

“familiar” of king Robert who (1310) knighted him and endowed his title with lands near Mariliano.¹ A chapel in the monastery of Montevergine near Avellino, for which king Robert had a special reverence, was adorned by his hands, and he is, by tradition, the author of a Madonna at that honoured shrine. The head of the image is said to have been brought home from the crusades; but this is a fable sedulously maintained with the aid of a fictitious reading of old records and by a diligent concealment of all but the features under an ornament and diadem of jewelled silver. Nor would it have been easy to form an idea as to the value of a picture exhibited at a shrine of such celebrity but for the circumstance that, not long since, the whole figure was laid bare for the sake of being copied, and it became possible to remark, first, that the whole altarpiece is the work of one hand and secondly that it corresponds in style to that of a painter living

¹ In the same records *Regist. Let. E. F 27 a tergo an. 1310*: “Robertus rex universis presentes litteras inspecturis, tam presentibus quam futuris. Inducti nos instituis naturalibus et ratio ut cum..... affectibus in hiis maxime per quæ et sequentibus merita digna pervenit, et opera magnificentiæ per quoddam honestatis debitum, nec indigno clarescunt sane Montanus de Aretio pictor et familiaris carissimi fratris nostri Filippi principis Acahie et Taranti fidelissimus in presentia nost. Majestatis.... quod idem princeps, de Grata servitia quæ idem Montanus sibi hactenus prestatum est præstabat suæ dirigens considerationis intuitum specialem sibi fecit gratiam et cessit que proinde litteras suo pendenti sigillo munitas quas nostro cospetui presentavit tenoris, &c. Philippus clare memorie.... servitiis quæ Magister Montanus de Aretio pictor familiaris noster nobis exhibuit et exhibere non cessat maxime in pingendo capellam nostram tam in domo nostro Neapolis quam

in Ecc. B. Mariæ de Monte Virginis, ubi specialem devotionem habemus eidem Magistro Montano et ejus eredibus utriusque sexus et ejus tempore legitime descendentibus natis, jam et in antea nascituris in perpetuum de a R. terra olim nemoris seu silva Larje quæ est in terra nostra comitatus acerrarum, sita inter Marilianum et Summam, quam Silvam in toto trahi et extirpari, &c.” *Ibid.* p. 15.

The manner in which the foregoing has been altered for an evident purpose may be seen in the following Extract from “*Privilegi Incepti e baronali. Fol. Naples. Vol. II.*”

“1310. Privilegio del Re Roberto con cui dona a Montanara d’Arezzo, pittore, una stanza di Maggia 100, site tra la Cerra e Marigliano per aver dipinto il busto del Quadro di nos. Sign. de Montevergine e la cappella del D. Re in Napoli.”

There is not a word of the Virgin of Monte Vergine in the record, still less of her “bust”.