

## The Sacrality of Frederick II of Swabia<sup>1</sup> La sacralità di Federico II di Svevia

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**Abstract:** By following the *Kaiser Friedrich II* of Ernst Kantorowicz, historians have often talked about the divine and messianic, as well as the angelic and priestly character of Frederick II (1194-1250). This paper presents the results of the analysis both of iconographic and written sources produced in the Swabian court, by calling into question the traditional interpretation.

**Key Words:** Frederick II of Swabia, royal sacrality, representation of power, kingdom of Sicily, Holy Roman Empire.

**Resumen:** Reproponiendo los esquemas interpretativos del *Kaiser Friedrich II* de Ernst Kantorowicz, los estudiosos han atribuido generalmente un carácter divino y mesiánico, así como angélico y sacerdotal a Federico II di Suabia (1194-1250). Este artículo presenta los resultados de un análisis tanto de las fuentes iconográficas como de las escritas producidas dentro de la corte suaba, poniendo así en duda tales interpretaciones.

**Palabras Clave:** Federico II de Suabia, sacralidad regia, representación del poder, reino de Sicilia, Sacro Romano Imperio Germánico.

**Summary:** 1. Introduction. 2. Royal images and sacred elements. 3. Divus Fridericus?. 4. Conclusion. Bibliography.

### 1. Introduction

In 1917 Rudolf Otto described sacrality (“*Das Heilige*”) as an element of absolute power for its possessor.<sup>2</sup> In this sense sacrality can be considered an important component of the *leader* described by Otto’s contemporaries, Sigmund Freud and Max Weber.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting that some of the most seminal studies on medieval sacrality and leadership were written precisely in these years, and they have considered royal sacrality as a propagandistic element exploited by kings in order to enhance their own power (Marc Bloch, Ernst Kantorowicz,

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<sup>1</sup> This is the text of my lecture at the Oberseminar “Neues aus dem Mittelalter” at the University of Kassel (Germany) on April 24, 2013 as a visiting researcher with a “Voucher di mobilità transnazionale a supporto di attività di lavoro all’estero della Regione Toscana” (January 10- July 10, 2013). I thank Ms. Hailey LaVoy for the revision of my English text.

<sup>2</sup> R. OTTO, *Il sacro. L’irrazionale nell’idea del divino e la sua relazione al razionale*, It. ed., Milano, 1966 (but original ed. Breslau, 1917).

<sup>3</sup> S. FREUD, *Psicologie delle masse e analisi dell’io*, It. ed., Torino, 1975 (but original ed. Leipzig, 1921); M. WEBER, *Economia e società*, It. ed., intr. of P. Rossi, Milano, 1961 (but original ed. Tübingen, 1922).

Percy Ernst Schramm).<sup>4</sup> However, in 1952 Wilfred Bion and in 1969 Norbert Elias overturned this interpretation of *leader*, suggesting that the *leader* does not impose himself on society, but rather reflects it.<sup>5</sup>

From this perspective perhaps the propagandistic meaning given to royal sacrality is no longer quite so obvious. But, if it appears clear that royal sacrality is a historical phenomenon and a cultural product of one society (Glauco Maria Cantarella),<sup>6</sup> it is nevertheless very difficult to give a general definition of its meaning. In other words, I think that royal sacrality can have different functions in different contexts, and historians have to verify –in every single case— its specific meaning without limiting it within a generic definition. Unfortunately, from my own research, I can say that the documents produced in the kingdom of Sicily rarely refer to royal sacrality and, when they do, it is always in the form of very few references inserted into a context that is, in general, dedicated to other aspects. Thus, the function of royal sacrality is not usually explicit in these texts, and it is quite difficult to give a general definition of it.

For this reason I have decided to analyse this aspect of the kingdom of Sicily by only approaching royal sacrality as a simple way to represent power or rather, with a point of view concerning the cultural history and specifically the history of ideas. In other words, my work is about how the relationships between king and sacred elements (that is to say, divine and religious authorities) are described in the sources produced in the king's own court and realised from an official point of view. Obviously, considering that every source must be analysed in view of its context, this last aspect is particularly important because only these types of sources can offer interesting information for my purposes.

