offered here, serves both to enrich our understanding of the cultural and urban significance of the Neapolitan Seggi, particularly the interpenetration of the Seggi with religious institutions, and to throw new light on the Treasury Chapel and its

1 Naples’ civic administration had its seat in the Piazza of San Lorenzo, next to the basilica of San Lorenzo. Every six months each Seggio elected its own representative, the eletto, who sat in the Tribunale. From the end of the fifteenth century Naples was administered by a group of „Eletti“, in which the nobility had five votes and the People only one. Thus the government of the city was effectively in the hands of 150 noble families, even though its population was by mid-seventeenth century c. 450,000. After 1548 the eletto of the people was no longer selected from the 58 procurators of the peoples’ ottine, but by the Viceroy from three names voted by the procurators. Muto, Giovanni, Il Patriziato napoletano e il governo della città capitale, in: idem – Capasso Torre delle Pastene, Enzo – Sanfelice di Bagoli, P. (ed.), Patriziato Napolitano e Governo della Città, Naples 2005, p. 17–23, esp. p. 20.

2 Gennaro, Bishop of Benevento, resisted persecution during Emperor Diocletian’s reign, and was eventually put to death by beheading on 19 September 305 at the Solfatara in Pozzuoli, at the orders of Timotheo. His blood, the story goes, was secretly gathered by a devout local woman, in two small ampoules and preserved along with other parts of his body, including head, finger, and bones. For many years his relics seem to have been more or less ignored. Although the date of the first liquefaction is disputed, in 1389 San Gennaro’s blood was recorded as having miraculously liquefied when brought into contact with the saint’s head. Paolo Regio’s „Le Vite de’ Sette Santi Protettori di Napoli“ (Naples 1579) was part of a concerted effort to secure the saint’s spiritual dominance as part of a „team“ of protector saints of Naples.
peculiar urban significance. Above all, it allows a reading of the Treasury Chapel as producing a new form of place, a new understanding of the city, and as fashioning an important new form of urban holiness. While the importance of individual members of the various Seggi as patrons of religious art and architecture has never been disputed, this chapter addresses the development of a new form of patronage of the Seggi working together for specific institutional ends. While the interweavement between secular and religious issues in early modern culture has long been acknowledged, this chapter illuminates the complex nature of the precise material terms of their intersection.3

The Treasury Chapel has been interpreted by scholars overwhelmingly as a teleological fulfilment of a vow made during the plague of 1527.4 Its concentrated artistic splendour has been interpreted, without exception, in terms of struggles and triumphs of individual

3 The problem of the relationship between materiality and holiness is one I consider at length in my forthcoming book Hills, Helen, The Matter of Miracles. Forms of holiness in baroque Naples (will be published in 2012).

artists. The chapel has been steadily characterized as exemplifying Neapolitan „Counter-Reformation“ devotion, and more specifically as the centre for the cult of San Gennaro and as a grand receptacle for the precious silver reliquaries of all Naples’ patronal saints.\(^5\) Thus the chapel is overwhelmingly treated as mere representation of, or as a passive receptacle for, events and objects produced and existing already somewhere else. I suggest here that to consider the Treasury Chapel in relation to the patronage of the Seggi allows a reading of this important work of architecture as not simply representing something already in existence elsewhere, but as productive of a new form of holiness that was at once both emphatically urban (and, as such, apparently all-inclusive), and yet aristocratic – like the Seggi themselves.

Most art historical accounts of the Treasury Chapel interpret it as a series of engagements with important individual artists. A more critical examination of its patronal body, the Deputazione del Tesoro di San Gennaro, is long overdue. Deputations or committees were bodies with specific functions. Some of them were administrative, others jurisdictional, such as the Tribunale della fortificazione, acque e mazzonata. Other deputations had no jurisdictional power, but enjoyed considerable political weight, such as the Deputazione contro il Santo Uffizio, the Deputazione dei capitolati e privilegi, the Deputazione della Moneta, and the Deputazione del Tesoro di San Gennaro.\(^6\) The Deputation of the Treasury of San Gennaro was an extraordinary body in Neapolitan political society, and remarkable – indeed, anomalous – as a patron. Despite the location of the Treasury Chapel in Naples cathedral (fig. 2), it was administered and directed by the Deputation, quite independently of the Duomo. The Deputation was a group of twelve laymen, two deputed from each of the five aristocratic Seggi, a representative of the Seggio del Popolo of Naples, and a Treasurer, who was charged with conducting the miracle itself. The Deputies thus represented their Seggi directly \textit{ex officio} at the Treasury Chapel. To this extent the chapel can be read as a product of their specific joint patronage. The Seggi did not pool resources in any other institution or patronize any other important piece of architecture – as a group – in this way. The Treasury Chapel was the singular focus and object of its delegated ambitions and desires. This patronage – anomalous, distinguished, and distinctive as it was – sheds significant light on urban institutions in seventeenth-century Naples, including the Seggi.

The Treasury Chapel was as anomalous as its curious patronage and must surely be understood in relation to it. Built in the Cathedral itself, it was exempt from canonical jurisdiction. A religious building, of city-wide spiritual and religious significance, of artistic prominence and material lavishness, it was administered, not by the Cathedral clergy or religious, but by a group of secular aristocratic laymen, in their very capacity as representatives of specific secular urban institutions – the Seggi. This anomalous situation gave rise to two important aspects of the chapel. First, while it appears to be a homogenous design, it is a radically heterogeneous space, with multiple investments by external institutions from across the city. Second, its spiritual claims were categorically made on behalf

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\(^5\) This position is most starkly articulated in Savarese, Silvana, Francesco Grimaldi e l’architettura della Controriforma a Napoli, Rome 1986, p. 116–126.

of the city as a whole. In turn, this produced a new rhizomatic form of urban holiness and architecture. In using the Deleuzian term „rhizomatic“, I am deliberately trying to invoke a non-genealogical conception of relationships of patron-architect-architecture and to avoid the assumption – that underpins much architectural history of this period – that architecture is simple instantiation of pre-existing ideas of either patron or architect-artist, or both.⁷ If we resist the assumption that architecture’s effects are necessarily intentioned by either architect or patron, then we allow architecture itself to be productive. It is that capacity in which I am particularly interested.

Let us start by revisiting the familiar narrative of the Treasury Chapel as a built response to the terrible plague of 1526–1528. In brief, it runs like this. In 1526 the plague once again seized Naples in its deathly grip. Coinciding with a bloody war with France, this was a terrible time for the city and Kingdom. In increasing desperation, „the Neapolitan people, unable to find any other solution, had recourse to the help of the saints“⁸. In par-

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⁸ Celano, Carlo, Notizie del Bello dell’antico e del curioso della Città di Napoli (III, 1), ed. by Giovan Battista Chiarini, Naples 1856, p. 235.
ticular, they turned to San Gennaro. On 13 January 1527, immediately after the traditional procession of the feast of the translation of San Gennaro’s relics from Montevergine to Naples, the *eletti* of Naples vowed to raise 11,000 ducats, of which 1,000 within a year for a silver tabernacle, and the remaining 10,000 to build, within ten years, a chapel in his honour. The Deputation was established in 1601; papal permission was given in 1605; and the first stone was laid in 1608. It was to be served by six canons and four clerics. The canons were to be chosen by the six Seggi, which were to take it in turns to elect a treasurer from their number.

