

Una <nuova> cappella Minutolo presso il Duomo di Napoli: questioni di patronato e rapporti di prossimità tra residenze e cappelle gentilizie

Abstract

The article presents the rediscovery of a chapel dedicated to the Annunciation which, at the beginning of the 15th century, Cardinal Enrico Minutolo wished to have placed underneath his own funerary monument. This monument is still to be found against the back wall of the Cappella dei Santi Pietro e Anastasia in the archiepiscopal complex of Naples.

Despite having almost completely disappeared from the historiographical discussion, the chapel was located thanks first to a reassessment of information that was already known and second to a careful reading of archival documents that had not previously been consulted. In addition, thanks to the introduction of special equipment through the only point of access to the Minutolo chapel, a loophole located in the crypt, it has been possible for the first time to carry out a photographic campaign inside the chapel. The Chapel of the Annunziata is in fact inaccessible through its entrance, which was walled up probably after the 1980 earthquake; however, the close proximity to Palazzo Minutolo in Vico Sedil Capuano, where a filled-in ogival arch survives and corresponds more or less to the walled space, suggests that in ancient times members of the Minutolo family took advantage of this gap to access the chapel from their residence.

Against this backdrop, it is proposed that the better-known Minutolo Chapel in the Cathedral belonged to the family well before 1402, which is the date of a document commonly used as the first point of reference for the patronage of this aristocratic family. In addition to appealing to aspects of canon law, this claim is reinforced by consulting the will of a certain Pietro Minutolo, who in the 1370s arranged to be buried there. This same Pietro was also responsible for the foundation of another family church near the Cathedral, dedicated to Santa Marta and demolished between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This formed part of a broader strategy of urban settlement pursued by the family, which between the late medieval and the early modern periods possessed two monumental residences and several noble churches in the area in question.