## 2. Royal images and sacred elements

That having been said, I can introduce the general topic of my research. In the last years I have analysed royal sacrality in the kingdom of Sicily during Norman-Swabian and Angevin-Aragonese period (or more precisely between the

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<sup>4</sup> M. BLOCH, *I re taumaturghi. Studi sul carattere sovranaturale attribuito alla potenza dei re particolarmente in Francia e in Inghilterra*, intr. of J. Le Goff, *Ricordo di Marc Bloch* of L. Febvre, It. ed., Torino, 1989 (but original ed. Paris, 1924); E. KANTOROWICZ, *Federico II imperatore*, It. ed., Milano, 2000 (but original ed. Berlin, 1927-1931); P. E. SCHRAMM, *Die deutschen Kaiser und Könige in Bildern ihrer Zeit. Bis zur Mitte 12. Jahrhunderts (751-1152)*, Berlin-Leipzig, 1928, voll. 2; IDEM, *Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio. Studien und Texte zur Geschichte des römischen Erneuerungsgedankens vom Ende des karolingischen Reiches bis zum Investiturstreit*, Leipzig, 1929, voll. 2.

<sup>5</sup> W. R. BION, *Dinamiche di gruppo*, ora in IDEM, *Esperienze nei gruppi e altri saggi*, It. ed., Roma, 1971 (but original ed. London, 1961), pp. 149-202; N. ELIAS, *La società di corte*, It. ed., intr. of A. Tenenti, Bologna, 1980 (but original ed. Darmstadt-Neuwied, 1969).

<sup>6</sup> G. M. CANTARELLA, *Le basi concettuali del potere*, in *Per me reges regnant. La regalità sacra nell'Europa medievale*, ed. by F. Cardini, and M. Saltarelli, Rimini-Siena, 2002, pp. 193-208; IDEM, "Qualche idea sulla sacralità regale alla luce delle recenti ricerche: itinerari e interrogativi", *Studi Medievali*, s. III, 44 (2003), pp. 911-927; IDEM, "Divagazioni preliminari", in «C'era una volta un re...». *Aspetti e momenti della regalità*, ed. by G. Isabella, Proceedings of the Seminar of Bologna, Bologna, December 17-18, 2003, Bologna, 2005, pp. 9-24.

foundation of the kingdom by Roger II in 1130 to the death of Robert the Wise in 1343) by comparing both iconographic and written sources, or, in other words, looking, on one side, through the rich material evidence of mosaics, paintings, sculptures, miniatures, coins and seals and between scenes of coronations or blessings by God and Christ as well as the presences or the absences of pictures of saints, angels or religious symbols and, on the other side, by exploring the illuminating textual evidence of the *Ordines coronationis*, poems and verses, homilies and public speeches, histories and chronicles, collection of laws, letters, and royal diplomas.

Particularly, my intent was to verify whether in all these sources we can find explicit elements regarding those ideological concepts that historiography about kingdom of Sicily has often proposed for its rulers, that is the king as *a Deo coronatus, rex et sacerdos, christomimetes* and *imago Dei*.<sup>7</sup> I wished to answer the following question: were these concepts really present in the official representations of the kings of Sicily?<sup>8</sup>

First of all, I would immediately like to say that among the existing images of the kings of Sicily, we can find interesting elements in this sense in only a few cases. Therefore, I think that it is very important to underline that royal sacrality

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<sup>7</sup> E. KANTOROWICZ, *Federico II imperatore...*, cit.; E. KITZINGER, "On the Portrait of Roger II in the Martorana in Palermo", *Proporzioni. Studi di Storia dell'Arte*, 3 (1950), pp. 30-35; H.-M. SCHALLER, "Die Kaiseridee Friedrichs II", in *Probleme um Friedrich II.*, ed. by J. Fleckenstein, Sigmaringen, 1974, pp. 109-134; G. M. CANTARELLA, *La Sicilia e i Normanni. Le fonti del mito*, intr. of O. Capitani, Bologna, 1988; J.-P. BOYER, "La «foi monarchique»: royaume de Sicile et Provence (mi-XIII-mi-XIV siècle)", in *Le forme della propaganda politica nel Due e Trecento*, ed. by P. Cammarosano, Proceedings of the Congress of Trieste, Trieste, March 2-5, 1993, Roma, 1994, pp. 85-110; S. WEINFURTER, "Friedrich II. staufischer Weltkaiser", in *Virtuosen der Macht. Herrschaft und Charisma von Perikles bis Mao*, ed. by W. Nippel, München, 2000, pp. 72-88; S. KELLY, *The New Salomon. Robert of Naples (1309-1343) and Fourteenth-Century Kingship*, Leiden-Boston, 2003; G. ANDENNA, "Dalla legittimazione alla sacralizzazione della conquista (1042-1140)", in *I caratteri originari della conquista normanna. Diversità e identità nel Mezzogiorno (1030-1130)*, Proceedings of the 16th Giornate Normanno-Sveve, Bari, October 5-8, 2004, Bari, 2006, pp. 371-406.