The deputys demonstrated uncompromising resolve and ambition for the chapel from the outset. As early as 1606 they requested the institution of a further twelve chaplains. And they refused to be disbanded after building was finished, but instead incessantly strove to enhance the Chapel’s importance. Naturally enough, the ambitions and independence of the Deputation and its chapel were resented by the Archbishop and cathedral canons. The absence of clear archiepiscopal control over a substantial chapel inside the cathedral itself was bad enough, but to make matters worse, it was increasingly clear that no expense was to be spared in its lavish adornment. Moreover, its running was bedecked by privileges and exemptions, and the miraculous liquefaction of blood attracted increasing attention, including from Viceroy and vicereine. Thus the cuckoo in the nest threatened to upstage archbishop, canons and cathedral. The jurisdiction of the chapel was bitterly contested by the archiepiscopal court. The most controversial issues included whether alms and income for a chapel administered by laymen were ecclesiastical or lay property, and whether the Deputation should continue to exist after building work was finished. In Rome and in Naples Cardinal Archbishop Francesco Boncompagni and the Cathedral canons criticized the overweening claims („pretendenze“) of the deputation. Four issues which provoked particular disgruntlement were enmeshed: the question of who controlled the chapel; the extent to which control of the chapel necessarily meant control of the precious relics of San Gennaro; the precise nature of the relationship between Deputies, Archbishop (and cathedral canons) and the relics and chapel; and the Deputies’ correct relationship to the cathedral.

Almost from its inception, the chapel was run administratively and financially by the Deputation, but was accountable to the Archbishop, while its jurisdiction lay in Rome.

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9 The initial vow was made by the *eletti* of the city of Naples in the presence of the Vicar General Monsignor Donato, bishop of Ischia. Thus „the City“, as the municipal administration was called, had patronage rights over the chapel and the tabernacle was to be the property of the *eletti*. See Strazzullo, La Real Cappella (note 4), p. 3. The deed of 13 January 1527 was notarized by Vincenzo de Rosis. The document was signed by Marino Tomacelli for the Seggio of Capuana, Francesco d’Alagno for Nido, Galeazzo Cicinello and Antonio Sanfelice for Montagna, Alberigo de Liguoro for Porto Nova, Antonio d’Alessandro for Porto and Paolo Calamazza for the Seggio of the Popolo. See Bellucci, Antonio, Memorie storiche ed artistiche del Tesoro nella cattedrale dal secolo XVI al XVIII desunte da soli documenti inediti, Naples 1915, p. 1–2.

10 See Strazzullo, La Real Cappella (note 4), p. 3.

11 According to a long-standing decree of the Reale Camera della Sommaria, issued January 1477, in relation to endowed chapels and *estaurite* administered and governed by laymen *bona sunt laicorum et non ecclesiarum*. The Bull of Paul V required the Treasurer and Deputation to give account each year to the archbishop of its income from pious alms and legacies. Strazzullo, La Real Cappella (note 4), p. 5.
Thus, in spite of inevitable tensions and compromises with archbishops and cathedral canons, the Treasury Chapel was first and foremost a city chapel, run by city representatives: always more aristocratic than ecclesiastical in organizational terms, more civic than See in compass. Its governance is singular in that, in spite of the injunctions of Trent affirming episcopal power and authority, and in spite of the fact that this chapel was located inside the Cathedral of Naples itself, nevertheless its governance was independent of both cathedral and Archbishop.

The terms of the chapel’s establishment, therefore, granted considerable autonomy in the financial and administrative arrangements of the Chapel and Deputation, while also binding the cult of San Gennaro to the cathedral, under the aegis of the Archbishop. Of course, the Deputation needed archiepiscopal support, but especially during the early years of the chapel during the tenure of archbishops Francesco Boncompagni (1626–1641) and Ascanio Filomarino (1641–1666), disagreements burst to the surface. The chapel’s special privileges irked the cathedral canons, as did the behaviour of its clergy. Of particular issue through the 1630s was the question of who was permitted to participate during the procession of the relics. From the start, therefore, the recognition of the powers of both the Deputation and the Archbishop together with ambiguities about the precise relationship...
of their jurisdictional claims accommodated the ambitions of both Archbishop and Seggi, while also sowing the seeds for dispute between them.  

The Deputation and the Seggi fashioned the Treasury Chapel to produce an urban spiritual centre which welded viceregal and archiepiscopal to civic engagement under their own aegis in two principal ways. First, the visual appearance of the Treasury Chapel was strategically distanced from what was in many ways its predecessor – the Succorpo Chapel (see fig. 3) – a distancing that allowed the Treasury Chapel to engage the devotion to San Gennaro with a far wider urban social group. Second, the Treasury Chapel required and maintained an unprecedented degree of spiritual and economic investment from diverse religious institutions across the city. Convents, monasteries, and parish churches were required to translate their precious relics of Naples’ protector saints in specially made

12 In fact, tensions over who held the precious blood of San Gennaro pre-existed the building of the new Treasury Chapel, since by 1509 it seems that it had been removed from the Treasury tower to the Succorpo, but by 1542, it had been returned to the Treasury tower. San Gennaro’s body was allowed to remain in the Carafan Succorpo chapel, but the blood was more highly valued by the cathedral and civic authorities. See Norman, Diana, The Succorpo in the cathedral of Naples. „Empress of all chapels“, in: Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte 49.3 (1980), p. 323–355, esp. p. 352.
silver reliquary busts to the Treasury Chapel, where they were allocated specific loculi, or niches punched into the very walls of the chapel, along the lines of the burial loculi in the ancient Neapolitan catacombs (figs. 2 and 4). These busts were formally returned on feast days, with attendant processions, to their “home” institutions. The processions on those occasions always encompassed the Seggi seats, thereby physically, ceremonially, and spiritually connecting the Treasury Chapel with a significant range of religious institutions across the city via the Seggi.

These two strategies deeply marked the chapel visually. The chapel was sharply distinguished visually from its non-Seggi sponsored predecessor to mark the important shift in its patronage, and the unusual degree to which the chapel was perforated by and informed by institutional links across the entire city. Thus the Seggi, via their Deputies, produced a dazzling chapel, which was rhizomatic in its capacities to both import institutional spiritual and material investment from without and to export spiritual authority. In short the Deputation produced a chapel that operated precisely to establish itself as the heart of Neapolitan urban spirituality.

The established account of the Chapel renders the first of these two strategies invisible. First it neatly vaults over the preceding chapter of the story of the Carafa family’s skilful engagement with the relics of San Gennaro and the building of the Succorpo Chapel (1497–1506) in the crypt of Naples cathedral; and second it fails to interpret the widespread institutional engagement with the Treasury Chapel through patronal relics as anything other than marks of pious devotion. In fact, it is impossible to understand the Treasury Chapel unless it is seen in relation to the Succorpo (see fig. 3). Indeed, the Treasury Chapel marked a significant change of key in the orchestration of the cult of San Gennaro, moving it from an introverted, if politically ambitious, Carafa family affair, to a divine address, orchestrated by the aristocratic deputation, but articulated in terms of the city of Naples as a whole. I suggest here that the new Treasury Chapel was in part a calculated repudiation of that Carafa chapel, as the Deputation sought to widen its address to the entire city.

