

The Italian Angevins: Naples and Beyond, 1266–1343

Introduction

Jane Gilbert, Catherine Keen, and Ella Williams

University College London

Both as a family and a cultural institution, the Italian Angevins are intimately connected to the history of Naples. Seminal publications encompassing artistic, architectural, and cultural history have demonstrated the ways in which the dynasty developed the city as a stage for royal patronage and, in turn, positioned itself as the ultimate emblem of Neapolitanism.¹ While upholding the city's central role in the development and promotion of Angevin interests, recent studies have turned to the ways in which the Angevin dynasty looked beyond Naples in pursuit of its ambitions and cultural interests abroad, and to the role of the city itself, as an international port, in facilitating intercultural encounters and transfers.²

¹ Important works include: Ferdinando Bologna, *I Pittori alla corte angioina di Napoli, 1266–1414, e un riesame dell'arte nell'eta federiciana*, (Rome: Ugo Bozzi, 1969); Francesco Sabatini, *Napoli angioina: cultura e società* (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1975); P. L. de Castris, *Arte di corte nella Napoli angioina* (Florence: Cantini, 1986). For an ample bibliography, with important recent contributions to the field, see *Boccaccio angioino: Materiali per la storia culturale di Napoli nel Trecento*, ed. by Giancarlo Alfano, Teresa D'Urso, and Alessandra Perriccioli Saggese (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2012). More recent studies have further emphasized the importance of the city for the family's political, cultural, and administrative programmes: for example, Caroline Bruzelius, *The Stones of Naples: Church Building in Angevin Italy, 1266–1343* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2004).

² For the development of Naples as a port city, especially under Angevin rule, see Luigi De Rosa, 'Naples: a Maritime Port', *The Journal of European Economic History*, 31.3 (2002), 513-29 (pp. 514-15). The importance of the port to Naples's cultural as well as political prominence is also indicated in, for instance, the chapters on Charles I and on Robert in David Abulafia's *The Western*

Under the title, *The Italian Angevins: Naples and Beyond, 1266–1343*, this special issue of *Italian Studies* contributes to the growing understanding of the international importance of the Italian Angevins and demonstrates the interdisciplinary approaches adopted by today's Angevin scholars, by publishing a range of articles focusing on the dynasty's engagements in cultural and political networks both inside and outside the Regno. The contributions are the result of a one-day conference held at University College London in 2013.³ Coinciding with that year's Boccaccio Septcentenary celebrations, and immediately preceding the first of two conferences organized by the AHRC-funded *Medieval Francophone Literary Culture Outside France* research project, the conference brought together an international group of scholars to consider the Angevins' cultural legacy from a variety of source types and methodologies, with the dynasty's international significance firmly in mind.⁴

For beyond their distinctly Neapolitan identity – and indeed, beyond their significant presence within many regions of the Italian peninsula – the Angevins also established themselves as a supranational dynasty, particularly during the period that constitutes the focus of this volume,

Mediterranean Kingdoms, 1200-1500 (London and New York: Longman, 1997); for Charles I alone, Gian Luca Borghese, *Carlo I d'Angiò. Politica, diplomazia e commercio internazionale prima dei Vespri* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2008). See also John Haines, 'The Transformations of the "Manuscrit Du Roi"', *Musica Disciplina*, 52 (1998), 5–43; Teresa Shawcross, *The Chronicle of Morea: Historiography in Crusader Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

³ 5 June 2013, University College London, organized by Jane Gilbert, Catherine Keen, and Ella Williams. The conference was generously funded by UCL's Faculty Institute of Graduate Studies (Faculty of Arts and Humanities).

⁴ 6–7 June 2013, University College London, organized by Jane Gilbert and Dirk Schoenaers, from which see the forthcoming publication, *The Moving Word: Studies in Medieval Francophone Literary Culture Outside France*, ed. by William E. Burgwinkle, Nicola Morato, and Dirk Schoenaers (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming). See also the project website, <http://www.medievalfrancophone.ac.uk/>.