<sup>8</sup> Here I am following: M. VAGNONI, *Raffigurazioni regie ed ideologie politiche. I sovrani di Sicilia dal 1130 al 1343*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Florence, 2008, unpublished; IDEM, "L'immagine dei re di Sicilia", in M. BUSSAGLI, G.M. CANTARELLA, F. DELLE DONNE, L. RUSSO, M. VAGNONI, *Svevi, Angioini, Aragonesi. Alle origini delle Due Sicilie*, Udine, 2009, pp. 138-163; IDEM, "Una nota sulla regalità sacra di Roberto d'Angiò alla luce della ricerca iconografica", *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 167/2 (2009), pp. 253-268; IDEM, "Problemi di legittimazione regia: «Imitatio Byzantii»", in *Il papato e i Normanni. Temporale e spirituale in età normanna*, ed. by E. D'Angelo, and C. Leonardi, Proceeding of the Congress, Ariano Irpino, December 6-7, 2007, Florence, 2011, pp. 175-190; IDEM, "Rex et sacerdos e christomimetes. Alcune considerazioni sulla sacralità dei re normanni di Sicilia", *Mediaeval Sophia. Studi e ricerche sui saperi medievali*, 6/2 (2012), <http://www.mediaevalsophia.net>, pp. 268-284; IDEM, "Evocazioni davidiche nella regalità di Guglielmo II di Sicilia", in *Hagiologica. Studi per Réginald Grégoire*, ed. by A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, U. Paoli, and P. Piatti, Fabriano, 2012, pp. 771-788; IDEM, *Le rappresentazioni del potere. La sacralità regia dei Normanni di Sicilia: un mito?*, intr. of J.-M. Martin, Bari, 2012; IDEM, *I re normanni di Sicilia e i loro diplomi. Elementi di sacralità regia*, in *Auctor et auctoritas in Latinis Medii Aevi litteris*, ed. by E. D'Angelo, Proceedings of the 6th Congress of Internationales Mittellateiner Komitee, Napoli-Benevento, November, 10-14, 2010, Firenze, 2013, pp. in press.

is not the primary aspect of the representation of these rulers, and, moreover, it is not absolutely constant for the period that I have analysed. For example, while it is present during the Norman period (for example Roger II is depicted with Saint Nicolas blessing him on his crown in the little plaque from the ciborium of the Basilica of San Nicola in Bari (Fig. 1); or respectively Roger II and William II are depicted with Christ crowning them in the mosaic of the church of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio in Palermo and in that of the cathedral of Santa Maria la Nuova in Monreale (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3), it completely disappears in the following years, only to come back during the reign of Robert of Anjou, though in a very different manner –Robert is often shown in a simple act of devotion toward Christ or Saint Ludwig of Toulouse: for example in the fresco of Lello of Orvieto in the Convent of Santa Chiara in Napoli (Fig. 4); in the painting of the Master of the Tempere Francescane (Fig. 5); as well as in the painting of the Master of Giovanni Barrile (Fig. 6)—. Moreover, sacrality appears very limited in comparison with the traditional opinion of historians, and absolutely never in the form of king as *rex et sacerdos*, *christomimetes* and *imago Dei*. These concepts appear not to belong to the representation of power in the kingdom of Sicily.



Fig. 1. *Saint Nicolas blesses Roger II*. Museum of the Basilica of San Nicola, Bari.





Fig. 2. *Christ crowns Roger II*, Church of Santa Maria dell' Ammiraglio, Palermo.