The Treasury Chapel’s address to the city in terms of material magnificence (see fig. 1) deliberately runs counter to the tone and address of the pre-eminently Carafan renaissance Succorpo Chapel in Naples cathedral, which held San Gennaro’s bones (see fig. 3). Before the building of the Treasury Chapel, San Gennaro’s fate in Naples was tightly bound up with the ambitions of the Carafa family, one of the most powerful clans in Naples. Particularly important was the patronage of Oliviero Carafa (1430–1511), Archbishop of Naples, 1458–1484 and 1503–1505. Oliviero Carafa was a significant patron of the arts, who undertook building and decoration in Rome at S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura, S. Maria in Aracoeli, S. Pietro in Vincoli, S. Maria della Pace and, most spectacularly, Filippo Lippi’s...
beautiful Chapel of St. Thomas Aquinas at S. Maria sopra Minerva (1489–1493), with scenes from the life of St. Thomas Aquinas on the west wall and „The Annunciation with St. Thomas Aquinas presenting Cardinal Carafa to the Virgin“ on the altar wall.\textsuperscript{14}

Giuliana Vitale and others have shown that the Carafa family claimed special episcopal hegemony precisely as patrons of San Gennaro and spiritual heirs and worthy guardians of his relics.\textsuperscript{15} Between 1497 and 1695 the Carafa family promoted San Gennaro through strategic acts of art patronage to enhance their own spiritual authority and socio-political power in Naples, in sharp contradistinction to the Spanish viceregal governments which were, at best, slow to respond to the plague emergencies.\textsuperscript{16} On becoming archbishop of Naples in 1458, Oliviero Carafa’s first act of patronage was, significantly, to establish a lazaretto or hospital, closely linked with one of the principal sites of San Gennaro’s cult and named after him. It was Oliviero and Alessandro Carafa who were responsible for translating San Gennaro’s remaining relics to Naples cathedral on 13 January 1497. The translatio was more than a simple relocation. Above all, it was a triumph for the Carafa family: „a sort of privatization of the cult of San Gennaro under their guardianship“.\textsuperscript{17}

When Cardinal Oliviero Carafa in Rome heard the news, he commanded that a sumptuous chapel should be built for the saint’s bones, „as was done“\textsuperscript{18}

Cardinal Oliviero’s chapel, known as the Succorpo (see fig. 3), was an elegant but ambitious piece of architecture that unequivocally announced both the Carafa clan’s acquisition of Gennaro’s relics and their spiritual, cultural, and political capital and urban ambition. It was built directly under the main altar of Naples cathedral between 1497 and 1506 by Tommaso Malvito of Como to hold the relics of San Gennaro, including the miraculously

\begin{itemize}
  \item Oliviero Carafa left property and other income for divine worship in the chapel and for annual dowries for several young women. See Aldimari, Historia genealogica (note 13), p. 15–17. The frescoes of the east wall of the Carafa Chapel in Santa Maria sopra Minerva are now lost.
  \item Archbishop Oliviero Carafa was patron of an early plague hospital, established in 1464. In 1656 the Spanish viceroy, apparently alarmed at the prospect of economic damage and social disturbance, imprisoned a doctor for announcing an outbreak of the plague after treating Spanish soldiers recently arrived from Sardinia. See Nichols, Plague and Healing (note 15), p. 23–44; Nappi, Eduardo, Aspetti della società e dell’economia napoletana durante la peste del 1656, Naples 1980, p. 12–13.
  \item Tutini, Camillo, Memorie della Vita Miracoli, e Culto di San Gianuario Martire Vescovo di Benevento, e Principal Protettore della Città di Napoli, raccolte da Don Camillo Tutini Napoletano. Terza impressione, Naples 1633 [reprinted Naples 1703], p. 56.
\end{itemize}
liquefying blood. Its name, „Succorpo“, refers both to the main body or altar of the cathedral under which it lies and the body of the saint lying below the main body of the cathedral. Refined and restrained, entirely of white marble, apart from its richly coloured polychrome floor, its walls decorated in relief all’antica, it is a delicate underground chapel, in effect not only a classic confessio for the relics of patronus San Gennaro and a funerary chapel for Oliviero Carafa, but a repositioning of Oliviero Carafa as visible patronus in a line of continuity with invisible patrons in heaven.

The Succorpo’s columnar articulation unmistakably references antique basilicas and follows the three-aisled crypts that are found under many Romanesque cathedral choirs, especially in southern Italy, somewhat in the manner of late Antique hypogea. The altar of relics mimics the location of sarcophagi, centrally placed in the middle of some Roman hypogea. Thus the impetus in the design of the Succorpo was markedly archaeologizing: to reference tombs of martyred saints from the Roman period, in a manner appropriate to San Gennaro. The chapel’s treatment is refined, the palette extremely restrained. Walls and vault are white marble; only the beautiful floor in opus sectile is coloured. On the chapel ceiling, such that the viewer in looking at them is also looking up towards the altar in the main cathedral above, are reliefs of the Madonna and Child, St Peter, St Paul, the four Evangelists, the four principal doctors of the Church (saints Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory the Great) and the seven early bishops and patron saints of Naples (saints Ianuarius, Asprenus, Agnellus, Agrippinus, Severus, Eusebius, Athanasius), who were – apart from San Gennaro – the Carafa brothers’ predecessors as primates of Naples (fig. 5). The unusual adornment of this ceiling thereby tied the Carafa family to San Gennaro and Naples’ other patron saints.

19 The sculptural adornment and perhaps the building works were entrusted to Tommaso Malvito and his workshop, where his son, Giovanni Tommaso, also worked. Fra Bernardino attests to this in his panegyric. See Strazzullo, Franco, La Cappella Carafa del Duomo di Napoli in un poemetto del primo Cinquecento, in: Napoli Nobilissima 5 (1966), p. 59–71. Camillo Tutini claims the chapel cost 10,000 scudi. Tutini, Memorie della Vita (note 18), p. 86.


24 The side walls are impressed with twelve delicately sculpted shell-headed niches, which the seventeenth-century writer Carlo de Lellis claims were to house the relics of other saints, including the protector saints, which were to be given marble statues, but which in his day held wooden statues (statue di legno) of all the protectors of the city. Lellis, Carlo de, Parte Seconda ò vero supplemento a Napoli Sacra di D. Cesare D’Engenio Caracciolo. Ove si aggiungono le Fondationi di tutte le Chiese, Monasteri, e altri luoghi sacri della Città di Napoli e suoi Borghi, Naples 1654.
However, arguably the body to which the Succorpo overwhelmingly refers is that of Oliviero Carafa: an extraordinary over life-size sculpture of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, kneeling in prayer, dominates the interior (fig. 6). It was probably conceived from the start as his mortuary chapel, a gracious resting place for his remains alongside those of San Gennaro: his will makes clear that he wanted his body to be buried there. In its use of the same colour palette, the figure of the Cardinal corresponds to the patronal saints in the flat white marble ceiling. Only the polychromatic stone floor in its dark rich hues brings a dash of colour to the whole chapel. Restricted as colour to the earthly realm of the floor, the whiteness of the worshipping Cardinal links him unequivocally to the heavenly, other worldly saints and locates him in a related spiritual register: their candid whiteness embodies the spiritual light and moral probity of Cardinal Carafa and the patronal saints.

Thus the figure of the Cardinal Bishop is both intensely identified with the relics of San Gennaro, the object of his spiritual engagement, and with the patron saints and other holy figures above, and works as intercessor on our behalf. He is both mediator and link between earthbound worshippers and heavenly saint. His devotion to the saint justifies and consumes the chapel. It does not leave much space for other worshippers. At best, they can kneel in all too earth-bound imitation of the palely ethereal bishop. Thus the unusual figure of the kneeling Cardinal-bishop positions the Carafa both as key mediators between city and saint, and as privileged linear descendant to Gennaro and other saintly archbishops figured in the vault. The Succorpo is therefore the culmination of Oliviero Carafa’s identification with San Gennaro.


