

The makers of Rogier van der Weyden 1400 | 1464 – Master of Passions present:

The Anjou Bible - Naples 1340

a royal manuscript revealed

17 | 09 | 2010 » 05 | 12 | 2010

M Leuven

After the wonderfully successful exhibition Rogier van der Weyden 1400|1464 – Master of Passions (2009), Illuminare -Centre for the Study of Medieval Art and M Leuven are again joining forces.

The Anjou Bible - Naples 1340 – a royal manuscript revealed presents the superbly illuminated pages of a little-known manuscript created at the unruly Royal Court of Naples in the turbulent fourteenth century. Power, intrigue, gold, a couple of shadowy figures and several exceptionally talented artists make for an explosive mix.

First half of the fourteenth century. Central and Southern Europe were governed by the successful dynasty of Anjou, which continued to expand its territories and boasted artists like Giotto, Boccaccio and Petrarch. In 1328, after the death of her father, Joanna of Anjou became the official heir to the prosperous house of the kings of Naples and Sicily. Several years later her grandfather, Robert I, gave Joanna and her young Hungarian fiancé Andrew a precious gift. That gift was a book which became known as the **Anjou Bible**, a manuscript that is priceless from a historical and art-historical point of view.

By any definition, it is one of the supreme Bibles of the gothic period

(Christopher de Hamel - Corpus Christi College, Cambridge)

Il s'agit d'une splendide Bible [...] qui constitue l'un des plus beaux fleurons de l'enluminure napolitaine du XIVème siècle

(François Avril - Bibliothèque nationale de France)

The above superlatives leave us in no doubt about the quality of the ancient manuscript whose historical, cultural and artistic value can hardly be overestimated. As well as bible texts and magnificent miniatures, it contains a wealth of historical information about the kingdom of Anjou and the book's origins. One of the Neapolitan artists responsible for the magnificent workmanship was Christophorus Orimina. He put his stamp on the work with his powerful, true-to-life, Byzantine-looking figures.

The precious parchment folios of the bible, which found its way to Brabant many centuries ago, have been carefully taken apart to give the public a chance to admire them. After the exhibition, this fragile gem will be irrevocably re-bound and returned for many years to come to the safety of the dark strongroom in the Theology Faculty's Maurits Sabbe Library at K.U.Leuven.

A regal, European manuscript in a Belgian collection

The Anjou Bible is steeped in history. Its roots can be traced back to the Angevin dynasty in Naples and Sicily. In the mid-thirteenth century King Louis IX of France, commonly known as Saint Louis, gave the regions of Maine and Anjou to his brother Charles I (of Anjou). Through his marriage to Beatrice he acquired Provence and in 1266 he conquered Naples. His son Charles II married Mary of Hungary. Their grandson Charles Robert of Anjou became king of that area in 1309. In 1370 his son Louis I (the Great) also became king of Poland.

The opening diptych in the Anjou Bible glorifies the rich history of the House of Anjou. Alongside Robert I of Anjou – the *rex expertus in omnia scientia* as the inscription describes him – is a genealogical tree in three registers: at the top Charles I and his wife Beatrice of Provence, underneath Charles II and Mary of Hungary and finally Robert I of Anjou himself with his wife Sancha of Majorca. They had no male heirs – their only son Charles died unexpectedly –, so it was their oldest granddaughter Joanna who was proclaimed their heir in 1330.



Anjou Bible, folio 3, verso; Maurits Sabbe Library, K.U.Leuven © Bruno Vandermeulen, DLA, K.U.Leuven

The House of Anjou ruled over Central and Southern Europe for two centuries.

The different areas gradually became close-knit states boasting efficient institutions, lucrative trade and a flourishing cultural life. It was the era of great artists and writers like Giotto, Simone Martini, Boccaccio and Petrarch. Music was also given a new lease of life at the Neapolitan court: even under Charles of Anjou (1226-1286), investments were made in more and better musicians.

This healthy artistic climate provided scope for musical experimentation. One of the most gifted musicians at Charles' court was undoubtedly the trouvère Adam de la Halle, who wrote the celebrated musical pastoral play *Le Jeu de Robin et Marion* while in service in Naples.

Charles' successor, Robert of Anjou, was a particularly well-read and sophisticated sovereign and he became the patron of many scientists and artists. As king of Naples he was the undisputed leader of the House of Welf or Guelf. As a supporter of Pope Benedict XII and patron of numerous musicians from the latter's entourage in Avignon, his name is linked to the famous music codices of Apt and Ivrea, which include a motet by Philippe de Vitry dedicated to Robert. The numerous musical instruments and musical scenes in the Anjou Bible are a unique, artistic externalization of this heyday of music.