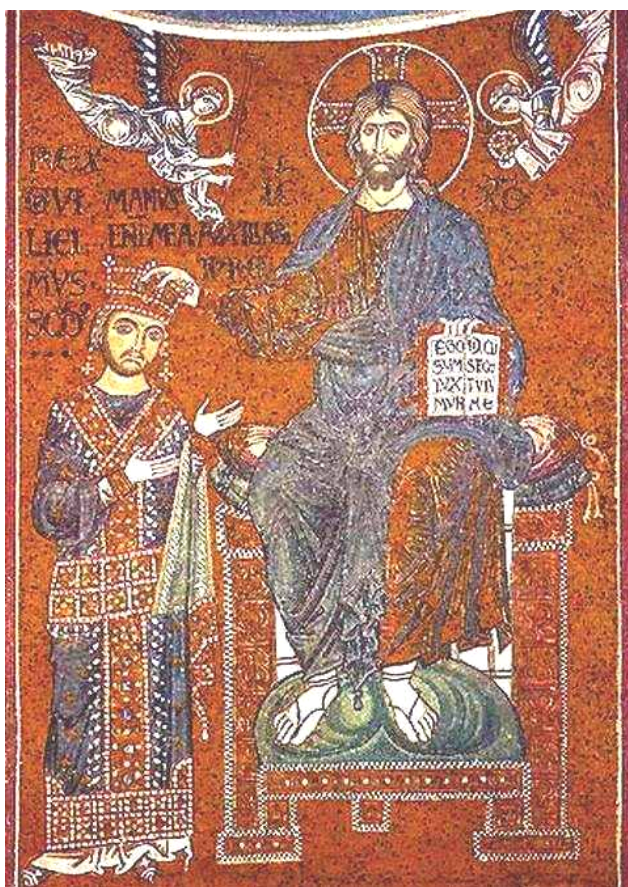


Fig. 3. *Christ crowns William II*, Cathedral of Santa Maria la Nuova, Monreale (Palermo).





Fig. 4. LELLO OF ORVIETO, *Christ, saints, and Angevin royal family*, Convent of Santa Chiara, Napoli.



Fig. 5

Fig. 5. MASTER OF THE TEMPERE FRANCESCANE, *The Crucifixion, Robert of Anjou, and Sancia of Mallorca*, Private collection.



Fig. 6

Fig. 6. MASTER OF GIOVANNI BARRILE, *Saint Ludwig of Toulouse, Robert of Anjou, and Sancia of Mallorca*, Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence.

### 3. Divus Fridericus?

Anyway, let us proceed to the specific topic of this paper. Certainly, the subject of the sacrality of Frederick II of Swabia is particularly broad for the historical importance of this king and for the huge number of existing sources in which he figures. Consequently in this paper I will propose, following the matter

of research that I have previously described, only a few considerations about a particular aspect of his sacrality. I am particularly glad to be able to present here a preview of the results of my recent research on the divine and messianic character of Frederick II inside the works produced at his court with an official intent.<sup>9</sup>

Even if similar considerations had already been presented in previous works, the sacrality of Frederick II is particularly emphasised in the *Kaiser Friedrich II* of Ernst Kantorowicz. The idea of a sacred king, perhaps influenced by the previously mentioned *Das Heilige* of Rudolf Otto, was particularly functional with regard to the image of an absolute sovereign that Kantorowicz outlined. Indeed, Kantorowicz often talked about the divine and messianic, as well as the angelic and priestly character of Frederick II.

Though Kantorowicz's book on Frederick II has been criticized, and his conclusions have been revised by other scholars, his interpretation of the sacrality of Frederick II, in general, has nevertheless been widely accepted by historians, and even in more recent works we can find consideration, though with a less emphatic tone, of a Frederick II compared to and equated to God and Christ.

