

# The portraits of Robert of Anjou: self-presentation as political instrument?\*

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Figure 1 Simone Martini, Saint Louis of Toulouse, c. 1317-19, Naples, museo di Capodimonte.  
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Reflections on the portraits of Robert of Anjou usually begin or end with Simone Martini's famous painting of *Saint Louis of Toulouse* (fig. 1), while a systematic examination of the portraits of the French monarch has yet to be conducted. Rightly, this panel must be placed at the beginning of such a narrative because it is the earliest known image of the king, painted between 1317 and 1319, and because it marks the establishment of his striking profile.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Martini's depiction

*\* This analysis is part of my doctoral dissertation, an iconographical study of Neapolitan art in the fourteenth-century, which offers a broader understanding of its evolution in the city and the Kingdom of Naples. Within this framework, I investigate Robert's self-perception of being a foreign king and the question of how this could have influenced Angevin artistic politics, in particular the image of himself that he wished to convey to natives and to people in other countries. I would like to thank Marek Walczak and Mateusz Grzęda for their remarkable commitment in organizing the conference Reconsidering the origins of portraiture, where I first presented my thoughts about Robert's portraits. My thanks go to Richard Woodfield for including the contributions of this conference in his journal. Above all, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Alessandro Nova of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence, Max-Planck-Institut, for a fellowship in his department as well as to my friends and colleagues there. Special thanks are due to Adrian S. Hoch, who is a precious help for my work continuously. For reading the first drafts of this text I want to thank my dear friend Sebastian Mielke. Last, but not least Rachel Boyd deserves many thanks for her help.*

<sup>1</sup> Naples, Museo di Capodimonte, main panel: 250 x 188 cm, predella: 56 x 205 cm. Cf. Adrian S. Hoch, 'The Franciscan provenance of Simone Martini's Angevin St. Louis in Naples', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 58: 1, 1995, 22-38. The dating of the

was formative for most of the subsequent portraits of Robert, a sophisticated study of these images seems appropriate. The assumption that a manifold image of the Angevin king was deliberately established during his reign needs to be proven. For what reasons did Robert himself facilitate this?

A few art historians have discussed this royal profiling, but they concentrate mostly on single examples and not on all portraits of Robert as a thematic whole. One exception is Harald Keller's history of portraiture of 1938, in which he included the depictions of the monarch and pointed out the possibilities the profile offered to painters (a point Keller examined in the *Saint Louis* painting), and compared these images to the evolution of portraiture in sculpture.<sup>2</sup> Only in 1992 did Julian Gardner return to this topic. Gardner mentioned Robert of Anjou as well as his grandfather Charles d'Anjou, who was depicted by Arnolfo di Cambio, as possible 'candidates for portraiture'.<sup>3</sup> Thanks to a fourteenth-century copy of a Franciscan manuscript published by Brendan Cassidy in 2006, today in the Mícheál O Cléirigh Institute in the University College Dublin, art historians know about another early image of King Robert.<sup>4</sup> Until his publication no one included this in their research. Two contributions to the earlier publishing came from the study of the monarch's portraits in the *Anjou Bible*, painted between 1340 and 1343 by the Neapolitan illuminator Cristophoro Orimina.<sup>5</sup> Stefania Paone placed these portraits between other images of Robert, posing general questions about portraiture, for instance, can these miniatures be considered as 'portraits in the modern sense' and how influential was Giotto's 'study of the naturalistic representation of the human figure' on the production of these miniatures.<sup>6</sup> Michelle M. Duran offers an analysis of the miniatures, referring to 'imaging sovereignty in the *Anjou Bible*', concentrating mainly on the frontispieces

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panel between Louis' canonisation – Pope John XXII exempted the bull 'Sol oriens mundo' on 7 April 1317 – and his translation into the Franciscan church of Marseille on 8 November 1319 is convincing. For a profound reference for any examination of Robert of Anjou, see Samantha Kelly, *The new Solomon. Robert of Naples (1309-1343) and fourteenth-century kingship*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Regarding this confrontation Keller stated that sculpture still maintained the ruling position at the time of Giotto and Simone Martini: Harald Keller, *Die Entstehung des Bildnisses am Ende des Hochmittelalters*, Berlin: Gruyter, 1938, 298-342. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Julian Gardner, *The tomb and the tiara. Curial tomb sculpture in Rome and Avignon in the later middle ages*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, 172-5.

<sup>4</sup> Brendan Cassidy, 'An image of King Robert of Naples in a Franco-Italian manuscript in Dublin', *The Burlington Magazine*, CXLVIII: 1234-1245, January to December 2006, 31-3.

<sup>5</sup> Leuven, Katholieke Universiteit, Faculty of Theology, Maurits Sabbe Library, Cod. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Alessandro Tomei and Stefania Paone, 'Paintings and miniatures in Naples. Cavallini, Giotto and the portraits of King Robert', Lieve Watteuw and Jan Van der Stock, eds, *The Anjou Bible. A royal manuscript revealed. Naples 1340*, Paris and Leuven: Peeters, 2010, 53-71.