1266–1343. From the earliest days of his occupation of the Regno, Charles I (r. 1266–85) concentrated on expanding his territories overseas, claiming rights over the kingdom of Albania (1272), the kingdom of Jerusalem (1277), and the principality of Achaia (1278). Through the reigns of his son and grandson, King Charles II (r. 1285–1309) and King Robert ‘the Wise’ (r. 1309–43), Angevin interests continued to extend across Italy, into Provence, France, Hungary, the Morea, and the Byzantine East. Although never achieving imperial status in the guise of classical Rome (unlike their frequent rivals, the Holy Roman Emperors of the day, who enjoyed the claim of historical continuity with antiquity), the dynasty sought to strengthen its influence through matrimonial, political, and cultural alliances with pockets of local elites throughout Christendom.⁵

While the following articles adopt a variety of approaches to Angevin cultural history, taken as a whole they bring into focus a number of Angevin networks incorporating diverse geographies and ideologies. In focusing on the Angevins’ role in local and international cultural networks in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the volume seeks to re-evaluate the Angevins’ impact on cultural trends during the period. As a cadet branch of the Capetian house of France, transposed to southern Italy and with ambitions stretching eastwards, the Angevins’ ‘inbetweenness’ has led to their being frequently overlooked by medievalists whose work has been traditionally aligned to nationalized disciplines, such as Italian and French Studies, and whose focus has rested on western Europe. By concentrating on how they initiated, maintained, or aspired to particular networks, however, we see that the Angevin dynasty’s very ‘inbetweenness’ can be a source of great interest for cultural historians, as it represents an important nexus for familial, political, and friendship relationships across medieval Christendom.

The study of Angevin networks is, at its most basic level, the study of relationships within and beyond the Angevin kingdom.⁶ The challenge for the medievalist is, of course, to establish the

⁵ For a thorough discussion of the Angevins as a supranational dynasty during the reign of Charles II, see Stephen R. Davies, ‘Marriage and the Politics of Friendship: the Family of Charles II of Anjou, King of Naples (1285–1309)’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1998).

⁶ See the position paper by Julian Haseldine, ‘Medieval Friendship and Social Networks: Transaction-Based Approach’, University of Hull, 2016

basis on which a relationship can be said to have occurred several hundreds of years ago. While documentary evidence may survive for marital and political relationships, many interpersonal relations have left no direct historical trace. We must therefore turn to those cultural artefacts which, happily, do survive – texts, manuscripts, and works of art – to infer the networks which brought them into being or along which they travelled. Rather than defining them according to place of origin, a network approach allows us to open out their associations to multiple cultural spheres.⁷ As well as offering new insights into Angevin cultural and material history, therefore, a network-orientated approach provides a test case for considering how ideas, languages, and cultural trends travelled between regional powers, and how medieval European institutions and ideologies became and remained (and sometimes, ceased to be) connected both within and across state territories.

Our focus is largely on works in the various vernaculars associated with the Angevin court:

<<http://www2.hull.ac.uk/fass/pdf/Medieval%20Friendship%20and%20Social%20Networks%20Position%20Paper%20Haseldine%202014.pdf> > [accessed 13 December 2016]. See also Irad Malkin, *A Small Greek World: Networks in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Some recent reference works based around ‘literary geography’ also contribute to such approaches, tracing the networks of relationship between different regions, authors, patrons, and language groups: see, for instance, *Europe: A Literary History, 1348-1418*, ed. by David Wallace, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); or, for the Italian peninsula, the *Atlante della letteratura italiana*, ed. by Sergio Luzzatto and Gabriele Pedullà, 3 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 2010-12).

⁷ As demonstrated by the ongoing controversy concerning the regional attribution of a number of thirteenth-century Italian manuscripts, many artefacts from the period resist categorization according to singular geographical areas. For example, see the group of francophone chivalric manuscripts once attributed to the Angevin court in Naples, which are now thought to have been produced in Genoa/Pisa, as discussed in Alessandra Perriccioli Saggese, ‘Romanzi cavallereschi miniati a Napoli al tempo del Boccaccio,’ in *Boccaccio angioino*, pp. 351-353. See also Charmaine Lee’s contribution to this volume [page 6].