On the contrary, in my previous work on the analysis of the official images of Frederick II in sphragistics, numismatics, glyptic, jewelry, sculpture, painting and miniature, I have found no explicit elements regarding this pattern of sacrality. Indeed, in his iconographic language the act of crowning or blessing by Christ or by the hand of God disappears; and likewise there is no longer the presence of saints, angels or religious and sacred symbols. In other words, in his iconography there are no overt elements which indicate a divine or messianic, nor an angelic or priestly character of his image. Other aspects, other representations of power, have more importance for the Swabian emperor: for example his connection with the Holy Roman Empire (expressed by the exchange of the Norman bull for the traditional German seal (Fig. 7 and 8), and in particular with the ancient Roman Empire, expressed by the depiction of the king in the typical ancient Roman imperial dress and with Roman symbols of

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<sup>9</sup> Here I am following: M. VAGNONI, *Federico II allo specchio. Analisi iconografica e politico-funzionale delle sue raffigurazioni*, Degree Thesis, University of Siena, 2004, unpublished; IDEM, *La legittimità e la sacralità imperiale di Federico II di Svevia*, «Tabulae. Del Centro Studi Federiciani», 18/1 (2006), pp. 127-169 (republished in «Eikón/Imago», 1/2 (2012), <http://capire.es/eikonimago/>, pp. 49-72); IDEM, “Il significato politico delle caratteristiche iconografiche di Federico II di Svevia”, *Iconographica. Rivista di iconografia medievale e moderna*, 5 (2006), pp. 64-75; IDEM, “*Caesar semper Augustus*. Un aspetto dell'iconografia di Federico II di Svevia”, *Mediaeval Sophia. Studi e ricerche sui saperi medievali*, 2/1 (2008), <http://www.mediaevalsophia.net>, pp. 142-161; IDEM, “*Lex animata in terris*. Sulla sacralità di Federico II di Svevia”, *Mediaeval Sophia. Studi e ricerche sui saperi medievali*, 3/1 (2009), <http://www.mediaevalsophia.net>, pp. 101-118 (republished in *De Medio Aevo*, 1/1 (2013), <http://capire.es/eikonimago/>, pp. 47-66); IDEM, “L'immagine di Federico II di Svevia. Un riesame”, *Eikón/Imago*, 2/1 (2013), <http://capire.es/eikonimago/>, pp. 49-68; and in particular M. VAGNONI, “*Divus Fridericus?* Alcune annotazioni sul carattere divino e messianico di Federico II di Svevia”, *Mediaeval Sophia. Studi e ricerche sui saperi medievali*, 7/1 (2013), <http://www.mediaevalsophia.net>, pp. in press.



power; or by the use of stereotypical depiction of the city of Rome and the imperial eagle (as we can see in the famous *Augustale* coin and in the imperial bull, Fig. 9 and Fig. 10); or the depiction of the sovereign as source of law and *Lex animata in Terris* (as in the sculpture of the Arch of Capua, Fig. 11).



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

Fig. 7. *Bull of Roger II*, Museum of Civiltà Normanna, Ariano Irpino (Avellino).

Fig. 8. *Imperial seal of Frederick II*, Bayerische Hauptstaatarchiv, München.



Fig. 9. *Augustale*, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Napoli.





Fig. 10. *Imperial bull of Frederick II*, Generallandesarchiv, Karlsruhe.

In the last few years historians have produced a number of new studies dealing with representations of Frederick II. For my own part, I have recently reevaluated both dubious and genuine likenesses of the king present in sphragistics, numismatics, glyptic, jewelry, sculpture, painting and miniature. In so doing, I have substantially decreased the number of the portraits of Frederick II which we know to have been produced both in his court and as a result of his own initiative. Even despite these new researches, it is nevertheless clear that, in terms of visual representations, Frederick preferred to ascribe Roman, imperial, legal qualities himself and his rule, rather than messianic or sacerdotal characteristics. It is, however, rather curious, because the study of written sources produces one result, whereas the iconographic analysis produces another. Did Frederick II really want to give these different images of himself?

To answer to this question, I have decided to compare my iconographic results with the texts which have been quoted by historians as particularly important sources for the interpretation of Frederick II's sacrality, in order to look for direct, explicit and decisive elements of it. First it is important to understand which type of sources the historiography has generally privileged in this regard.

We can identify six different types, namely sources produced after the death of Frederick II; sources produced outside the court and in an enemy context (for example the papal court or the cities of northern Italy); sources produced outside the court but in a friendly context (for example in Swabian or Ghibelline areas); sources for which we do not know the origin, time, audience, or purpose of their production; sources produced at the court and to celebrate the king but with a private character (for example letters between courtiers or poems written by members of the court but without the imperial order); and sources produced at the court with an official point of view and in the name of Frederick II.

