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THESES OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Solomon – the Model of the Royal Ideals in the 13–14th Centuries
in Western and Central Europe

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1. **The background and aims of the research**

King Solomon, the famously wise ruler of the Old Testament and successor to King David, was a popular ideal for kings of Europe’s Middle Ages. This thesis aims to examine – with interdisciplinary methods, included written and artistic sources – the way in which King Solomon was employed as a royal *exempla* in the medieval Western and Central Europe between the 13th and the 14th centuries. My goal was to analyse the Solomonic representational elements on the track of the earlier researches and to clarify those medieval rulers who preferred Solomon as a personal model.

One cannot find monographs about King Solomon as medieval royal ideal, but several papers discuss his role in royal and courtly context, the topic is flourishing nowadays. The earlier examinations concentrated only on writing case studies about Solomon, without any royal context.

One of my main bases, was the monograph of Samantha Kelly about Robert the Wise, published in 2003, *The New Solomon*. Kelly in her last chapter collected those 14th century wise monarchs who wanted to resemble Solomon, similarly to Robert. This group consists the main part of my doctoral dissertation, Kelly listed the king of the French monarchy, Charles V the Wise, the Holy Roman emperor, Charles IV and as an odd one out, the English Richard II. I have completed this list with other rulers as well.

Further starting point of my dissertation was the article of Gábor Klaniczay, published in 2008 about the ambivalent character of Solomon in the Middle Ages. The third fundamental work for my thesis was an article by Jean-Patrice Boudet, who focused on Alfonso X of Castile’s and Charles V the Wise’s Solomonic elements in their representations and traced the connections of these aspects. I also used the works of Jacques Krynen, Jacques Le Goff, Marc Bloch, M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, and for the theological parts, the writings of Philippe Buc and Beryl Smalley. The temporal dimensions of my thesis are in connection with the tendency of the 13–14th centuries, that is the period when the biblical kings started to flourish as royal models instead of the classical Greek and Roman heroes, and increased the number of the new Solomons. Smalley, Gaposchkin, Harvey Stahl and Robert Antonin also highlighted the importance of this theoretical and theological background. I sought to define more precisely the Solomonic model based on these works.
2. Structure

In my first chapter I summarised my methodological approach, expanded with the main historiographical works.

Since new Solomons were not only in the 13–14th centuries, my second introductory chapter, without claiming its completeness, traces the main tendencies from the early Middle Ages, that is the Frank and Byzantine rulers, who were in connection with Solomon. In the third chapter I analysed particularly Saint Louis and his canonisation process from the examples of the 13th century. I expanded this chapter with two case studies about Henry III of England and Alfonso X of Castile.

The fourth chapter, which is the longest part of my work, includes four analyses. The first is the determining example of Robert the Wise. After this part, returning back to the French kingdom, the representation of Charles V the Wise was analysed. They were the two classical new Solomons of the period. Two counter-examples follow them, the meaning and importance of the Solomonic motives in the court of Charles VI and the discussion of the biblical images in connection with Richard II.

In the last, fifth chapter I explored the Central European examples starting with the codex of Louis the Great of Hungary, the Chronicon pictum, then demonstrated shortly the Solomonic aspects of Casimir III of Poland. Finally, I presented the Holy Roman emperor, Charles IV in a longer case study.

3. Methodology

I had to choose between two methodological approaches. The first one is the elaboration of the motives relating to Solomon and connecting them to the kings and their courts, like Doina Elena Craciun did in her dissertation about the Three Magis. But, I decided to select another path, the contrary method of the previous. I seek for the answers why Solomonic motives occurred in the royal representations. I received a more complex picture about the motivations behind the royal ideals with the help of this approach, thus I present case studies which were in connection in several ways. I did not follow a strict method in each examination, the analysis depended on the mode as Solomon occurred in the royal sources. In most cases, citations to the Solomonic books in the sources have no intended message about kingship and political thought. It was, of course, common for medieval authors to quote the
Bible in support of their arguments, the words of Solomon from Proverbs were only one example. Methodologically, it is important, therefore, to separate specific allusions to the ruler as a new Solomon – which always depend on the historical context and the genre of the source – from the general citations. Those examples that feature Solomon as a supporting actor, that is, for example, as son of David or father of Rehoboam, can be discounted. However, caution is required: in some cases – for example in a mirror for princes that contains indirect references to biblical figures – such citations might help to convey the author’s general opinion about Solomon if the king was referred to on multiple occasions or other Old Testament kings were conspicuous by their absence. The thesis focuses primarily on those instances when a direct comparison can be drawn between Solomon and a specific ruler with the exception of instances in which an author placed particular emphasis on Solomon. One of the most difficult question to answer is the role of a ruler’s own intentions and effects in this aspect. In my paper I sought to divide those cases in the courtly examples when it could be reconstructed the king’s personal effect on his own Solomonic majesty’s visualization. We need to keep in mind that the use of the biblical typology could be mixed, and the rulers’ contemporaries sometimes applied numerous models at the same time, including David, Joshua, Melchizedek, the Magi or the negative example of a king like Saul.