27 Franco Strazzullo quotes Oliviero Carafa’s will made on 12 March 1509: *Corpus autem relinquuo et manu tradi ecclesiastic e septulture et presens deponi intra cappellam mean beate Marie et beati Thome Aquinatis super Minervam [illegible] ac deinde trasferendum Neapolim ac sepellendum in catedrali ecclesia in alia cappella mea ubi corpus et sanguis beati Ianuarii requiescatur tumulo mei moderate et sine pompa facto*. Strazzullo, Il Cardinale Olivero Carafa (note 13), p. 149. “Moreover [my] body I leave to be sent to the ecclesiastical tomb and be laid within my chapel of the blessed Mary and Saint Thomas Aquinas in the Minerva and then be transferred to Naples and buried in the cathedral in my other chapel where the body and blood of Saint Januarius resides.” Norman, The Succorpo (note 12), p. 337. Cardinal Oliviero Carafa died in 1511 and was buried in the chapel dedicated to St. Thomas Aquinas in the right transept of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, which he had decorated with frescoes by Filippino Lippi. He acquired the site as early as 1486, work began on the chapel in 1487 and finished in 1493. See Dreszen, Oliviero Carafa (note 21), p. 168. For Carafa’s chapel at the Minerva, see Chambers, David, Patrons and artists in the Italian Renaissance, Macmillan 1970, p. 24–25 and Geiger, Gail L, Filippino Lippi’s Carafa „Annunciation“. Theology, artistic conventions and patronage, in: The Art Bulletin 63 (1981), p. 62–75.


29 For the alignment of the tomb of Oliviero Carafa with the relief of San Severo, who first brought San Gennaro’s head and blood relics to Naples Cathedral, see Dreszen, Oliviero Carafa (note 21), p. 200. While securely aligning himself with his distinguished ecclesiastical antecedents, the chapel also produced a figure of Oliviero that initiated an important new tradition of heroic episcopal imagery for the Carafa family, see Maio, Romeo de, Pittura e controriforma a Napoli, Rome 1983, p. 151–152.
By contrast, the Treasury Chapel (see fig. 1) seethes with colour and texture in its full-length dark bronze sculptures, silver busts, colourful altar-pieces and frescoes. Here the Succorpo’s archaeologizing wall decoration all’antica of arabesques, garlands, and putti is unapologetically replaced with modern – Papal – coloured marble revetment, referencing up-to-date papal funeral and reliquary chapels, such as the Sistine Chapel (1585–1589) in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, albeit without the praying pope. In sharp contradistinction to Cardinal Oliviero in the Succorpo, the aristocratic Deputation does not represent itself directly: ostensibly this chapel celebrates only its heavenly patrons, not its earthly ones. Thus there are no images of an obsequious group of aristocrats venerating the saint. Not only the Carafa clan, but archbishops and the ecclesiastical hierarchy as a whole apart from Bishop Gennaro, are effectively “eliminated” from the picture. Only the coat-of-arms of the Deputation itself modestly indicates its patronage. If the iconography eschews representations of the aristocratic deputies, this is not due to their limited ambitions. Indeed the chapel is marked as distinctly aristocratic and urban – or, more particularly, as an architecture of the Seggi – both in its form and materials, as we shall see below.
In the Treasury Chapel it is San Gennaro himself who assumes visual predominance. He receives far greater articulation than he does in the Succorpo. In the Succorpo his presence is staged through the relics in the ancient clay urn, and in the relief bust in the ceiling’s central panel (see figs. 4 and 5), but in the Treasury Chapel, his presence is far more loudly amplified. Not only are his relics presented in both the glittering bust and the mysterious ampoules of blood, but Gennaro is represented in the entrance gate, the central bronze statue in the presbytery (see fig. 1), and he is the principal subject of Jusepe de Ribera’s altar-piece „San Gennaro escapes unharmed from the furnace“, Domenichino’s „Beheading of San Gennaro“; Domenichino’s altarpiece, „Miracle on the Tomb of San Gennaro“; and he figures prominently in frescoes in the pendentives, including Domenichino’s „Christ entrusts Naples to San Gennaro’s protection, San Gennaro saves Naples from the eruption of Vesuvius, The Intercession of saints Gennaro, Agrippino and Agnello, San Gennaro saves Naples from Robert Guiscard“; and Giovanni Lanfranco’s

30 The magnificent mosaic in Santa Restituta’s Santa Maria del Principio chapel shows the Madonna and Child flanked by San Gennaro and Santa Restituta, but the iconography of the Treasury Chapel puts San Gennaro centre stage.
cupola fresco, „The Saints in Paradise“. In short, San Gennaro unequivocally displaces any overt reference to the chapels’ patrons, thereby dispensing with the evocation of the Carafa patron-suppliant and also closing down the close links between Carafa family patronage and the cult of San Gennaro. Concomitantly, an important shift occurs: the Succorpo’s emphasis on redemption through prayer (and patronage) of prominent clergy in relation to relics obscurely contained in a non-figurative becomes in the Treasury Chapel an amplified evocation of the saints themselves.

Everything about the earlier Succorpo, pre-eminently a Carafa chapel, was subverted in the new Treasury Chapel. The rectangular plan, the austere, monochrome interior of simple materials elegantly treated, the forest of columns supporting the flat ceiling are all banished. In their stead, the new chapel boasts a centralized plan with a soaring vault and cupola supported on massive piers (all internal columns banished), which produces a verticalized interior, bristling with colour and rich materials from floor to vaults, from walls to altars. In place of the pale almost translucent and immaterial sculpted stone of the under-stated Succorpo, densely coloured marbles, richly veined like flesh, bulging precious stones, and gleaming metals are amassed unabashedly in the Treasury Chapel.

While the Succorpo eschewed a pictorial programme of the life and miracles of San Gennaro, the Treasury Chapel took up that challenge. While the earlier chapel is pre-eminently ecclesiastical, with its solitary sculptural figure of the praying Cardinal, the Treasury Chapel throbs with full-length sculptures, silver busts, altar-pieces and frescoes of San Gennaro and other Neapolitan saints. A reflective evocation of a solitary and still piety in the Succorpo becomes in the Treasury Chapel a busy, competitive throng, a clamour of competing faces and bodies, a surge of energy pushing the viewer-worshipper this way and that. Thus attention shifted from the powerful pious cardinal patron in prayer to the saint for his intercession, to an overwhelming celebration and evocation, both direct and indirect, of the saints themselves. Their presence is secured now by „bringing them down to earth“ – more specifically, by locating them in the city of Naples. The ambition of the chapel has shifted from the explicit redemption of a pre-eminent figure to the implied redemption of the city of Naples as a whole, represented through its patron saints, especially San Gennaro, and implicitly in the institutional engagement at work in the chapel through the institutional investment in silver busts. In other words, the Treasury Chapel aspires to encompass the city of Naples, apparently transcending social and political divisions. In part the new Treasury Chapel is a flamboyant civic counter-point to the elegant and restrained Carafa Succorpo.