Figure 2 Anjou Bible, fol. 3v. c. 1340-43, KU Leuven, Library of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Maurits Sabbe Library. © KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library

Figure 3 Anjou Bible, fol. 4r. c. 1340-43, KU Leuven, Library of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Maurits Sabbe Library. © KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library

(figs 2 and 3).<sup>7</sup> Duran's approach took the same direction as this examination, but it was only in the work of Mirko Vagnoni, that Robert's portraits were studied in a wider context, chronologically and with regard for their potential to create a sacred royalty.<sup>8</sup>

Although the first example, which will be discussed here, seems to be just a secondary scene, it exemplifies how the portraits were utilised to transfer subtle messages about the king's status. Fol. 4r (fig. 3) is the second frontispiece in the *Anjou Bible* and contains a genealogy programme. All three male Angevin rulers are shown with their wives, all of whom are identified and seated in successive order: Charles I and Beatrice of Provence are depicted on the top register, Charles II and Mary of Hungary on the middle, and Robert and Sancia of Majorca on the one below.<sup>9</sup> While the founder of the Neapolitan Kingdom and his wife are flanked by

<sup>7</sup> Michelle M. Duran, 'The politics of art. Imaging sovereignty in the Anjou Bible', Watteuw and Van der Stock, eds, *Anjou Bible*, 73-93.

<sup>8</sup> Mirko Vagnoni, 'Una nota sulla regalità sacra di Roberto d'Angiò alla luce della ricerca iconografica', *Archivio storico italiano*, CLXVII: 2, 2009, 253-67.

<sup>9</sup> Charles I (1227-85) was a younger brother of Louis IX and from 1266 onward King of Sicily. After 1282 Naples has been the capital of his realm. His son Charles II (1254-1309) had been king from 1289 onward. Because of the fact that Charles' oldest son Charles Martel (1271-95) died in 1295 and the next son Louis (1274-97) chose a life as a Franciscan monk, it was Robert (1277-43) who became king in 1309.

their son Charles II and vassals, the other two couples are flanked only by their children and grandchildren. Obviously there was a need to straighten out the succession of the Angevin generations in Southern Italy.<sup>10</sup> But special care has been taken mainly to underline the importance of Robert's rulership. The people on either side of the throne, on the top register as well as on the bottom, concentrate on the couple in the middle of them, while the scene with the succession of Charles II is more complex and can be understood as an autonomous image within the miniature. Robert is surrounded by six men, including his brothers Charles Martel, King of Hungary, and Saint Louis of Toulouse, as well as his sons Charles, Duke of Calabria, and Louis, plus Andrew of Hungary, who was the son of Robert's nephew Charles Robert,<sup>11</sup> and two girls, Charles of Calabria's daughters Mary and Joanna, are kneeling before him. All figures focus their attention on Robert expressing no interest for the enthroned behind their backs. Robert is not even in a devotional position in front of his father, but he is already crowned. The special attention given to a differentiation of the king's portraits seems to have been driven by the fact that they were an important feature to clarify his status. So how did they fit in with Robert's self-perception and his understanding of his role on the Italian peninsula?

On fol. 4r Robert is depicted twice, enthroned and standing, both times admired, while Martini painted him in front of his brother in a devotional position. This image shows another mode of displaying: Robert holds his hands before his chest in a praying position and is kneeling, proportionally smaller than the saint and in the bottom right of the image. In this instance, he is the one who adores the enthroned, namely his brother Louis. But attention must be paid to the portrait of the king: Robert is not lost in adoration, but is squinting up at the saint with a face full of expectation. Louis, who was next in the line of succession after the death of Charles Martel, the eldest son of Charles II, renounced his royal inheritance in favour of a life as a Franciscan monk, a choice that led to Robert's rulership. The gesture of the saint crowning his brother made this picture visually manifest Robert's divinely sanctioned right to rule the kingdom. Against this background, one also has to understand the representation of the two faces. While the saint is depicted frontally and with a schematic face, which resembles other faces painted by Simone Martini, for example in Assisi,<sup>12</sup> Robert, in contrast, is kneeling laterally and his striking profile with the big, hooked nose, the jutting and hanging chin is quite visible. Obviously, the purpose was to establish a recognisable image of the

<sup>10</sup> During his entire regency Robert had to struggle against the accusation that he had not inherited the throne properly and the accusation regarding his succession. After the death of Charles Martel, his son Carobert (1288-1342) should have become King of Naples. Being still a child and already heir of the throne of Hungary, Charles II and Pope Boniface VIII decided that Carobert should not be king, which is why Louis was made next in the line of succession. These unusual circumstances influenced opinions about Robert's legitimacy as sovereign.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Duran, 'Politics of art', 85.