(varieties of) Italian, Occitan, and French. Each of these was both a local and supralocal language, and using them enabled the Angevins to interact with allies, neutrals, and enemies in Italy and Provence, France, the Low Countries, and northern Europe, and across the eastern Mediterranean into Greece and the Middle East, where Occitan and especially northern French were used commonly among traders and crusaders.⁸ These vernaculars must, of course, always been seen against the background of the transnational, elite, Latin-literate and Latin-speaking cultures which dominated law, learning, religion, politics, and diplomacy in the Regno as in the rest of the western Christian world. Several essays in this volume show how the networks enabled by these different languages frequently intersected or overlapped; however, Latin is not the main focus here. This means that, for instance, the close connections between the Angevins and the papacy (which in 1309 moved from Rome to Avignon, in the Angevin county of Provence) are touched upon relatively lightly. Not that Latin was the only cosmopolitan language important to the Angevins: as several contributors show, Greek and Arabic were also influential sources, not least because the Greek speakers of western Europe were concentrated in southern Italy and Sicily, while contacts between these areas and the Islamic world were traditionally closer than for more northerly states.⁹

We do not claim to offer a comprehensive account of Angevin networks, but present a number of case studies which work to illustrate how a network-oriented approach illuminates the cultural history of the Italian Angevins and their significance in wider European history. Jean

⁸ On language communities and use in the Middle East, see Laura Minervini, ‘Le français dans l’Orient latin (XIIIe–XIVe siècles). Éléments pour une caractérisation d’une *scripta* du Levant’, *Revue de linguistique romane*, 74 (2010), 119–98. On the implications of writing in French, see also Laura Morreale on changing scholarly views on the use of French outside France, and Lee on French-language history writing in the Regno, both in this volume.

⁹ See, for instance, Alexander Metcalfe, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009); Abulafia, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms*; Roberto Weiss, *Medieval and Humanist Greek*, ed. by Conor Fahy and John D. Moores (Padua: Antenore, 1977); Annick Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs de l’Italie méridionale post-byzantine: Une acculturation en douceur* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2009).

Dunbabin's contribution, for example, which stands alongside her extensive exploration of the cultural connections between the Regno and northern France in her monograph on *The French in the Kingdom of Sicily, 1266–1305*, illuminates the overlapping political-familial-cultural networks at the court of Charles I, from which she traces the production of literary, medical, and religious texts.¹⁰ That these writings then also became involved in international exchange within influential networks beyond the Regno suggests further ways in which cultural contacts made in Angevin circles quickly spread overseas. Laura Morreale, likewise, unpicks the multiple international networks involved in the production of the *Conseil du Roi Charles*, and explores Charles II's engagement in Hospitaller networks in the Regno, Provence, and Cyprus. Manuscripts play a crucial role in our unraveling of Angevin cultural connections. Both products and facilitators of cultural relationships, they embody the ideologies of their producers, mediating between real and imagined worlds. Marilyn Desmond's article highlights the way in which Robert's patronage of translations from Greek texts figures an ideological network designed to incorporate the textual and linguistic cultures of both the Morea and the Byzantine East into an Angevin imaginary. Troy, in particular, provided a key cultural site for Robert, as for several other projects of European expansion; Robert's rhetorical appropriation of the great myth had local as well as international goals. Desmond's analysis reveals the crisscrossing networks involved in Robert's manuscript production, and thus the competing cultural agendas found in his court.