The Treasury Chapel, I suggest here, represents the orchestration of the espousal of San Gennaro as pre-eminent patron saint of Naples in emphatically lavish material terms, supposedly by the city as a whole, but in fact by the Deputation, its aristocratic administrators, as an attempt to produce San Gennaro and the Treasury Chapel as representative of the whole city, rather than merely of a small elite group. Thus San Gennaro, as holy martyr for the new Christian order, is exalted as crucial justification for a new spiritual order.

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31 I am, of course, claiming that the Deputation was concerned with appearing to do this, rather than with actually doing so.
in Naples. Since Gennaro had not been claimed as patron saint by any other city, Naples’ relationship with him could be both exclusive and demanding. More than that, competing clans and social groups within the city were able to make and remake San Gennaro in their own image. Thus the chapel was a particularly vital transformational point through which tensions between competing urban institutions assumed specific forms.

The change in emphasis from the Succorpo to the Treasury Chapel is significant materially, socially, liturgically, urbanistically, and spiritually. Prayer is replaced by presence. Emphasis on a relation achieved through concentrated prayer, articulated in the Succorpo, is replaced in the Treasury Chapel by access to presence apparently already given and readily granted. The pious cardinal patron praying to the saint for his intercession is replaced by strategic wonder, which unequivocally displaces and dispenses with the bodies of aristocratic ecclesiastics. Instead, the bodies to which the new chapel is overwhelmingly dedicated are those of saints. The saints’ presence is secured now by bringing them down to earth. That place where they come down to earth is what we call the Treasury Chapel and it is that chapel that both brings them to earth and is brought into place by them.

Between the Succorpo and the Treasury Chapel the ambition of redemption shifts and expands almost beyond recognition: from the redemption of an individual through prayer (an individual who represents both ecclesiastical hierarchical order and aristocratic might, as well as being a pious worshipper) to the redemption of the city of Naples (or something encompassing it) – apparently above all social divisions. This is not to say that the chapel offers a democratic or egalitarian vision. Rather, a shift has occurred from the city which is the sum of its occupants, to the city with the vocation of capital. The relation between sanctity and social recognition has become a “localization” of holy space. Many of the chapel’s most extraordinary characteristics relate to these points. Its size and grandeur and its location near the entrance to the cathedral strategically differentiate it from the Succorpo and bind it to the city. Its extraordinary richness of materials and decoration, its singular reliance on metalwork also serve to differentiate it starkly from the Succorpo and to produce a chapel that works holy protection in peculiar formal terms. There is remarkably little emphasis on patronage directly articulated visually within the chapel. Instead, the emphasis at the Treasury Chapel is on San Gennaro and his court of patronal saints.

The Saintly Implication of the Seggi

We turn now to investigate the work of saintly investment in the chapel and the implication of the Seggi in this. It is important to note that the Treasury Chapel’s court of patronal warriors incorporated the Seggi both directly through the Seggi’s central role in electing

32 In central Italy St Sebastian and in Venice St Roch were established by the end of the fifteenth century as principal protectors from the plague. On the cults of Sebastian and Roch, see Marshall, Louise, Manipulating the Sacred. Image and Plague in Renaissance Italy, in: Renaissance Quarterly 47 (1994), p. 485–532; Boeckl, Christine M., Images of Plague and Pestilence. Iconography and Iconology, Kirksville 2000.
new protector saints for Naples, and indirectly via institutions scattered across the city of Naples, which were symbolically incorporated into the Treasury chapel via the relics, and which participated in the processions for the age-old protector saints, especially San Gennaro’s miracles and feasts which were celebrated in the Seggi. Thus, in turn, those disparate urban religious institutions were brought partly under the aegis of the Seggi through the Deputazione.

Framed by shiny red brocatello marble columns are nineteen niches for as many bronze statues of Naples’ protector saints (see figs. 2 and 4). Directly beneath each statue a small copper-lined niche holds a silver reliquary bust of the same patronal saint. This duplication is effected in part strategically so that when the silver reliquary busts were moved out of their niches either to be set up on the altar of the chapel or cathedral, or to be exported entirely from the Treasury Chapel and processed across the city to their „home“ institution, the bronze statues would mark their place and continue to represent them.

The peculiar mobility of the relics of the Treasury Chapel and its notable consequences are brought into sharp relief by comparisons with two other types of reliquary chapel in baroque Naples. The new Treasury Chapel in the grand Carthusian monastery complex of San Martino (fig. 7) for example depends on a narrative, not a dynamic, formulation. Both, an integral part of that narrative and ensconced in their gorgeous wall reliquaries, the relics in the Certosa Treasury Chapel are necessarily immobile and fixed, and thereby differ sharply from those in the Treasury Chapel in the Duomo.

Juan de Ribera’s „Pietà“ altarpiece (signed and dated 1637) was painted for the sacristy of the church of the Certosa, but was moved to the new Treasury Chapel at the end of the seventeenth century, when the reliquary cases in fine ebony and gilt copper by Gennaro

33 24 columns in marble for the presbytery and lateral altars were acquired from Tortosa di Valencia by Cristofero Monterossi, and arrived in Naples in 1612 before the principal structure of the chapel had been completed.

34 The Neapolitan reliquary chapel of San Gennaro keeps its principal relics far more mobile, too, than the Roman examples, especially of course the celebrated Bildtabernakel. In Italy the housings created for highly venerated images essentially followed two types from the medieval period on: the architectural altar tabernacle and the inserted image or Bildtabernakel, in which the miraculous image is inserted into another painted image surrounding it. In the architectural altar tabernacle (free-standing or attached to the wall) architecture is the dominant element and acts as a frame to the relic. Thus Andrea Orcagni’s mid-fourteenth century tabernacle of the Virgin in Orsanmichele, Florence, houses its image, the Madonna delle Grazie, in a richly encrusted Gothic aedicule, and presents the image within a precious enclosure. In the case of the Pauline Altar tabernacle in Santa Maria Maggiore, Camillo Mariani’s angels, large and active, appear to carry the image, evoking a narrative in which inserted and framing elements are conjoined. The angels reclining on the pediments further connect the altar tabernacle with that outside it, the scene painted in the dome. Steven Ostrow argues that the angelic surround, together with the framing lapis field, evoking the sky, activates the Marian icon, transforming it from a static immagine into the central element of an istoria, either as a heavenly apparition or as the Virgin’s Assumption (with the altar below representing her tomb). Ostrow, Steven F., Art and Spirituality in Counter-Reformation Rome. The Sistine and Pauline Chapels in S. Maria Maggiore, Cambridge – New York 1996, p. 158–160.
Monte were added in 1691. Christ’s sacrifice, depicted pictorially at the centre, is thus amplified by the relics of saints displayed to each side in Monte’s elegant jewel cases. Relics and altarpiece work together to extend the narrative of Christ’s martyrdom into the chapel to produce a holy continuum between holy artefact of saints and the representation of Christ’s death, allowing the miracle of the resurrection to reverberate through the bones. Christ’s death and sacrifice are thereby seen directly to underpin the relics, almost as if to guarantee the potential miracles they afford. The opening of the lipsanoteca doors to reveal the treasures stored inside, as shown in a painting of 1848 by Vervloet, corresponds

![Fig 7: Naples, Certosa di San Martino, Treasury Chapel, with Jusepe de Ribera’s Pietà (1637) and reliquary cases in ebony and gilt copper by Gennaro Monte (1691).](image)

The Certosa Chapel thus functions like a sort of stage set, complete with openable wings, on to which visiting dignitaries could enter. The whole ensemble therefore stages the Carthusian prior and visiting dignitaries as much as the relics that surround them.