The Anjou Bible and the context in which it was created are particularly important for the study of socio-cultural life in medieval Southern Italy. However, the manuscript soon found its way to Northern Europe. Even in 1402 the codex was described in the inventory of Jean Duc de Berry (1340-1416), brother of King Charles V of France, who was well known for his love of art and books. Traces of Jean Duc de Berry's coat of arms can still be seen on the edge of the manuscript.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the manuscript found its way to Atrecht (Arras) College in Leuven via the Bishop of Arras, Nicolaus de Ruistre (1442-1509). Lucas Brugensis' *Notationes in Sacra Biblia*, published by Christoffel Plantin in 1580, contains an explicit reference to the manuscript. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the manuscript came into the possession of the Episcopal Seminary in Mechelen. Since 1970 it has been preserved in the Theology Faculty's Maurits Sabbe Library at the K.U.Leuven.

A well-preserved masterpiece

The Theology Faculty's Maurits Sabbe Library at the K.U.Leuven contains an impressive collection of manuscripts, most of which originate from the Episcopal Seminary in Mechelen. The show-piece of the library collection is the fourteenth-century Anjou Bible. After peregrinations in royal circles, in 1509 the codex ended up on Brabantine soil where it has remained to this day. During the course of those 500 years, this unique manuscript fell into oblivion. But recently all that changed. On March 10th 2008 the bible was officially recognized by the Flemish Community as a "Masterpiece" and that same year a major project was launched which involved researching and conserving the book and making it accessible to the public.



A matter of conservation

Given the value of the manuscript, it may seem strange that it has never been properly researched before and that the public has never really seen it. However, the book's condition simply did not allow this.

The twentieth-century binding was much too tight and had made damaging creases in the parchment. There were also difficulties with the pigments and the abundant use of gold leaf in the illuminations. Thanks to the international research and conservation project to which scientists from Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, Great Britain and the United States of America are contributing, these problems are now being addressed. The latest techniques are helping unlock the book's secrets and revealing Orimina's extraordinary technical skill. The Anjou Bible will step briefly into the limelight during the exhibition before being returned indefinitely to the library strongroom for safekeeping.

Follow the evolution

The bible project is not being conducted behind closed doors. All the research findings will be brought together in the art book entitled *The Anjou Bible. A Royal Manuscript Revealed. Naples 1340*, Peeters Publishers, Leuven. Series: *Corpus of Illuminated manuscripts*, ed. Lieve Watteeuw and Jan Van der Stock, K.U.Leuven, Leuven. Essays in English by some of the most noted experts describe just how the arts were promoted at the court of Robert of Anjou I and also shed light on the bible's genesis and on all the research methods and results. The book will contain lots of beautiful illustrations.

The bible's conservation was also the opportune moment to digitalize it using the latest technologies. From September 17th all the folios of the Anjou Bible will be available digitally, at the exhibition venue and online on this site.

High resolution pictures and zoom functions make it possible to study even the tiniest details in the miniatures. By explaining the context and adding indexes, a direct link is established between illustration and description. This digitalization links up seamlessly with one of the great challenges of the digital era: raising public awareness of a vulnerable part of our cultural heritage.

Anjou Bible addenda

Also suitable for children, families and schools

For the young public there will be a book entitled *Joppe de Boekenworm. Verhalen verborgen in een middeleeuws handschrift*. Joppe is one of a long line of bookworms that resides in the magnificent Anjou Bible. The book is their home and they know it inside out. An enthusiastic Joppe tells the story of the bible, a story of friendship, treachery and love, of allergies and fear, of unconcealed murder and extraordinary courage. Thus the history of the Anjou Bible is revealed first hand and uncensored by the book's inhabitants. Katharina Smeyers' disarming story is published by Davidsfonds/Infodok. On sale at the M shop: €19.95 (Dutch)



© An Smeyers

M is developing special programmes for primary and secondary schools. Primary schoolchildren view the bible through the eyes of Joppe the bookworm and in this way they learn all about the medieval court. Secondary school pupils find themselves caught up in a world of intrigue. At one point, the unruly Neapolitan royal household is even the scene of a murder.

Information + reservations: M Leuven, +32 16 27 29 29 or bezoekm@leuven.be

On family Sundays children aged under 13 are our special guests. On the family Sunday on October 3rd (14.00 to 16.00 hrs) *Joppe, the bookworm* will hog the limelight. Argus-eyed, we will search for traces of Joppe and for the most fanciful animals in the bible. We'll do it all over again on November 2nd during the autumn half-term holiday.