<sup>12</sup> One should think of the Cappella di San Martino in the lower basilica of San Francesco, commissioned by Cardinal Gentile Partino da Montefiore and painted between 1313 and 1318. Cf. Joachim Poeschke, *Die Kirche San Francesco in Assisi und ihre Wandmalereien*, München: Hirmer Verlag, 1985.

monarch which included his divinely sanctioned right to be king as well as his pious attitude. This panel was commissioned by Robert himself right after Louis' canonisation, and wherever its original location was, art historians discuss the churches of San Lorenzo Maggiore or Santa Chiara as well as the cathedral of Naples, all of which were open to a wide audience, where a programmatic representation would have fit in.<sup>13</sup>

In summary, the above observations about the panel of *Saint Louis of Toulouse* regarding the representation of Robert are points we will find in the next representations as well: The king is depicted in a devotional position, kneeling in prayer, he is connected with members of his family and the painting illustrates the strong ties between the Anjou and the Franciscans. Robert occupies less space than the other figures and due to the type of representation that was in high demand at the time, the portrait of the king was fashioned in a stationary format as the following examples demonstrate.<sup>14</sup>

The fresco in the chapter house of Santa Chiara in Naples covers the complete south wall and depicts the enthroned Christ flanked by the Virgin Mary, Saints Louis of Toulouse and Clare on one side, and by Saints John, Francis and Anthony of Padua on the other side (fig. 4). Four people are kneeling in the front row holding their hands in prayer. The fact that three of them are crowned indicates that they are members of the royal family. Furthermore, Robert on the right side of Christ is easily recognisable. Next to him is Andrew of Hungary, and the women on the left side are Queen Sancia and Joanna of Naples.<sup>15</sup> In November 1330 Robert appointed Joanna, the eldest daughter of his dead son Charles, as his successor,

<sup>13</sup> Harald Keller argued for a display as an altarpiece in San Lorenzo Maggiore while Julian Gardner discussed 'the ninth chapel on the south side' of Santa Chiara as the original site. Cf. Keller, *Entstehung des Bildnisses*, 320 and Gardner, 'Tomb and the tiara', 33. Arguing with the fact that Santa Chiara was founded by the royal couple and that 'the altarpiece's installation [...] near the main altar would have exulted a new saint envisioning his family's religious and political ideals', Adrian Hoch argued for Gardner's thesis. Cf. Hoch, 'Simone Martini's Angevin St. Louis in Naples', 38. While Lorenz Enderlein and Francesco Aceto instead assumed San Lorenzo Maggiore, Klaus Krüger pointed to the possibility of a non-Franciscan provenance considering the Neapolitan cathedral. Cf. Lorenz Enderlein, 'Zur Entstehung der Ludwigstafel des Simone Martini in Neapel', *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana*, 30, 1995, 135-49; Francesco Aceto, 'Spazio ecclesiale e pale di 'primitivi' in San Lorenzo Maggiore a Napoli: dal 'San Ludovico' di Simone Martini al 'San Girolamo' di Colantonio. I', *Prospettiva*, 137, 2010, 2-50 and Klaus Krüger, 'A deo solo et at regnum teneo. Simone Martinis 'Ludwig von Toulouse' in Neapel', Tanja Michalsky, eds, *Medien der Macht. Kunst zur Zeit der Anjous in Italien*, Berlin: Reimer, 2001, 79-119.

<sup>14</sup> Vagnoni pointed to the same images from 1317 onward and especially to those from the 1330s which, in his point of view, are the portraits with a primarily sacral character. In this regard he mentioned the numerous saints, especially from the Franciscan order, Christ and Mary in these representations as well as the devotional position of a proportionally smaller Robert. This special piety was part of his propaganda. Cf. Vagnoni, 'Nota sulla regalità sacra di Roberto d'Angiò', 254-6.

<sup>15</sup> For the debate regarding the question whether the man next to the king is his son Charles of Calabria or Andrew of Hungary and who are the women on the other side, see Vinni



Figure 4 Naples, Santa Chiara, chapter house, *Christ flanked by saints and the royal family*.  
Source: foto Archive Elisabetta Scirocco

and in September 1333 he signed the marriage contract between her and Andrew. Since both were underage, they were married just formally at this time.<sup>16</sup> Robert bequeathed his kingdom only to Joanna and made Andrew her prince consort, a fact which explains why Andrew is not crowned in this fresco. While the ladies are depicted in a three-quarter profile, Robert and Andrew are shown in profile. They differ in the position of their heads: Andrew, leaning his head back, looks up, while Robert maintains a straight position and looks forward. As in the case of his representation in the panel with the *Saint Louis*, here too he incarnates his sovereignty in a picture with a devotional character. The idea that Robert's earthly rulership is supported by a sacred rulership or, rather, takes place with spiritual backing, is expressed in the composition of the back row.<sup>17</sup>

It is not documented who commissioned the fresco that must have been painted after the marriage contract of September 1333.<sup>18</sup> This picture includes a

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Lucherini, 'Regalità e iconografia francescana nel complesso conventuale di Santa Chiara a Napoli: il Cristo in trono della sala capitolare', *Ikona*, 3, 2010, 151-68.

<sup>16</sup> The actual marriage took place only in spring 1342. Cf. Lucherini, 'Regalità e iconografia francescana', 156.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Lucherini, 'Regalità e iconografia francescana', 158.