The relics in the Treasury at the Certosa remain visible as bones and, unlike the Treasury Chapel in Naples cathedral, there is no attempt to portray the saints to whom they belonged. Wall reliquary chapels, such as those at the Gesù Vecchio and Gesù Nuovo in Naples, like the Cathedral Treasury Chapel, did deploy representations of saints in the form of bust reliquaries, but at the Gesù the reliquaries are handled representationally, rather than ontologically (fig. 8). With their relics and authentications visible in little boxes below them, they are ranged at the Gesù Nuovo in rows to encompass an entire wall – a formidable array of holy bones aligned beneath busts of their saintly owners, like a barracks, in a splendid visual taxonomy of sanctity.\footnote{37}{The relics came from Isabella Feltre della Rovere, Princess of Bisignano, who bequeathed a remarkable number to the Jesuits. She had acquired a vast collection of relics through her mother, Vittoria Farnese, niece of Paul III, and her uncle Cardinal Odoardo Farnese. See BNN, Ms. XI-A-52, Vita di Isabella Feltre della Rovere, Principessa di Bisignano, written in 1619 by Niccolò B. Sanseverino, SJ. Between the rows in the Gesù Nuovo chapel more bones are arranged in glass-fronted boxes, although they do not necessarily belong to the saint represented (some contain two skulls for example).}

This is the work of Domenico Di Nardo and probably dates from shortly before 1682.\footnote{38}{Bernardo De Dominici records Domenico Di Nardo as a pupil of Pietro Ceraso and as responsible for this reliquary. See de Dominici, Bernardo, Vite de’Pittori, Scultori ed Architetti Napoletani (III), ed. by Fiorella Sricchia Santoro – Andrea Zezza, Naples 2003, p. 391. The date of the Gesù Nuovo reliquary must be 1682 or earlier, because in 1682 Di Nardo was paid for a statue of S. Nicola di Bari and for two figures of Virgin saints and martyrs „similar to that of S. Teodora situated in the Reliquary of the Gesù Nuovo“, destined for an unknown church. See Fiorentino, Katia, Domenico Di Nardo, in: Civiltà del Seicento a Napoli (II) [Exhib. cat. Naples 1984], ed. by Ermano Bellucci, p. 171.}

Both north and south walls of this chapel are divided into thirty-five small compartments framed in feverishly carved gilt wood. While the uniformity here achieves impressive effect, the relics and representations of the saints assume a passive relation to the architecture of the chapel, simply cladding two of its facing walls in uniform niches, rather like books in shelves. In this it differs markedly from the Duomo Treasury Chapel, where architecture works in consonance with representation of saints to produce a sharper sense of the presence, not simply of the saints’ relics, but of the saints themselves.

Likewise, in the Jesuit chapel the relics themselves are encased in the lower register of the reliquary, separate from and below the wooden heads of the saints, while in the Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro the relics are often actually incorporated within the reliquary busts, visible through small windows (fenestelle) in the silver, most usually in the base of the reliquary, but sometimes at its heart. In turn, this lends the Treasury Chapel busts a more compelling quality of actually embodying or being the saints, rather than...
simply representing the various saints whose relics remain in distinct form as bones, as in the Gesù Nuovo. In the Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro the relics themselves are a range of bones: arm bones, leg bones, and other body parts. Of the relics only San Gennaro’s is actually the head. Yet all the saints are represented by silver reliquary busts or half-length figures. What is unusual at the Treasury Chapel is that the busts are not set into the wall as an immovable display, but are autonomous and portable, and indeed, were almost all paid for by institutions external to the chapel itself. San Gennaro’s Treasury Chapel is therefore remarkable in two principal ways. First, it is unusually large and adorned with striking magnificence. The marble revetment of the chapel is striking; but its internal carapace extends beyond marbles to semi-precious stones, to oil paintings, frescoes, and to the whole glittering orchestration of metallurgy – unrivalled in Italy – including bronze statues and silver busts of its saints. The principal spatial effectuation of the chapel is realized by its „cladding“ in this extended sense. Second, the chapel is remarkable in that the reliquary busts were not fixed and static, but regularly made journeys across the city – both to the altars of the Seggi to celebrate San Gennaro and also to their home institutions for their own feast days.

Thus the Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro is forcefully articulated as superabundantly „populated“ by protector saints, a saintly populace that was not only multiple but unfixed, mobile in the city beyond the chapel. Here the reliquary busts are not part of the wall, an immovable display; on the contrary, they remain fully transportable. Indeed, full-length
bronze sculptures, set into the walls above the niches where the reliquary busts are located, duplicate the representation of those saints (see fig. 4). The Treasury Chapel is striking in its treatment of the saints as living presences, not a peep-show of bones behind glass, but part of our world, mobile and fluid, animating not just the chapel, but out into the street during annual processions back to their churches of provenance. Thus the reliquary busts themselves occupy a position analogous to the relics in the Gesù Nuovo reliquary, but unlike them they are not static and fixed, but work to link together institutions across the city. The Treasury Chapel thereby engages in a multiplication and repetition of saints, a sort of teamwork of heterogeneous elements, that overflows the usual architectural limits.

Let us now consider how those processions linked the Treasury Chapel to the Seggi seats and to other religious institutions across the city. Again, these actions can be seen as rhizomatic, extending the sway of the Treasury Chapel across the city and threading the investment of the participants, fabulous *apparati* and *macchine*, back into the Treasury Chapel. These processions took broadly two forms. First, the regular feasts of San Gennaro and second, the translation to the Treasury Chapel of new patronal saints’ reliquaries and their annual export back to their home institution. San Gennaro’s regular feasts were his *dies natalis* (19 September), the translation of his relics (from Marciano to Naples) celebrated on the Saturday before the first Sunday in May (supposedly it was in this translation that the miracle of liquefaction first occurred), and 16 December (after Vesuvius 1631). In addition, his relics were processed across the city to ward off impending catastrophe. The feast of the translation, supposedly that in which suffragan bishops and priests, who participated wearing garlands, gave their obedience to the prelate, is important in relation to our present theme. It was celebrated in various churches until 1525 when the Eletto del Popolo, Girolamo Pellegrino, requested the Archbishop that celebration should occur that year in the Piazza della Sellaria. Thereafter the celebration circulated between the piazze of the Seggi, promoting emulation in terms of magnificent *apparati* and *macchine*. It is striking in that the miraculous liquefaction was made to occur not only outside the Treasury Chapel and cathedral but in supposedly secular space, in the piazze of the Seggi themselves. Not only did this permit participation by large numbers of people reluctant to go to church, but in this way the Seggi directly participated in the miraculous in their very own piazze. On the Saturday morning of that feast in solemn procession San Gennaro’s head under a rich *palio* was carried to the particular Seggio where the feast was to be solemnized. Amongst the participants were the gentlemen and knights of that Seggio and their guests, who passed before the holy relic; next came the Deputies of the Chapel, also

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40 The requirement that suffragan bishops should so participate was removed in 1578 by the Council of Trent. See Maria di Sant’Anna, Istoria della vita (note 39), p. 406. A fresco by Domenichino above the entrance to the treasury chapel represents the garlanded priests in this procession.
41 See Maria di Sant’Anna, Istoria della vita (note 39), p. 390–391.
42 Ibid.
43 Girolamo Maria di Sant’Anna follows Antonio Sorgente, in claiming that the liquefaction in the square was part of developing devotion from the faithful. Ibid., p. 395.
with burning torches. Once the procession reached the Seggio, the head was placed on a sumptuous altar, and one of the two gentleman chaplains from that same Seggio remained to guard and venerate the relic. Later the Archbishop came to the cathedral, received the obedience of all the Neapolitan clergy; and conducted vespers in the cathedral, and while vespers were being sung, a long and splendid procession, joined by all the clergy of the city, including regulars, took place. As Girolamo Maria di Sant’Anna observed in his „Istoria della Vita, Virtu’ e miracoli di San Gennaro“ 1707:

* Questa processione è una delle piu’ belle, e diveute funzioni, che si fanno nella nostra Città, e ne’ tempi antichi vi sono state molte differenze tra’ li Signori Cardinali Arcivescovi, e Signori Vicerè intorno al ceremoniale da osservarsi nel Seggio. 

