

The “Testa Carafa”

In XVII century, the idea that the famous Carafa head belonged to the bronze equestrian statue that **Virgil the Magician** had made, grew in popularity. According to popular belief, the statue had the power to cure sick horses. In reality, the Carafa head was not part of the mythical group of horses which was destroyed in 1322 because it had become a source of popular superstition.

The huge **bust of a horse**, which was Hellenistic in origin, was in fact given by **Lorenzo the Magnificent** to **Diomede Carafa** in 1471. He had the statue put up in the courtyard of his home, **Palazzo Carafa di Maddaloni**, in Via San Biagio dei Librai, in the heart of the old centre of Naples, along the lower Decumanus of the old Greco-roman city. When the house changed hands from the Carafas to the Marquess **Francesco Santangelo**, the horse’s head was moved to the National Archeological Museum. The original, **1.75m high**, is currently housed in the metropolitan train station called Museo on Line 1.