Obviously, only the last type can be useful for this kind of work, and thus only these sources must be analyzed. Finally, a consideration about the methodology of my analysis: my opinion is that historians, studying these sources, have overemphasized, with regard to the sacred sense, the meaning of elements that are not necessary linked with sacrality. I think that the meaning of symbolic

elements (that, for their nature, are open to different interpretations) must be given by the text. In other words, I think that our task is to find in these sources clear and explicit references to the divine and messianic, as well as to the angelic and priestly character of Frederick II, in order not to force the real meanings of these texts into anachronistic and preconceived schemes.

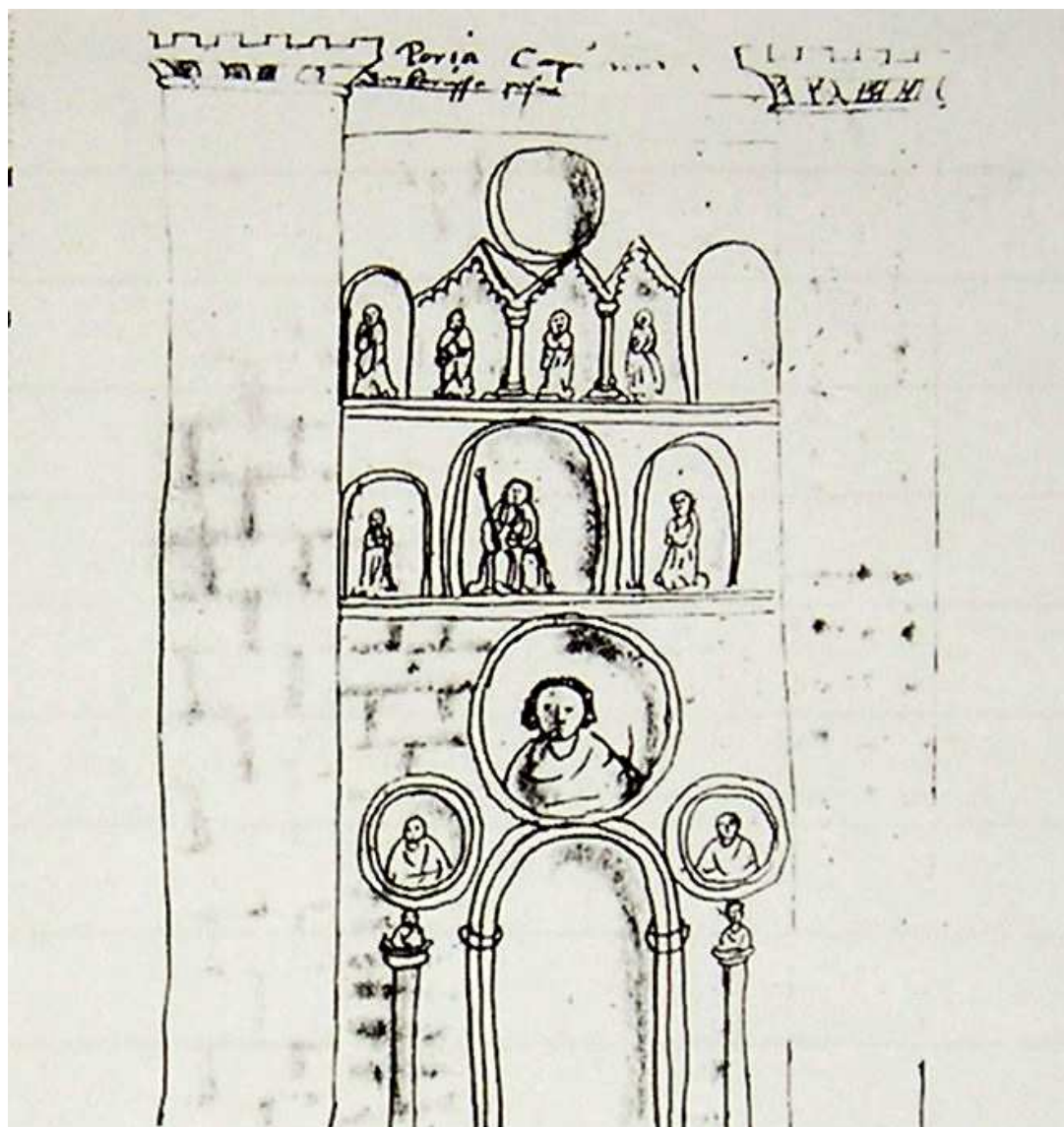


Fig. 11. *Drawing of the Arch of Capua*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien.