<sup>18</sup> Also Lucherini argued for a date close to 1333, the year of the first marriage of Joanna and Andrew. I suggest that the end of the construction of Santa Chiara could be a marker as well. In 1328 this large complex with a church, a Franciscan monastery and a monastery for the

dynastic statement and it represents a link between the Anjou as founders of the Franciscan monastery of Santa Chiara and the famous personalities who marked the beginning of this order, namely Saint Francis and Saint Clare, while Mary and Christ present the holy kingdom and divine rulership. A chapter house would be a very fitting setting for a complex program like this, because besides being the location for the monks' meeting, this space was also be used for gatherings with secular and clerical representatives.<sup>19</sup>



Figure 5 Master of Giovanni Barrile, *Saint Louis of Toulouse*, c. 1340, Aix-en-Provence, musée Granet. © Musée Granet, Ville d'Aix-en-Provence

Another devotional scene shows Robert and Sancia kneeling on either side of Louis (fig. 5), and the small dimensions of this panel, painted around 1340 by the Master of Giovanni Barrile, suggest that it was designed for private devotion.<sup>20</sup> Once

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Poor Clares was still under construction, and in 1340 it was consecrated. A date for the fresco after 1340 therefore seems unlikely.

<sup>19</sup> Lucherini argued against an assumption that the fresco was conceived as a propagandistic manifesto for the pope because in her opinion the chapter house was a closed space where only the monks could have entered. A convincingly counterexample is the fresco of the Pentecost in the Spanish Chapel in Santa Maria Novella in Florence which was convincingly analyzed as a statement to the Christian mission in Asia at that time. Cf. Niels von Holst, *Zur Ikonographie des Pfingstbildes in der Spanischen Kapelle*, *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 16: 3, 1972, 261-8. For a wider analysis of chapter houses as sites of exchange and discussion and the decoration therefore, see Miklós Boskovits, 'Insegnare per immagini: dipinti e sculture nelle sale capitolare', *Arte cristiana*, N. S. 78, 1990, 123-42.

<sup>20</sup> Aix-en-Provence, musée Granet, 64,3 x 40 cm. Cf. Dominique Thiébaud, eds, *Giotto e compagni*, Paris: Louvre éditions, 2013, 184-7. For further information on the Master of

again, Robert's portrait is linked with the famous saint of his family and once again he is depicted in profile making him recognisable. Louis has the same, already known schematic face and Sancia is not portrayed individually at all - in fact, the general presentation of the queen seems to be standard.<sup>21</sup> More than twenty years after the first representation of Robert and Louis, the king can be depicted already crowned and in a pious attitude, here meaning a less tense facial expression, and looking upward to his brother. His representation also forms the image of the king: Louis is not enthroned, but rather he is standing barefoot and more clearly a representative of the Franciscan poverty. Thus, the theme of *beata stirps*, which means that the affiliation to a family chosen by God sanctifies the sovereign and legitimates his rulership at the same moment, was an important component of Robert's portraiture at the beginning of his rulership as well as later on.

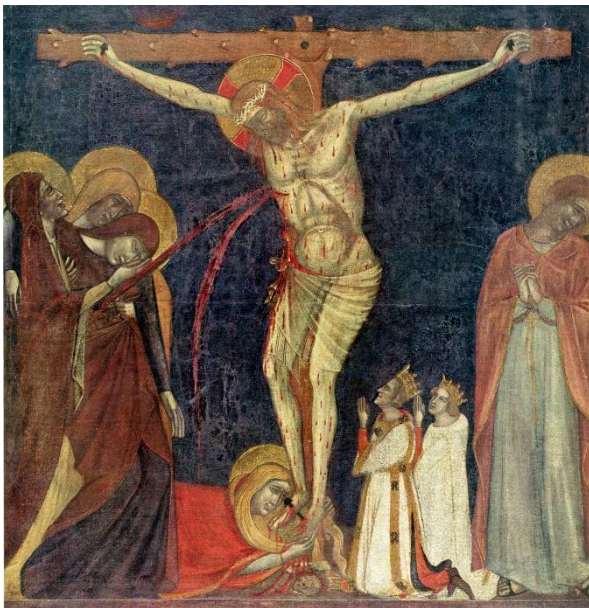


Figure 6 Milan, private collection, *Crucifixion*.  
Source: Ferdinando Bologna, *I pittori alla corte  
angioina di Napoli. 1266-1414 e un riesame  
dell'arte nell'età fridericiana*, Rome: Ugo Bozzi  
Editore, 1969.

Aside from the Saint Louis, the royal couple is also shown in adoration of the crucified Jesus (fig. 6). This image belongs with three other pictures on canvas which depict the enthroned Madonna with child, flanked by the Saints Mary Magdalene and Clare, the Flagellation and the Stigmatisation of Saint Francis.<sup>22</sup> Together these images must have been part of a bigger cycle, attributed to the Master of the Franciscan Temperas, which decorated a chapel dedicated to the Annunciation in

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Giovanni Barrile and whether the painting was made in Naples or in Southern France and when, please see above.