Concerning the expressions the most common word is the ‘model’ in the modern works about Solomon. The ‘cult’ could have been also used, however, according to my point of view, this is irrelevant, because Solomon was not honoured as a saint (and he is not a saint) in a traditional way. In French papers sometimes the word ‘myth’ occurred. In my thesis I preferred to use the ‘ideal’ next to the ‘model’, because it could reflect Solomon’s role in a kingship, in a royal representation. The higher level of this ideal was when a king’s own personal effect appeared in the background of the glorifications.

Methodologically, my last important aspect was to clarify the expression of ‘Solomonic’, because in several examples this attribution was applied without any concrete mention of King Solomon and expressed only the rulers’ wise ideal. The general use of the word ‘Solomonic’ is misleading, and conveyed the impression that Solomon was a part of the representation, albeit it was only an impressive phrase.
4. Results

In my analysis – without the early medieval introduction – I showed ten case studies of kings’ representations where Solomon was one of the ideals or models. Mostly I had French examples (Franks, Saint Louis, Charles V and Charles VI), with instances from Naples (Robert of Naples) and England (Henry III and Richard II). In the introduction I referred to the group of Kelly, which I completed with Henry III, Alfonso X of Castile, Charles VI and partly with Louis the Great and Casimir III.

One of my questions was the following: which Solomonic virtues and motives occurred next to his wisdom? The early medieval Frank, Byzantine and Ottonian royal examples show an interesting tradition, that is while the father was a new David, his son was known as a new Solomon. I was not able to find later examples from the Middle Ages, probably because David was more popular than Solomon in the early period, the latter was praised because of his peaceful aspect.

The 13th-century examples were featured by the fact, that the personal royal Solomonic image could hardly been detected. During the rule of Louis IX (Saint Louis) mostly the iconography – like the Sainte Chapelle and its stained-glass windows – showed the Old Testament preference of the royal family. I collected four Solomonic aspects of the chapel: (1) in the upper floor, the architectural symbolism of the reliquary; (2) the symbolic meaning of the relics, as the possession of the Arc of Covenant; (3) the iconography of the stained glass windows depicting the Kings Book and Passion relics’ Parisian translation; and finally (4) the sources about the liturgical cult of the Passion relics and the translation. On the windows of the Sainte Chapelle the idolatry of Solomon was a part of the stories, like in the mirror for princes. I think, the temple of Solomon was a crucial model for Louis IX, but the references to Louis as Solomon showed unequivocally ecclesiastic effect. The most definite iconographical suggestion – however the theological analyses of the throne of Solomon and the parallelism with the stories in the upper part of the windows could not been available for everyone – was the symbolism of the chapel. The transition regarding to the Solomon-image is visible in the case of the reign of Saint Louis, because among the Solomonic virtues the wisdom started to dominate in the sources of canonisation.

Henry III’s representation showed definitely his own interest about Solomon three ways: the iconography of the mural painting on Solomon’s guardians in the residence of Winchester and another in Westminster and thirdly by his throne. The expression of this
preference constituted a complex system – in connection with the cult of Edward the Confessor – on the murals. The inclusion of the Solomonic lions, more accurately the leopards in the iconography of the throne and seal, marked that Henry used not Solomon, but his symbols in his representation: his guardians and his animals from the throne. In contrast with this, it is striking that there is no praise or comparison with Solomon by his contemporaries. I think Henry’s interest to Solomon was not independent from the French court’s effect.