This is what I have done in my research, and I have reached surprising conclusions. First of all, despite the very prolific production of Frederick II's court, there are very few extant documents (only 25), and in general they do not really reveal much about the king's alleged sacrality. Yes, we can identify a relationship between the emperor and God and Christ by the fact, for example, that the king's power emanates from them, and that they have elected and crowned him king. Likewise, Frederick says that in legal and judicial actions he is inspired by God. However, the relationships between the ruler and the divine is never explicated in sense of identification between the king and the deity and even if, sometimes, what the emperor does is presented as an action of God, this

is because Frederick, humbly, considers himself to be a mere tool of God. The main intent of the text, then, is to celebrate the Lord more than the king. Moreover, if at other times Frederick has a relationship, for example, with the angels, he does not, in any case, identify himself with them at all.

If Frederick is celebrated as lord of the whole world and even of the natural elements, this is done without giving him a divine character, and it is included in a monotheistic context that excludes the possibility of interpreting Frederick as a deity. If the emperor, on rare occasions, uses the adjective *divus* for himself, this is not necessarily because he considers himself an idol but in order to express his relationship with the sphere of God. Moreover, we can find nothing about an eschatological and messianic interpretation of Frederick like the emperor of the last time or like the new leader who, following the thought of Joachim of Fiore, would renew the Christendom before the arrival of the Antichrist.

Other times the text has a completely devotional sense, and even the simple celebration of the emperor does not find space. Moreover, if Frederick sometimes has a relationship with King David, it is not to underline his messianic and priestly character (in the way of a *rex et sacerdos*). Indeed, we can often find in the texts explicit considerations of the authority of the emperor only in the temporal sphere of the power, and, concerning his functions in the ecclesiastic area, there are references only to his military protection (or, eventually, to his patronage) of the Christian faith and the Church.

Other times Frederick, quoting passages from the Bible regarding Christ or even the words of the Redeemer Himself, has a relationship, in some way, with the Messiah, but there is no reason to presume that this was blasphemous. Christ is only taken as a model. Modelling oneself on Christ is also particularly useful, depending on the sense of the text, for underlining the good behaviour of the emperor, his devotion, his faith, and his respect for and submission to the pope and the Church, as well as, in other situations, the perfidy and the wickedness of the pope in his actions against Frederick II. Moreover, these messianic relationships are sometimes included in a context that mainly celebrates the Imperial and Caesarean aspect of Frederick II's power.

At this point I would like to analyse more precisely one document which is particularly significant to elucidating my methodological approach and my opinions. This is a very important and famous source often quoted by historians to demonstrate the messianic character of Frederick II: the encyclical *Collegerunt pontifices* written against Pope Gregory IX on April 1239 after his second excommunication (and edited by Huillard-Bréholles).<sup>10</sup>

The text begins by evoking the priests and the Pharisees gathered to conspire against Christ, Mt 26, 3: "*Collegerunt pontifices et pharisei consilium in unum, et adversus principem et Romanorum imperatorem convenerunt*".<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Historia diplomatica Friderici Secundi. Sive Constitutiones, privilegia, mandata, instrumenta quae supersunt istius imperatoris et filiorum eius. Accedunt Epistolae Paparum et documenta varia*, ed. by J. L. A. Huillard-Bréholles, Paris, 1852-1861, V. 1, pp. 308-312.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 309, rr. 10-11.