<sup>21</sup> Thiébaud said that in this case one could not speak about portraits, but she said at the same time that the identity of the Saint and the kneeling couple is unquestioned. This is contradictory because if one defined a portrait as a depiction which distinguishes one from another, at least the figure of King Robert can be considered as one. Cf. Thiébaud, *Giotto e compagni*, 184-7.

<sup>22</sup> Milan, private collection, each canvas: 130 x 135 cm. Please see colour illustrations in Ferdinando Bologna, *I pittori alla corte angioina di Napoli. 1266-1414 e un riesame dell'arte nell'età fridericiana*, Rome: Ugo Bozzi Editore, 1969, 238-9 and 242-3.



Santa Maria Maddalena, a Neapolitan convent for converted prostitutes founded by Sancia in 1324 and date around 1342.<sup>23</sup> This time Robert and his wife appear next to each other forming part of the group of family and friends of Christ.

The portraits of the royal couple are differentiated in this representation as well. The queen is depicted in a three-quarter profile, as women in Angevin art often appear,<sup>24</sup> whereas the king appears in profile. He is looking up to Christ while Sancia focuses on the scene with Mary and the holy women. Because it is not the first time that the portrait of the French monarch is linked with images of family members, this manner of presentation must be seen as a feature of Angevin portraiture. When it came to consolidate Robert's rulership, there was obviously no need to surround him with others. Given that Adolf Reinle discussed the 'representatives of sovereignty',<sup>25</sup> one should also consider the depiction of family members and courtiers as well as the coats-of-arms in the pictures which could have been inserted in remembrance of the facial portrait of the king.<sup>26</sup>

As I have mentioned, there are other modes of representing the king besides the one in which he appears in a devotional position. All these other modes appear in miniature painting, which was an important genre at the French court in Naples, and a useful medium to proclaim opinions and convictions. Precious books have always been objects shown to other rulers or persons of an elevated social status, both in a secular and in a clerical context.

The *Anjou Bible* is a treasure full of portraits of Robert. He ordered the illuminations by the local painter Cristoforo Orimina, most likely for the second marriage of Joanna and Andrew, which would explain the Hungarian coats-of-arms that appear throughout the book. After Andrew's death in mid-September 1345, Niccolò d'Alife took possession of the bible. D'Alife had been the chancellor of the

<sup>23</sup> Adrian Hoch demonstrated the provenance of this cycle convincingly based on iconographical facts and the particular piety of that time in this convent which was influenced by the queen's confessor Friar Philip Alquier of Riez. He was known for his belief in chastity and his obsession with the Flagellation and the Crucifixion which could end in manifestations of mystic piety. In 1343 he became the guardian of Santa Maria Maddalena but his close connection with Queen Sancia dated already to the early 1330s. Cf. Adrian S. Hoch, 'Pictures of penitence from a trecento Neapolitan nunnery', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 61: 2, 1998, 206-26.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. the depictions of the women in the *Anjou Bible* on fol. 4r as well as the one in the fresco in the chapter house of Santa Chiara in Naples.

<sup>25</sup> 'Vertreter der Herrschaft'. Cf. Adolf Reinle, *Das stellvertretende Bild. Plastiken und Gemälde von der Antike bis ins 19. Jahrhundert*, Zurich and Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1984, 110-2.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. therefore the portrait of the Neapolitan Bishop Humbert d'Ormont, today in the Museo Diocesano di Napoli, as well as the fresco with of the *Allegory of Poverty* in the refectory of Santa Chiara where the scene is embedded in the coats-of-arms of the House of the Neapolitan Anjou and the House of Aragon. The coats-of-arms of Sancia do appear once again in the tabernacle with the black statute of Mary in the Moravian gallery in Brno. Instead, the depiction of Queen Sancia in the sculptured relief in the National Gallery of Art in Washington seems less programmatic because the dimensions of this art piece as well as her representation – kneeling before the enthroned Madonna who blessed her – suggest a use for private devotion. Please see illustrations in Michalsky, eds, *Medien der Macht*, 107, 135, 131, 267.

House of the Anjou and had obviously asked to paint his coats-of-arms over those of the Anjou.<sup>27</sup> Fol. 3v, the first frontispiece, contains an image of Robert flanked by various virtues and vices, all of which are explicitly labelled. Robert is enthroned and identified by a phrase at the upper border of the picture: 'Rex Robertus, rex expertus omnia scientia'. In the front row are the four cardinal virtues – Justice, Fortitude, Prudence and Temperance – carrying the baldachin over the king, and behind them are the virtues of Courtliness, Purity, Discretion and Loyalty. These four are the courtly virtues and together with the cardinal ones they stand above corresponding personifications of eight sins or vices: Avarice, the Devil, Indiscretion, Treason, Tyranny, Weakness, Folly and Fury.<sup>28</sup>

