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Fama et familia: *funerary culture and the construction of family identity in Early Modern Naples*

The rich sculptural heritage of Renaissance Naples offers fertile ground for analyzing the political and social importance of family identity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The aim of my research is to examine several specific aspects of Neapolitan sculpture, social history, and artistic exchange between 1400 and 1500. The project will combine various methodological approaches such as stylistic criticism and archival studies with more current perspectives on artistic geography, urban space, gender traditions, and the analysis of patronage networks.

My dissertation is structured along five major axes. The predominant approach to Neapolitan sculpture is driven by stylistic criticism in search for the identification of artists, description of stylistic change, and the dating of artworks. Contrary to research on earlier Angevin times, little research has been done on typological issues or the correlation to political change. The reason for this seems to be inherent to a certain approach of historical periodization and 'etiquettage'. Firstly, I intend to embed my research in a larger methodological frame considering recent scholarship on historiographical concepts of Renaissance society and court cities.

In the second chapter several aspects of my Master's thesis will be discussed and developed. The double monument of Sanzio Vitaliano and Ippolita Imperato will serve as a point of departure for reconstructing the transfer of funerary monuments in the church of Santa Maria la Nova and to address the question of the transfer of tombs in a more general and systematic manner. The changes in church decoration at Santa Maria Nova from 1596 onwards will be interpreted as signs of social change, especially concerning the position of a more recent nobility.

To elucidate the role of the artist in establishing taste, models, and options for social autorepresentation, the third chapter will concentrate on the workshop of the Malvito, one of the most active sculpture workshops in Naples between the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries. Only partly documented, their identities and artistic itineraries are not sufficiently known, and the catalog of works attributed to them needs to be updated.

Although the specific role of women in the patronage of funerary monuments has already been addressed, a more in-depth analysis is needed. Cataloguing different representations of women in funeral contexts will enable me to test current research hypotheses and to sketch a new perspective on family structures, the representation of noble alliances, and the role of women in Neapolitan society. I will question to what extent the genealogical model, presenting the family's descendance, continued in Aragonese times and in the monuments of the nobility but under other formulae and typologies.

In the last chapter I will discuss the relationship between typology, artistic tradition, and new arrangements in church decoration with local historiographic literature of the sixteenth century in which nobility became an issue. The recomposition of several monuments into a new 'old' one is to be seen as the result not only of a desire to make place for new and modern chapel decoration but also to preserve and to document ancient origins as proof of nobility.