The strategic participation in this procession of the Viceroy after 1596, in the wake of various disputes, was significant. He was housed under a ceremonial baldacchino in the presence of the Cardinal also under a baldacchino, something not done in any other function, even in the chapel of the Royal Palace. Girolamo Maria di Sant’Anna suggests this anomalous ceremonial ritual is best explained by the fact that it takes place outside of any church, in the Seggio itself, „which is considered as a non-sacred place“ (il quale si considera per luogo non sacro); the Viceroy generally did not participate in the procession either outward or homeward bound or in the cathedral, but would go direct to the Seggio in order to observe the miraculous liquefaction of the blood. Thus Viceroy, Cardinal, populace were brought together, as nowhere else – even in the cathedral or the chapel of the royal palace – in the piazze of the Seggi. In short, the miracle of the liquefaction of San Gennaro’s blood, conducted outside in the Seggi, elevated the piazze of the Seggi (and thus the Seggi) to a spiritual stage of considerable urban, political and religious significance and consequence.

After 1631 the feast of Vesuvius was celebrated by a short procession on 16 December when the relics left the Cathedral, passed via the Seggio Capuano, along the vico del Seggio Capuano, passed in front of the Archbishop’s palace, and returned to the cathedral, with the brancard borne by the *eletti* of the Seggi. Similar processions and outdoor liquefactions were staged via the Seggi to ward off threats. Thus in March 1709, following a grain shortage, the head of the saint was exposed in the Treasury Chapel with heated prayers imploring his protection. In miraculous response, on the night of 15–16 March the ships, which several months before had set off for Puglia, appeared in the port followed by others the following day, loaded with grain and oil. We are told that *tutta la Città frettolosamente concorse alla [sudetta] gran Cappella del Tesoro, redendogli umilissime e copiosisime grazie.* There then followed on 25 March (feast of the Annunciation) a solemn procession through *le principali strade della Città* („the principal streets“) which passed through the piazze of the five Seggi, carrying the holy head of the saint, accompanied by the Archbishop, Viceroy, Deputies, and other nobles, followed by an immense and very numerous populace. The proces-

44 Ibid., p. 391–392.
45 See ibid. p. 414.
46 Id., Aggiunte all’Istoria della Vita di S. Gennaro Vescovo e martire, Naples 1710, p. 15.
47 Ibid., p. 16.
sion then returned the relics to the main altar of the cathedral, orations were made; the cardinal blessed the People with the ampoules of blood before they were handed to the Treasurer for kissing and safe return to the Treasury Chapel, at whose gateway they were in turn solemnly handed to the Treasury Chapel Chaplains.

The Treasury Chapel was also aligned to the Seggi through Naples’ protector saints other than San Gennaro, and through their silver reliquary busts which it housed. First, when a saint was selected to be city patron, all the aristocratic Seggi had to vote on and agree to the decision. The relics were subsequently encased in a silver reliquary bust and processed to the cathedral. Next the relics of the new patron saint were processed through the city and were returned “home” every feast day along the same route. Figures 9 and 10 show the processional routes taken during the translation of the relics of San Francesco di Paola in 1629 to the Treasury Chapel in the Duomo. The one route (fig. 9) is that taken by the Minims bearing six statues of patron saints from the cathedral to go to collect the relic of San Francesco di Paola from the church of San Luigi; while the processional route
back to the cathedral with the reliquary, which called at each of the Seggi, as well as via the most important churches of the Clarissans, Jesuits, Theatines, and Dominicans, amongst others, is shown in the other one (fig. 10). This latter route was reiterated every feast day – once again affirming and making visible the connection between protector saints, their relics and their home institutions, the Treasury Chapel and the Seggi.

It was the Deputies of the Treasury Chapel who determined broadly what the reliquaries would look like: they stipulated that they be encased in a silver reliquary bust broadly following the form of that of San Gennaro himself. But although the form and material was established by the Deputation, the work had to be organized and the costs met by the contributing institution. Consequently, in spite of the appearance of coherence within the Treasury Chapel, on which the deputies placed great emphasis, it was nothing without the support and presence of the many diverse institutions represented there prosthetically via their saints. In turn, of course, the presence of their reliquaries in the Treasury Chapel raised the spiritual profile of the various institutions involved. It was an investment, much
as the marriage of their daughters to powerful scions was an investment for aristocratic families. The party was never over: it was always about to commence.

In these ways via the Seggi diverse institutions invested materially and spiritually in the Treasury Chapel in the form of precious relics and silver reliquary busts. Thus diverse relics representing a plethora of competing urban institutions were tamed, made relatively uniform, paying clear formal homage to the first reliquary bust of San Gennaro, and housed at the Treasury Chapel. Institutions external to the Treasury not only paid for the reliquary busts; they also remained their saints’ second homes. The busts were exported back annually to these institutions for festivals. Therefore the silver reliquary busts were exported objects, which belonged simultaneously to their originating institutions (Neapolitan convents, monasteries, and churches), and also to the Treasury Chapel itself. While the bronze statues remained in the chapel, fixed permanently in place in their niches ranged around its walls, the silver reliquaries were peripatetic, brilliantly mobile objects, never fully at home or at rest. These bodies regularly left the Treasury, solemnly processed through the city *en masse* in the same hierarchical order as that of their niches in the chapel, during the special processions into the Seggi for the feasts of San Gennaro. They also left the chapel separately on their own feast days to process through the city and to return to their “own” institutions: to be received at each “return” with renewed veneration and enthusiasm. Most of the reliquary busts of protectors belonged to those churches or monastic institutions that had held their relic before their election as protectors. Back to those same institutions the silver reliquary busts were processionally escorted on their saints’ days. Thus blessed Andrea Avellino and san Gaetano went to the Theatine church of San Paolo Maggiore, St Patricia returned to the convent of Santa Patrizia, and St John the Baptist alternated between the convents of Santa Maria Donnaromita and San Gregorio Armeno. The silver reliquaries belonged simultaneously to both the Treasury Chapel and their “home” religious institutions; and the chapel returned them to the city whence they had come. In terms of patronage, institutional affiliation, and physical movement and relocation, therefore, the reliquaries bound the Treasury Chapel to institutions beyond it, and threaded prominent institutions into the chapel. Through their dual engagements the silver reliquary busts both enriched and “contaminated” the Treasury with the investments and presence of as many external institutions. In short, the reliquaries both bound the Chapel to the city more broadly, and together articulated a conception of the city that was at once apparently spiritually unified, while remaining institutionally heterogeneous and stratified.