The fact that the virtues appear as servants of the king suggests that he must be a great man of high qualities. Robert, depicted as an older monarch on a throne with lions, personifies wisdom and dignity. Considering that the king ordered this book for Joanna and Andrew, it is plausible that he wanted to be understood as an example for the younger generation.<sup>29</sup> Besides the virtues which are necessary to triumph over the vices, Robert paid special attention to the sacral perspective of his ruler-ship. He is holding the orb and sceptre as symbols of the earthly power that he derives from Christ, whose right hand is extended in benediction toward him. In the opposite corner appears Mary in a devotional position observing this scene with arms crossed before her chest and accompanied by saints or angels. It is here that my observations go beyond Mirko Vagnoni, who pointed exclusively to the virtues as the features to convey an image of King Robert of Anjou as a wise, sophisticated and morally good person.<sup>30</sup> Above all, in my opinion, it is crucial to note that this scene is framed, or better is under the protection of a Christian gesture, namely the benediction of the king by Christ. Furthermore, this occurs with the acceptance of Mary, who watches this act of benediction. This resembles the idea of the spiritual backing in the fresco in the chapter house of Santa Chiara, expressed in the composition of the back row with the saints, and Robert's divinely sanctioned right to rule the kingdom, expressed in the crowning Saint Louis in the painting by Simone Martini.

Juxtaposed with the second frontispiece, the ideological program of the *Anjou Bible* indicates another dimension of understanding the personality of this wise and pious ruler. On fol. 4r, Robert appears as son, grandson, father and grandfather as part of a pictorial genealogy that presents the Angevin dynasty as the social and political foundation of the kingdom. The three times the king is

<sup>27</sup> At the end of the fourteenth-century the *Anjou Bible* found its way from Italy to France, in the possession of John, Duke of Berry. In the sixteenth-century it was brought to Belgium and after the French Revolution to the Major Seminary of Mechelen. In 1969 the seminary was closed and the book ended in the Faculty of Theology of the University of Leuven where it still is. Cf. for this paragraph and the history of the book: Frank Gistelincx, 'The Anjou Bible: A treasure from the Maurits Sabbe Library in Leuven', Watteuw and Van der Stock, eds, *Anjou Bible*, 27-35.

<sup>28</sup> For an elaborate study of the meaning of the virtues and vices cf. Duran, 'Politics of art'.

<sup>29</sup> For a deeper analysis of the idea of exempla relating to the *Anjou Bible*, see Duran, 'Politics of art'.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Vagnoni, 'Nota sulla regalità sacra di Roberto d'Angiò', 254-6.

shown in these two images, he is easily recognised by his facial characteristics: the hooked nose and the hanging chin.



Figure 7 Anjou Bible, fol. 234r c. 1340-43, KU Leuven, Library of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Maurits Sabbe Library. © KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library

On fol. 234r (fig. 7), the man in the left medallion has these specifics and is identified as Robert. But who are the other two enthroned kings in this bas-de-page? The depiction of the three kings seems to be more than just another dynastical statement, because this time only the crowned heads of the family appear. In comparison with fol. 4, one could suggest that the figure in the middle is Charles I and the figure on the right side is Charles II because of the different position of their heads, one in profile and the other in a three-quarter profile.<sup>31</sup> This would indicate homage from Robert to his grandfather, founder of the Angevin rulership in Italy, renouncing the middle space for his own representation – a subtle message which serves to characterize him as a ruler who is generous and always conscious of his origins.

The fact that the last examples of portraits are in books invites a reflection on the connection between text and image. Fol. 234r contains the prologue of the *Book of*

<sup>31</sup> Paone shared this assumption: Cf. Paone, 'Paintings and miniatures in Naples', 65.

*Malachi* which opens with a small initial D (Deus per Moysen). The book itself opens with a large initial H (Onus verbi Domini ad Israel) depicting Cain murdering his brother Abel. It is important to consider what type of meaning this scene of the first murder in the Holy Scripture could have conveyed, placed above the kings. The *Book of Malachi* belongs to the *Prophetic Books*, and the word Malachi means 'Messenger of God', for which reason this messenger was identified with the coming Messiah who liberated mankind from its sins. Could it be that Robert considered Angevin sovereignty itself as a kind of ecclesiastical authority, reconsidering the fact that Italy remained free from her ecclesiastical centre because of the Avignon Papacy?

Talking about text and image, the numerous literary portraits of Robert should be mentioned at least briefly. Besides the poets, namely Dante, who described Robert as 'miserly, unmartial, treacherous and fit only for useless preaching', and Petrarch, whose description of the king was the complete opposite of Dante's,<sup>32</sup> there were a variety of preachers and royal publicists who proclaimed a certain image of the king. In part, these descriptions were steered by the king himself, making them political instruments in portraying the French monarchy.<sup>33</sup>

I will summarise the representations so far: Panel-painting, wall-painting and miniature-painting were all used to establish a certain image of Robert. His portraits appear either as full-page representations or as part of a bigger picture. In a few cases we have seen him adopting a kneeling, devotional position before a saint or Christ, and in others he is depicted enthroned or standing, occasionally admired by members of his family or allegories. An autonomous portrait of this king, a portrait in which he does not act, has not been known until now.