The particularity of Alfonso X of Castile’s patronage in sciences and culture, that King Solomon was a part of his juridical and magical tractates as exemplary. Alfonso was one of the earliest examples of a 13th-century wise king, whose representation contained Solomonic aspects, but he was not called to new Solomon. Only the prologue of the Libro de las cruzes draw a parallel between them. Alfonso prevented his contemporaries in his erudition, but I considered to divide the Solomonic topics attributed to him in the earlier researches, and the general Solomonic impression, which was occurred by the references in the Siete Partidas and the General Estoria, and in connection with the iconography of the Cantigas de Santa Maria. In the light of the fact, that Alfonso reached eminent achievements as scientists, when Solomon came up as model, it was only by the citation of his words from the Bible. Which was special in the representation was the magical feature – resulted by the cultural impacts in the Iberian Peninsula – spread widely in his court in contrast to the other 13th-century rulers. His juridical practices may suggest the rightfully Solomon-image, but in the Siete Partidas, Solomon was not the only reference. I could imagine that behind Alfonso’s personal qualities and his interest, his preference to Solomon was plausible. However, according to my opinion, Alfonso could be a new Solomon only with reservations because of the references in his representation and the lack of parallels by the contemporaries between Solomon and Alfonso.

I think in the case of Robert of Naples it could be acceptable that Solomon was his first and the most significant model. Robert always wanted to express his role as a rex sapiens. Robert was praised as a new Solomon by his contemporaries through his lifetime, although King David was occurred in a few examples, but his function was only secondary. For example, David symbolised the military victory in his sermon in Genova in 1318, but in an inauguration ceremony Robert referred to David as the wisest king, and to himself as David, too. The magical aspect of Solomon featured earlier Alfonso X, or later Charles the Wise, but for Robert, this character of Solomon was not significant at all. In my eyes, for
Robert’s representation, the conscious Solomonic-image was an equipment in the political rhetoric to confirm his own authority and piety, and the magical part of Solomon couldn’t help to him in this, and his interest was mostly theological. Unfortunately, his famous library could not be examined fully, we know that the courtier authors-translators cited in his dedications King Solomon. Probably, I think the onetime library and the dedications to Robert may contained more praises like these.

I have noticed, that the examples and parallels during his 34-years-rule the parallels concentrated to two periods. Firstly, from his coronation till the 1320s years (except the De evangelica paupertate from 1323), secondly not only after a few years, but after few decades of his death. The reason behind this can be the fact, that at the beginning of his rule during the 1310-1320s Robert received critics, and the balancing between the imperial, the papal powers (including the guelf part) was a determining situation. The praises after his death, and over his courtly men take over the phrase that Robert was the wisest from the era of Solomon. Not only the compliments of the courtiers could be traceable from his representation, but as I wrote it above, his conscious self-image too. The peak of this was the predication in Genova and the illumination of the Anjou Bible. With several iconographical resolution Robert become a new Solomon: firstly, with the laconic description of the frontispiece (Rex Robertus expertus omnia scienca) and by his portrait in his throne with lions and finally with his portrait in the beginning of the Ecclesiastes where below the image of Solomon, the illuminated king is definitely Robert. In my opinion Robert in every aspect of his kingship interweaved his piety, to create his real aim, the erudite image in political rhetoric, which moved away from the Capetian origins of the Solomonic image and the ideal of Saint Louis.

The wise king of the French monarchy, Charles V’s Solomonic aspects was known in the earlier researches, I collected and examined these examples. In his magnificent library in the tour of the Louvre, several manuscripts commissioned by him cited Charles as a new Solomon. The translators made these citations in two cases, and after the king’s death another two examples occurred in the nostalgic era. Moreover, the courtly painters illustrated his portraits in his codices: in these Charles was painted in the company of Solomon (like on the folios of the French translation of the Policraticus and in his Bible historiale). Although, Christine de Pisan dedicated a whole book to the memory of the wise Charles V, she compared to Solomon in only one case.
The impact of Charles V’s was presented in the expectations toward his son, Charles VI. His changing mental condition of course could not allow to rule oneself, because of this, for the courtier counsellors and for the family it was a serious challenge to replace the earlier king. After an outstanding king, the expectations were higher, as the poems of Eustasche Deschamps and the writings of Philippe de Mézières witness: they set the father as an exemplary new Solomon. Despite the fact, that the king was ill, sometimes he was not ‘absent’, and could be a part of the government. Maybe Pierre Salmon built to this pale hope (or rather idealistic desire) his first version of his mirror for prince in 1409. He coordinated the illuminations also, in the beginning of the Dialogues King Solomon, King David and Charles VI were presented in three images which symbolised his unhidden expectations.