Also focusing on the appetite for historiography in the Regno, Charmaine Lee traces the development of historical writing in the Angevin kingdom. Whereas the universalizing panorama of francophone histories of the ancient world were harnessed in support of the early Angevins' imperial ambitions, the dynasty's consolidation of power within southern Italy brought with it a taste for more locally orientated narratives of the past. Looking beyond the chronology of the volume as a whole, Lee's essay ends with the evocation of the native, even proto-'national' culture that began to find expression under Joanna's rule in the production of works in Neapolitan-inflected French, in Tuscan-Neapolitan hybrids, and in a burgeoning Neapolitan literary

¹⁰ Jean Dunbabin, *The French in the Kingdom of Sicily, 1266–1305* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

vernacular.

As Catherine Léglu reminds us, ‘the Italian Angevins were a dynasty for whom the personal – in the sense of the familial – was intensely political’ (p. 21). The highly politicized nature of Angevin family networks is brought to the fore in her discussion of how Robert was depicted in manuscripts of two Occitan-language texts, the chronicle *L’Abreujamen de las estorias*, and a *complancha* (lament) written after Robert’s death. Léglu also shows how saintly heredity (acquired via Robert’s brother, Saint Louis of Toulouse, and his mother, Maria of Hungary, of the famous *beata stirps* or ‘blessed line’) could function as an imaginary network exploitable for political ends. The lines and broken lines that Léglu traces from Avignon to Hungary via Provence and Naples, and through networks linking the Angevins, their allies, and vassals with the papacy and the Franciscans, illustrate how internal fragmentation accompanied the Angevins’ international expansion.

The different phases and emphases of the Angevins’ expansionism are the focus also of Ella Williams’s article. This study complements Desmond’s essay on the cultural politics of francophone production of Trojan history in Naples, with a similarly attentive investigation of Neapolitan court copies of the *Faits des Romains* and *Histoire ancienne jusqu’à César*. She shows how episodes in these historiographical works that focused on the Romans’ conquest of Italy, and on Caesar’s conquest of Rome, helped support the Angevins’ self-perception as the justified rulers of territories and titles acquired by conquest, rather than succession. As the dynasty became established, and as different regions passed into and out of their spheres of alliance and interest, the material features emphasized in the manuscripts changed: the highlighting of physical conquests achieved by force of arms gave way, over the intergenerational transfers from Charles I to Robert, to emphases on spiritual readings that stressed aspirations to intellectual and religious justification, and consolidation within the southern Italian realm.

The final essay in the volume investigates yet another strand in the fertile networking that grew out of the interconnected milieu of Angevin Naples – one that engaged the city with a more defined position within the confines of peninsular Italy, under the third and later the fourth generation of Angevin rulers. Focusing on Boccaccio, Alessia Ronchetti highlights the importance to his literary development of his early Neapolitan formation, in a networked city where he could

enjoy contacts with both fellow-Tuscans and other scholars in the *Studium* as well as with migrant Florentine communities in court and commercial circles, and enjoyed access to the wealth of Latin and vernacular manuscripts in the royal libraries. Her close study of his *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta* explores its topological distinction between Naples and Florence, and its presentation of two authorial personae whose rhetorical strategies expose a deep divide between the literary and political traditions of the two cities, and of Boccaccio's own two possible authorial destinies within each.

Naples was thus an important locale in the explosion of literary production in *lingua di sì* of the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, which saw the city become a meeting-place for some of the leading writers in an Italian vernacular that is historically more closely associated with Tuscany and the tradition of the *tre corone*.¹¹ As well as Cino da Pistoia and Boccaccio, both cited in Ronchetti's essay, and Zanobi da Strada and the several members of the Acciaiuoli family mentioned by Lee, the most famous Tuscan figure to accord cultural prominence to Naples was Petrarch, in his poetic self-definition as Latin laureate and leading contemporary intellectual and writer. The Neapolitan aristocrat Guglielmo Maramauro, friend of both Petrarch and Boccaccio, was a relatively early commentator on Dante's *Commedia*, which enjoyed a modest but distinct local tradition in the later fourteenth century;¹² and the *Studium*, the churches, and court circles

¹¹ The story of production specifically in Neapolitan or Tuscan-Neapolitan under the Angevins involves complex transmission histories and patchy manuscript conservation, but the city was an important hub for writers and intellectuals in several varieties of *lingua di sì*, including literary Tuscan: see Charmaine Lee, 'Naples', in Wallace (ed.), *Europe*, pp. 732-47 (esp. pp. 739-41, 743-44), as well as her essay in this volume.