48 The reliquary bust of St John the Baptist was initially commissioned by the convent of Santa Maria Donnaromita; but the protestations of the nuns of San Gregorio Armeno, where St John the Baptist’s famously liquefying blood was kept, led to an agreement whereby both convents paid for the reliquary (executed in 1695) and hosted its homecoming every alternate year. For the bust, see Catello, Elio – Catello, Conrado, *La Cappella del Tesoro di San Gennaro*, Naples 1977, p. 84–85, 215; Celano, Notizie del Bello (note 8), p. 112; Bellucci, Civiltà del Setecento (note 38), p. 321–322.
Eventually the Treasury Chapel boasted 52 silver reliquaries of patronal saints, whose quality of workmanship is astonishingly high.⁴⁹ Not only did external institutions make substantial and substantative investments in the chapel through their reliquary busts, the Treasury invested in the celebration of its saints in their “homes” outside the chapel. For instance, on 1 October 1670 the chapel’s sacristy lent the nuns of San Francesco its two largest silver splendours, six candelieri, six urns, six frasche (literally “branches”: presumably silver flowers) and a cross for their celebrations of the forthcoming feast of saint Francis.⁵⁰ Thus specific devotions wove institutions together through shared spiritual investment as the exported and peripatetic saints produced a drama of authority and a drama of re-integration. Deterritorialization demanded reterritorialization: “Relics that go out to the main church or that go beyond that should be exposed the following day of their feast with lights on the altar in the Treasury”.⁵¹

Despite their investment in the reliquary busts both financially and spiritually, the sponsoring institutions did not own them. The last word lay always with the deputies; and this, too, served to centralize the protectors and to intensify the relative spiritual authority of the chapel. Since travelling saints were relatively readily damaged, the Deputies repeatedly inveighed against their ill-treatment and for their prompt return.⁵² Ultimately, they turned to the threat of withholding them altogether. Thus on 13 December 1673, they determined that if busts were returned in a damaged state or without due veneration to the Treasury Chapel, they would not be released the following year.⁵³ The deputies emphasized uniformity and conformity, but control and efficacy through visual effect were what mattered most to them. Thus on 20 February 1669 in response to a request from the Discalced Carmelites for the return of their reliquary bust in order to make some repairs and to set it on a silver support, the Deputies allowed them the statue, but withheld the relic, and insisted that the reliquary must be back in time for the next festival so that the relic could be exposed along with all the others.⁵⁴ In such ways, although the external institutions paid for the silver work, that work was protected and policed by the Deputies in the name of the chapel and material damage resulted in spiritual punishment.

Architecturally, the chapel worked to draw disparate patron saints together, and to set them apart in hierarchical rivalry. The relationship between niche and statue meant that nine little niches for nine saints’ relics and nine full-length sculptures punctuated the walls of the presbytery (see figs. 2 and 4). Those spaces in turn implied that the particular saints “housed” in those niches were also Naples’ most important protectors. Thus the architectural arrangement of the chapel produced a saintly hierarchy and gave

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⁵¹ Archivio del Tesoro di San Gennaro (henceforth ATSG), H121 [undated document], n.f.

⁵² On 13 May 1676 the Deputies threatened excommunication for any damage. ATSG, 59, f. 161r.

⁵³ Document of 13 December 1673 in: ATSG, AB/12 (Conclusioni), f. 6r.

⁵⁴ See ATSG, AB/11 (1602), f. 95v.
rise to competition between institutions for the better positions. The presbytery niches were particularly coveted, not only because above each niche a corresponding full-length sculpture in bronze of the same saint ensured a doubling of its figural representation (that was true of the lateral chapels also), but above all because they were located in the holiest part of the chapel, closest to the main altar and to the safe behind it where the relics of San Gennaro were kept.

Institutions vied eagerly to occupy the most prestigious of the niches and thereby secure the rights to a correspondingly prestigious position in ritual processions, including those of San Gennaro’s relics. For example, the right of occupation of the ninth niche in the presbytery was hotly disputed between the nuns of Santa Patrizia for St Patricia and the Theatines of San Paolo for Blessed Andrea Avellino, beginning in 1625 and lasting over a decade and a half. St Patricia eventually triumphed. Her claim to spiritual authority over the city of Naples as a whole is articulated in two book frontispieces. The earlier frontispiece for Giovanni Battista Manso’s “Vita et miracoli di S. Patricia Vergine Sacra” (Constantino Vitale, 1619) shows the ampoules of Saint Patricia’s miraculously liquefying blood, which rendered her a significant female counterpart of and even rival to San Gennaro. In the later frontispiece to Paolo Regio’s “Vita di S. Patricia Vergine” of 1643 – after St Patricia’s patronal election in 1621 – the claim is urbanized (figs. 11a and 11b). The place of altar and relics in the first frontispieces is assumed by the city as a whole. Thus the city itself is staged as part of a relationship with holiness, rather than simply its location.
Conclusion

The Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro should be seen as a cumulative and intensifying investment by the Seggi of Naples spiritually and materially. That investment continued to overflow the Chapel itself. It extended across the city first through the regular processions of Gennaro’s relics out into the Seggi, and second, through the building of the guglia of San Gennaro in the little square to the south of the Duomo after the eruption of 1631, and in the erection of the monument to San Gennaro at Santa Caterina a Formello following that of 2 August 1707.

I have demonstrated that the Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro can usefully be seen as architecture of the Seggi and, as such, as a civic treasury. Not only were the Seggi, via the deputies, its indirect patrons; but the Seggi played a crucial role in the investment across the city in patronal saints, including their processions, and were intensely involved in the miraculous liquefaction of San Gennaro’s blood in the piazzes themselves, and in their sumptuous housing in the Treasury Chapel. Thus the Treasury Chapel became a civic Treasury. I have argued that to effect this, it was necessary for the Treasury Chapel to be markedly different in visual terms from the Succorpo chapel in order to radically re-present San Gennaro, to detach him from the Carafa clan, and to intertwine his fortunes instead with those of the Seggi and the many “competing” religious institutions...
across the city. Those institutions in turn invested in adding their own saints to the rapidly proliferating patronal saints housed at the Treasury Chapel. Through these principal axes were woven the often strained relations between the Deputies of the Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro and the Archbishop of Naples, and between the saint and cult of his miracle and the Viceroy.

I suggest that to think of the Treasury Chapel’s Deputation as an institutional extension of the Seggi allows us better to appreciate the way in which the Treasury Chapel worked as an important machine in the production of forms of urban spirituality that were quite new. The Chapel infiltrated the city and was porous to institutional claims across the city, whose rhizomatic energies penetrated it both inwards and outwards, transforming secular and political concerns into a manifestation of the holy. By harnessing the ambitions of a diverse range of external religious institutions, and encouraging their investment, the Deputies of the Seggi managed to forge a unifying and remarkably flexible new focus of urban spirituality – supposedly for the city of Naples as a whole. Thus the unequalled proliferation of Neapolitan protector saints is best seen as part of the operative work of the Chapel itself. While the interests represented were in fact very partial and overwhelmingly aristocratic, the chapel, secular in patronage, located within the Cathedral, and engaged with the question of the protection of the city as a whole, appeared to be beyond factional interests. The Treasury Chapel is of vital significance for an understanding of the development of early modern Naples as a capital city that was more than the sum of its parts, and an elucidation of its complex relationship with the Seggi allows us better to grasp this.