His portrait on fol. 257r (fig. 8) in the *Anjou Bible* breaks away from all of this. The king, playing chess, features other characteristics instead. Chess, the royal game, is known as a mental exercise, so the image indicates that Robert and Sancia are cultivated. It was the courtly game *par excellence*. Besides this, the reference to chivalric legends and courtly love, like the one between Tristan and Iseult for example, chess also contained a dimension of love, in particular when the depiction was part of a book designated for a newly married couple. Also, regarding the royal couple itself, the depiction of Robert and Sancia at the chess board could have been a statement of their relationship.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the animals and the women with the violin, and the basket of flowers flanking the royal couple underline the aesthetic dimension of the Anjou. The curtain behind the couple supports this dynastic aspect, and the piety of Robert is symbolised by the rosary he holds. It seems that he never wanted to be shown separated from a religious dimension.

<sup>32</sup> Dante did so in the canto VIII of his *Paradiso* and from Petrarch we do have many letters in which he praised the French monarch as 'wise', 'kind', 'high-minded and gentle', see Kelly, *New Solomon*, 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> For example the protonotary Bartolomeo da Capua, the Dominican Remigio de' Girolami and the Neapolitan preacher Giovanni Regina. For further information on the office holders and publicists who portrayed King Robert see Kelly, *New Solomon*, 33-41 and 182-5.

<sup>34</sup> For a short summary of the meaning of games in general, and chess in particular in the Middle Ages, see Enrico Castelnuovo and Francesca de Gramatica, eds, *Il gotico nelle Alpi. 1350-1450*, Trento: Castello del Buonconsiglio, 2002, 300-6.



Figure 8 Anjou Bible, fol. 257r. c. 1340-43, KU Leuven, Library of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Maurits Sabbe Library. © KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library

Figure 9 Anjou Bible, fol. 157v. , c. 1340-43, KU Leuven, Library of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Maurits Sabbe Library. © KU Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library

The last two portraits to be discussed present another highly important trait of Robert's character, one which is shown in a few more of his activities and which leads us to the notion that the portraits of the king were an important feature in a strategy called *Ecclesia Neapolitana*.<sup>35</sup> On fol. 157v (fig. 9) the king is depicted sitting on a throne and shown in profile while talking to a group of men, two of whom seem to be scholars. The one in front of Robert and the king have proportionally big hands and in particular a stretched out forefinger, indicating that they are having a discussion. However, the king is characterised as a literate man and as one who is keen to debate.

<sup>35</sup> In writing the history of the cathedral in Naples, art historians often use the Latin expression *Ecclesia Neapolitana*. In this case they refer to documents regarding a church named Santa Restituta, now incorporated into the cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta. At the beginning of the fourteenth-century, King Robert took the first steps towards recasting the identity of the city by integrating his own identity into this former cathedral. Because this transformation happened exactly here, in the chapel of Santa Maria del Principio, I have chosen the term *Ecclesia Neapolitana* as an allegory for one aspect of my doctoral dissertation. To discuss the thesis if the portraits of Robert had been a thread in this strategy one could add the judgment of the commissioner as a decisive aspect in establishing a certain image. This aspect was brought up in the discussion by Philipp Zitzlsperger during the conference in Cracow.

Compared to the other representations in the bible, this portrait is neither full-page nor a bas-de-page, but is contained within the large initial V and hence part of the text. The folio contains the *Book of the Ecclesiastes*, and it is interesting that secular men mark the beginning of a religious text. Robert appears as Solomon and is characterised as a wise authority who makes the right decision and can be seen as an example. The question remains: Does this small initial M depicting a king reading on a folding chair in front of a church building, complete the image of Robert which is given in this miniature? This man does not have the facial characteristics of the Angevin ruler and he is much younger. Is he thus depicted to mark the beginning of Robert's studies, which then ends in his perception as a new Solomon?



Figure 10 *Opus moralium distinctionum*, dedication page, c. 1320, Dublin, University College, Mícheál O Cléirigh Institute, UCD-OFM B44. © UCD-OFM.

This consideration leads to the above-mentioned manuscript which Brendan Cassidy published, the copy of the *Opus moralium distinctionum* by the Franciscan writer Arnald Royard (fig. 10).<sup>36</sup> Actually, we have to admit that the image alone does not directly resemble the portraits of the king, but we do have a text proper on this folio with a dedicatory address to Robert. The crowned king sits on a bench, against a background of gold fleurs-de-lis with the red label, and a bishop kneels before him. The cleric hands the monarch a book while behind him stands Saint Francis. The saint holds a book as well, and reveals the stigmata that he obtained from the seraph that hovers above. Saint Anthony of Padua, a figure in episcopal vestments, and Saint Claire are depicted in medallions at the bottom of the folio. Unfortunately, it is not possible to say why the illuminator did not try to portray the king as he was known from the other portraits: 'Perhaps portraiture was not among his skills, or he had never seen the king personally, [...]. But even so, it is curious

