

Alfonso II Piccolomini The Duke of Sarteano origins, general under Charles V in Siena

Antonio Tedeschini Piccolomini, nephew of Pope Pius II, opened the path to nobility for the Sarteanese family in the Kingdom of Naples through his marriage to Maria d'Aragona, the natural daughter of King Ferdinand I. Since then, Antonio and his son Alfonso I Piccolomini d'Aragona remained loyal to the Aragonese cause, both holding the positions of chief justice of the Kingdom of Naples and general lieutenant of arms. They became feudal lords of a territory spanning from the principality Citra (Amalfi, Ravello, Scala, Minori, Maiori, Tramonti, Conca, Furore) to Abruzzo Ultra in the counties of Celano, Capestrano, and Deliceto (where there are Piccolomini castles).

For a brief and tumultuous period, Antonio's nephew Alfonso II (born in Naples on March 10, 1499, to Giovanna d'Aragona) returned to Siena, succeeding his father (who died before his birth) in the Duchy of Amalfi and other positions. In 1517, he married Costanza d'Avalos, daughter of Innico (Marquis of Pescara and Del Vasto) and Laura Sanseverino, of the princes of Bisignano. Alfonso II, like his aunt Constance (Duchess of Francavilla), was part of an intellectual circle in Ischia, alongside Vittoria Colonna and Giulia Gonzaga. The couple had the Piccolomini palace in the Nido region (Naples) and the feudal courts of Amalfi, Celano, or Ischia of the Avalos at their disposal. They had three daughters and four sons. Their first two children, Constance and Antonio, died at a young age. Vittoria married Marcantonio Doria del Carretto, Prince of Melfi, in 1539. The second son, Innico, became the fourth Duke of Amalfi and Grand Justiciar of the Kingdom after the death of his brother and father. Pompeo became the bishop of Tropea, and Giovanni became the baron of Scafati.

Alfonso II served under Charles V in various actions, necessitating the delegation of the governance of his fiefs. In 1528, during the war between the Holy Roman Empire and France, he was a member of the Kingdom's War Council defending Naples. He undertook the restructuring of Amalfi, Ravello, Scala, and the defensive enhancement of the entire coastline of the Gulf of Salerno. In the summer of 1529, he returned to his origins with the appointment as Captain General of the Republic of Siena. The ancient republican city had been torn apart by internal factional struggles and the persistent aspirations of popes and cardinal families to establish their own state. The appointment of Piccolomini, a representative of the ancient Sienese patrician family and a major feudal lord in the Kingdom of Naples, to command the Spanish garrison for the defense of the territory had the support of the populace and the pro-imperial party, strengthened by the treaties of Cambrai and Barcelona.

The return of the Noveschi exiles to the city and the resurgence of feuds and local particularisms forced Piccolomini to return to Naples in 1531, but by May 1532, he was again the General of Arms in Siena, acclaimed by the popular faction of the city. From then on, Alfonso Piccolomini mediated between opposing factions and the changing alliances of the Montesi, serving as the imperial governor in public ceremonies when the Viceroy of Naples and, in 1536, Emperor Charles V himself visited Siena.

The garrison under Alfonso's command and his political mediation diverted the small Republic from the ambitions of Pope Paul III, directing it towards the Spanish Crown. In 1538, he arranged the marriage between his son Innico and Silvia Piccolomini. The recall to Naples in 1541 aimed to break the ties and personal power accumulated in Siena. In Naples, the absolutism of Viceroy de Toledo diminished the political and military weight of aristocratic houses, but Piccolomini's loyalty remained unquestioned.

In Siena, the expulsion of the Spaniards in 1552 ended any aspirations for Alfonso. In 1553, he acquired the island of Nisida (where he died in 1559) to build a refined castle. As a culmination of his political career in the Kingdom of Naples, he was appointed a member of the Collateral Council in 1554.