

Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (1208–1250)

Subjects: Art

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Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, King of Sicily (1208–1250). Frederick II of Hohenstaufen was the second king of the Swabian dynasty to sit on the throne of Sicily. He was crowned in 1198, but, in consideration of his young age, he only ruled independently from 1208 to 1250 (the year of his death). He not only held the title of King of Sicily but also was the King of Germany (or of the Romans), the King of Jerusalem, and, above all, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. His most relevant and innovative iconographic representations were in Southern Italy. For this reason, we focus on the images in this geographical context. In particular, we have nine official (that is, those commissioned directly by him or his entourage) representations of him: the bull (in three main versions), the seal (in three main versions), five coins (four denari and one augustale), the statue of the Capua Gate, and the lost image of the imperial palace in Naples.

Keywords: royal images ; royal iconography ; kings of Sicily ; Swabian dynasty ; Frederick II of Hohenstaufen

Frederick II of Hohenstaufen was crowned King of Sicily when he was less than four years old, but, at the beginning of his reign, he was under the regency of his mother, Constance (until 27 November 1198), and of Pope Innocent III (until 25 December 1208). After this period, he ruled independently until his death (13 December 1250). Frederick II was not only King of Sicily but also King of Germany or of the Romans (1212–1250), King of Jerusalem (1225–1250), and, above all, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (1220–1250) (for general information about Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, see: ^{[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10][11]}). His most relevant and innovative iconographic representations were in Southern Italy, and, for this reason, we focus on the images in this geographical context. Historians have identified Frederick II in numerous artifacts, but, in reality, only a limited number of them can be considered real and official representations of the Swabian ruler (that is, those commissioned directly by him or his entourage). In particular, we have nine images: the bull (in three main versions), the seal (in three main versions), five coins (four denari and one augustale), the statue of the Capua Gate, and the lost image of the imperial palace in Naples (on the identification of Frederick II's official images, see: ^[12] (pp. 82–87)).

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