<sup>36</sup> Dublin, University College, Mícheál O Cléirigh Institute, UCD-OFM B44.

that he would not have known what Robert looked like from Simone's great panel, if indeed this was painted shortly after St Louis' canonisation in 1317, as is commonly supposed.<sup>37</sup>

In comparison with the other representation of Robert as a learned man who appears strong in any discussion, the monarch is depicted here at the beginning of his studies. That is why he receives a book, known 'as an alphabetical dictionary of biblical commonplaces for the use of preachers. Arnald's analytical list of 'keywords' would have been a useful reference work for the king,<sup>38</sup> who is also known as a king who preached and left around 280 sermons.<sup>39</sup> The picture shows what kind of knowledge was expected of him. Instead, nearly fifteen years later, the king had internalised this religious knowledge, defending his thoughts in every upcoming debate, as he is presented in the *Anjou Bible*.

In my opinion, Robert's portraits were part of a strategy in which the king wanted to be considered as a moral and religious authority. Italy remained free from her ecclesiastical centre because of the Avignon Papacy, and Naples seemed to offer enough distance and space to establish a kind of leadership with an ecclesiastical character rather than a purely political one. Robert's sermons document his laical use of ecclesiastical privileges. The king interfered in the theological controversies at that time, for instance as the only secular man in the debate of the *visio beatifica*, when Pope John XXII argued that those who died in the faith did not see the presence of God until the Last Judgment. In this controversy, he interfered not only in writing but in the pictorial programmes he commissioned simultaneously.<sup>40</sup>

There must have been a need for every ruler to create and proclaim an image of this own personality, which otherwise might have vanished.<sup>41</sup> In Robert's case, his portraits seem to be related to the special situation on the Italian peninsula at the time and to the idea of creating an *Ecclesia Neapolitana*, which is why the spiritual component is always so important in the depictions of his person. Long ago, art historians recognised that the courts were the perfect location for any evolution in portraiture. Enrico Castelnuovo pointed out that fewer norms in the courtly context

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Cassidy, 'Image of King Robert of Naples'.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Cassidy, 'Image of King Robert of Naples', 33.

<sup>39</sup> There are different indications regarding the number of Robert's sermons. For further information on this topic, see Darleen N. Pryds, *The king embodies the word. Robert d'Anjou and the politics of preaching*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2000.

<sup>40</sup> For Robert's interference in this debate, see Anette Creutzburg, "'...et vident divinam essentiam visione intuitiva et etiam faciali". Zur Reflexion der Kontroverse um die "visio beatifica" im Bildprogramm der Stuttgarter Apokalypsetafeln', Hans-Walter Stork and Babette Tewes and Christian Waszak, eds, *Buchkunst im Mittelalter und Kunst der Gegenwart – Scrinium Kilonense. Festschrift für Ulrich Kuder*, Nordhausen: Verlag Traugott Bautz, 2008, 55-88.

<sup>41</sup> In a broader study of Robert's portraits one could also compare them with those of other sovereigns. A similar understanding of portraiture can perhaps be found as well for Charles the Wise, King of France, and/or Charles IV, King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor.

allowed for experimentation.<sup>42</sup> Naples was special because no guild for artists existed to provide practice guidelines, a fact that gave the court considerable latitude in hiring and controlling artists.<sup>43</sup>

Regarding the various styles of portraits for King Robert, I suggest that this variety was endorsed primarily to establish the different features of his person. Representations like the ones in the *Anjou Bible* reveal different aspects of his personality, but also, programmatic images like the panel by Simone Martini were therefore used to establish a prominent visual image of the king's face. For a further analysis of the question of which depictions shaped the mode of Robert's portraits, I would suggest an approach that asks about the different time frames one can find in these images: Does the profile come from the art of coin? Is the age of the French monarch discussed in the pictures? Which role did the clothing play and does it offer any hint regarding the status of the king at that specific moment in time?<sup>44</sup> For example, the former ruler, Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, was depicted on coins that were diffused particularly in the South of Italy, so the French monarch needed to develop his manner of portraiture too. Considering the fact that Robert of Anjou was deeply religious and quite sceptical of some papal decisions, he understood his rulership not only as political. To establish his court as an *Ecclesia Neapolitana*, the French king had to create an image of himself as a wise, fair, sophisticated and above all pious person.

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<sup>42</sup> Enrico Castelnuovo, 'Il significato del ritratto pittorico nella società', *Storia d'Italia*, V I documenti, 5, Turin: Einaudi, 1973, 1033-94.

<sup>43</sup> 'The city was special in that no apparent guild for artists existed to provide practice guidelines, giving the court considerable latitude in hiring and controlling artists, and few named painters were present in the Angevin capital before Pietro Cavallini.' Cf. Cathleen A. Fleck, *The Clement Bible at the medieval courts of Naples and Avignon. A story of papal power, royal prestige, and patronage*, Surrey: Ashgate 2010, 114.

<sup>44</sup> Some of these questions developed out of comments by Philipp Zitzlsperger and Pierre-Yves Le Pogam made after my talk in Cracow. I want to thank them for their observations.