¹² The most recent editors of Maramauro's commentary date it to between c. 1369-1373: Guglielmo Maramauro, *Expositione sopra l' "Inferno" di Dante Alligieri*, ed. by Saverio Bellomo and Pier Giacomo Pisoni (Padua: Antenore, 1998). The *Commedia*'s Neapolitan circulation is predominantly attested after the death of King Robert: its highlights include the lavishly decorated 'Codice Filippino', and the mid- to late-fourteenth-century annotated 'Codice cassinese': Sabatini, *Napoli angioina*, pp. 94-95.

fostered continuous encounters between the different Italian regions. Closing a series of essays that predominantly look beyond peninsular confines at the Angevins' international contacts and aspirations, Ronchetti's paper (like the closing paragraphs of Lee's) helps recall the importance of Naples in Italian networks as well as in those involving northern and eastern lands. With Robert and his successor Joanna, Naples – though destined to experience many more vicissitudes while crisscrossed by the differently 'networked' politics of Spanish and French rulers to come – enjoyed a period of its own vernacular prominence, as the cultural allegiances expressed with such varied energy through the opening decades of the Angevins' presence took root in the southern Regno. That vernacularism, as this volume suggests, permitted the *lingua di sì*, in its Tuscan and its Neapolitan forms, to take a more substantial place alongside the cosmopolitan gathering of influences from French, Greek, Hungarian, and Outremer regions fostered by Charles I and Charles II: yet (as Morreale reminds us) without displacing them, but rather drawing them all together into genuinely 'Angevin' forms expressive of the Regno's cosmopolitan, multilingual, and above all interconnected cultural networks, under the reigns of the dynasty's first four rulers.

The articles gathered in this volume demonstrate some of the ways in which network approaches allow us to consider the fluidity and mobility of the Angevin court, its changing self-perception, and its interconnectedness with diverse geographical and ideological contexts. The collection thus contributes to the ongoing revision of the isolationist treatment of the Angevins within medieval studies, and helps to situate the dynasty's role in cultural and political developments within the Italian peninsula and beyond. It presents furthermore a method through which we might upend the traditional model of cultural studies and its notions of centre and periphery, which can only go so far in considering the legacy of a dynasty established by geographical and political outsiders. By considering the Angevins through the networks in which they engaged, this volume urges us to look between discrete pieces of evidence and – with due caution – to make suggestions as to new and exciting routes of cultural transmission in Naples and beyond.

Volume conventions

- In this volume, the 'Regno' is the term used to describe Angevin territories in Italy. For the

period 1265–82, it refers to the Kingdom of Sicily, an area previously under the control of the Norman and Hohenstaufen dynasties, encompassing both the southern Italian mainland and insular Sicily. Following the popular uprising against Angevin rule and subsequent war involving the kingdom of Aragon, known as the Sicilian Vespers, Charles I lost control of the island of Sicily in 1282, from which point the Angevin Regno refers to the kingdom of Naples only.

- For consistency, the names of historical people have been anglicized throughout this volume.

[3 images to be inserted as best fits page allocations, either before start of Introduction or at end]

Figure 1: Genealogy of the Angevin House of Naples. Samantha Kelly, *The New Solomon: Robert of Naples (1309-1343) and Fourteenth-Century Kingship* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), xvi. By kind permission of Samantha Kelly.

Figure 2: Angevin territories in Europe and the Mediterranean. Samantha Kelly, *The New Solomon: Robert of Naples (1309-1343) and Fourteenth-Century Kingship* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), xvii. By kind permission of Samantha Kelly.

Figure 3: The Kingdom of Naples. Samantha Kelly, *The New Solomon: Robert of Naples (1309-1343) and Fourteenth-Century Kingship* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), xviii. By kind permission of Samantha Kelly.