Next to Charles VI, I chose another counter-example: Richard II of England. Together with Charles VI, they show a weak, declined Solomonic image: for them the courtier’s role was essential, and the parallels mostly occurred in the literary sources, and neither Richard II, nor Charles VI were successful monarch regarding to political life or military victories. The example of Richard also hanging out from the medieval wise kings (only the De quadripartite regis manuscript could be a part of his tiny book collection), because he was compared only by his peace and wealth to Solomon. His contemporaries called him as a new Rehoboam in several cases. A short inscription featured Richard as a ‘prudens’ ruler on his tomb in the Westminster Abbey, but in the eyes of his courtiers he couldn’t incorporate the wise Solomon image.

In the case of Emperor Charles IV, the Solomon-typology was dependent on the people who supported him, like the Pope, the bishops and archbishops. In his imperial coronation, Pope Clement VI and the archbishop of Prague promoted Charles in their sermons, calling him a new Solomon. One of the most typical examples of Solomonic image about a ruler, was his funeral. Uncertain, which archbishop of Prague preached during the ceremony, but the text of the preaching demonstrates that Solomon was a highlighted figure in it. In theological and literary writings, the figure of Charles was emphasized in an explicit way as a new Solomon. The castle of Karlštejn with the imperial relics, treasures and his portraits could have been referred to Solomon, but the courtiers, the contemporaries did not draw a parallel between them, and there is no image of Solomon in the castle. Several roles of Charles occurred (for example as an author), and by a manuscript (BSB, Clm 10085) exorcist aspect also emerged, but I think this is uncertain. Furthermore, the conscious Solomon-model
in Charles’s case is problematic, instead of his personal interest, the Solomon ideal of contemporary people appeared mostly.

Only few signs allude to Solomon’s ideal as a considerable figure for the Hungarian and Polish kings, Louis the Great and Casimir III. While Casimir was similar to Solomon by his establishments as the sources testify, due to the lack of sources regarding to the rule of Louis, only two manuscripts could be examined. The frontispiece and the prologue of the *Chronicon pictum* together marked the presence of the virtue of royal wisdom, which symbolised by the image of King Solomon in the initial ‘P’. Neither in the case of Louis nor Casimir, I was able to demonstrate any personal preference to Solomon, but for their courtiers the Biblical king was an essential ideal. In my analyses I presented – based on the researches of Gyula Kristó and Ernő Marosi – that the introduction of the *Chronicon pictum* and the ideal of the *Secretum secretorum* (of Louis) mixed the chivalric virtues with the Solomon’s wise image, and this was reflected in the writing of John of Küküllő. The biblical prologue related to the chivalric King Louis, and the principle was not the military glory but the Solomonic virtue-catalogue, propagated the ideal of the *rex sapiens.*

The ideal of an erudite king spread mostly after the death of Casimir III in Poland; his representation reflected this Solomon-ideal by the propagation of the buildings and establishments similarly to the biblical king. The Solomonic part of Casimir’s self-image was known by the historians and the royal chancellery, but this Biblical reputation started to fade in the 15th century, Jan Długosz omitted this comparison in contrast to his predecessors.

5. Conclusions

The thesis presents that the nostalgic memory of kings helped in the spread of the Biblical image. The Solomon-parallel occurred in the funeral sermons and commemorations several times. On the one hand, in the sermons of the funeral ceremonies of Robert the Wise and Charles IV they were compared to Solomon – indeed the preachers emphasized that the kings surpassed King Solomon – and on the other hand, Charles the Wise was mentioned with nostalgia in the poems of Eustache Deschamps. The canonisation of Saint Louis was a special example and also the predications of Boniface VIII and Jacques de Lausanne praised his virtues compared him to Solomon. The role of the Church was essential in the spreading of
this model: like in the case of Charles IV or in the funeral sermons. In the case of Robert the Wise and Charles V (and also in a half-way Richard II) instead of the ecclesiastical impact, the self-conscious way was more powerful.

In my thesis I sought to divide those cases which were not only about an ideal but rather a personal model, or sometimes a Solomonic-image was crucial. This image seems the most definite in the case of Robert the Wise and partly in the case Charles V, but Louis IX and Henry III could not be excluded completely from this group. Solomon was a significant model for these ruler because of their personal interests, as I argued. In my opinion, the origin of consciously undertaking this Solomon-model was a compensation: because these kings preferred books and erudition instead of the battlefield.
4. List of own publications on the topic