The meaning of this *incipit*, however, is not the identification between the king and the Messiah (and we ought to consider that in the whole document we find no explication in this sense). Instead it appears perfectly useful at the following negative description of the pope:

*“Iste patre patrum, qui dicitur servus servorum Dei, omni prorsus exclusa justicia factus est asp̄is surda, non admittens romani principis allegata; et velut lapis qui de funda jacitur, sic contentum emisit subito verbum malum, ac velut omnino respuens in perturbatione consilium, «quod scripsi scripsi», vociferans, respuit viam pacis”.*<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, we note that the title of “*Christi vicarius*”,<sup>13</sup> here as in other parts of the text, is used, even if with a polemic meaning, only for the pope and not for the emperor. Regarding the latter, the document talks only about the divine origin of his power and his function as defender of the Church.

Moreover, the biblical quotations and the sentences taken from the teaching of Christ by Frederick II (“*Dic, rogo, quid resurgens a mortuis dixit primo discipulis ille magister omnium magistrorum*” or “*sicut eterni Regis Filius dixit Petro...*”)<sup>14</sup> do not create a particular link or relationship between the emperor and the Messiah. Simply, Christ is a very important model for the behaviour of a medieval king (both as a monarch and as one of the faithful) and, in this specific case, Christ’s teaching is also particularly functional in underlining the negative image of the pope that is described here: cruel, greedy, uninterested in the good of the Church and one who has abandoned the examples of Peter and Christ.

We could see in the reference to the Roman prince as the King of the kings and saviour of Jerusalem an allusion to the messianic character of Frederick, but, really, this is not explicated in the text and nothing, in the context, goes in this direction:

*“assidue Regem regum romanum expectans principem, captivitatis sue fiduciam, et sui exterminii redemptorem. Tu autem hostis, Herodes impie, illuc ire times; lapis offensionis et petra scandali, maris et terre semitas conturbasti, ne Cesar iste, mirabile mundi lumen et speculum sine ruga, succurrat more Cesareo terre Dei”.*<sup>15</sup>

The emperor is effectively the King of all the other kings and, simply, we can see *redemptor* also as someone who redeems someone else from the slavery.

Again, at the end of the text Constantine is not remembered for his characteristics of *rex et sacerdos* or *alter Christus* (“*sacri magnificentia Constantini, qui curatus a lepre vitio, dedit Ecclesie quicquid habet libertatis*

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 309, rr. 30-32 and p. 310, rr. 1-3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 310, r. 3 and *passim*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 310, rr. 5-6 and p. 312, rr. 25-26.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 312, rr. 11-16.

*hodie vel honoris*")<sup>16</sup> and, furthermore, we cannot identify Frederick with God for the reason that whoever opposes the royal power opposes the divine power ("cum dicat Apostolus: «Omnis potestas a Domino Deo est; qui potestati resistit, divine potentie contradicit»").<sup>17</sup>

In addition, the symbolic figure of the lion, which appears at the end of the text, does not necessarily have an eschatological, messianic or sacerdotal meaning:

*“Revertentem ergo ad gremium matris Ecclesie benigne recipias filium singularem, presertim cum petat instanter veniam absque culpa; alioquin leo noster fortissimus, qui simulat hodie se dormire, rugitus sono terribili trahet ad se omnes a terre finibus tauros pingues, et plantando justitiam Ecclesiam diriget, evellens prorsus ac destruens cornua superbiorum”*.<sup>18</sup>

## Conclusion

In the end, my general opinion is that in his official representation Frederick does not identify himself with God or Christ, nor with an angel or a priest (at least not explicitly and not in the tone generally proposed by historiography). Thus the concepts of *imago Dei*, *christomimetes* and *rex et sacerdos* appear inadequate for him.

If Christ serves as a model for the king, we cannot talk about identification: Frederick never considers himself to be the Son of God. In the same way, the references to David or God do not mean that Frederick considers himself to be priestly or divine. These interpretations are forcing the real meaning of the sources too much. Thus my conclusion is that the sacrality of Frederick II appears in fact rather reduced and underpowered in comparison with what historians have generally proposed. Maybe he does not consider it appropriate to present his *majestas* in this way, and perhaps the weight and the sense of the sacred element of his kingship should be reevaluated as well: how is it effectively used? Does sacrality increase the authority of the king? Does it create a charismatic *leader* and hypnotiser of the masses? But as I have explained, it is very difficult to answer these questions and perhaps the historian here should be silent.

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 312, rr. 22-24.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 312, rr. 27-28.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 312, rr. 28-33.

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