Information + reservations: M Leuven, +32 16 27 29 29 or bezoekm@leuven.be

visit as a group

Groups visiting the exhibition can have the benefit of a guide's introduction to the history of the Anjou Bible. You then visit the exhibition independently. The exhibition is always offered with another guided tour of M.

Information + reservations: M Leuven, +32 16 27 29 29 or bezoekm@leuven.be

In cooperation with Tourism Leuven, M has put together a day's programme, consisting of a walk in the city and lunch followed by the exhibition.

Information + reservations: www.leuven.be

You can combine the Anjou Bible with a visit to Park Abbey, where the Norbertines (Premonstratensians or White Canons) live, work and pray. The interior of the buildings and furnishings are mostly original. The seventeenth-century library, stained-glass windows in the ambulatory and stuccowork ceilings are truly breathtaking.

Information + reservations: +32 16. 40.01.51 or museumparkabdij@skynet.be

or individually

The little visitors' guide tells you about the magnificent miniatures, the bible texts and the unruly kingdom of Anjou as it leads you round the exhibition.

If you're not visiting as part of a group but would like more information from a guide, the 'Een blik op M' guided tours (in Dutch) give you the chance to join up with other individuals. At 14.00 hrs on Sunday October 10th you can visit the Anjou Bible and the M/St Peter's treasure-house. At 19.30 hrs on Thursday November 25th a visit to the Anjou Bible and the M collection is planned.

Information + reservations: M Leuven, +32 16 27 29 29 or bezoekm@leuven.be



Anjou Bible, fol. 308 v: Apocalypse, Maurits Sabbe Library, K.U.Leuven
© Bruno Vandermeulen, DLA, K.U.Leuven

Voices of Passion

The House of Anjou and the Anjou Bible provide the theme for the **Passion of Voices** concerts. **Passion of Voices** presents music from the beginning of the burgeoning of music in Naples under Robert's predecessor Charles of Anjou through to the polyphonic masterpieces which can be linked to the rule and music policy of Robert I himself.

Le Jeu de Robin et Marion (Adam de la Halle)

Micrologus led by Patrizia Bovi

Monday November 1st 2010 - 20.00 hrs, Dominican Friars' Church (Predikherenkerk), Romaanse Poort

Introduction to the concert by musicologist Sofie Taes, 19.00 - 19.40 hrs

Under Charles of Anjou (1226-1286) musical life at the Neapolitan court changed course. He invested in more and better musicians, a healthy artistic climate prevailed providing scope for musical experimentation and music was increasingly influenced by elements of French court culture. One of the most gifted musicians at Charles' court was undoubtedly the trouvère Adam de la Halle, who wrote the celebrated musical pastoral play *Le Jeu de Robin et Marion* while in service in Naples. This mix of spoken comedy and profane – often popular – songs produced a unique medieval spectacle in which the lovers Robin and Marion provide a demonstration of uncomplicated, rural gaiety in a succession of lively and elegant scenes – at least, as it was presented at the Neapolitan court... Ensemble Micrologus provides an inspired and refreshing rendition of *Le Jeu*: the early instruments, the role played by percussion and the specific style of singing guarantee an evening to remember!

A Divine Comedy: Guelfs and Ghibellines duel

ClubMédiéval led by Thomas Baeté

Tuesday November 2nd 2010 - 20.00 hrs, Dominican Friars' Church (Predikherenkerk), Romaanse Poort

Introduction to the concert by musicologist Sofie Taes, 19.00 - 19.40 hrs

During the Middle Ages Italian cities laboured under an on-going internal struggle between two socio-political factions: the Guelfs (including Dante Alighieri) – true to the Pope – and the Ghibellines, who sided with the emperor. The brand-new ensemble led by the highly talented Fleming Thomas Baeté gives musical expression to this turbulent internecine conflict. Robert I of Naples, leader of the Guelfs, is the key figure: as a supporter of Pope Benedict XII and patron of numerous musicians in his entourage in Avignon, Robert I can be linked to the famous music codices of Apt and Ivrea, which include a motet by Philippe de Vitry dedicated to Robert. The Ghibellines appear on stage with compositions from the Holy Roman Empire. The result is an artistic sparring match, a quest for musical antitheses and hidden harmonies.

Partners: 30CC & Alamire Foundation with the support of the City of Leuven

Curator: Bart Demuyt

Information and tickets: www.30CC.be or www.alamirefoundation.org

Location + Information

M Leuven
Vanderkelenstraat 28
B-3000 Leuven
+32 16 27 29 29
bezoekm@leuven.be
www.bijbelvananjou.be

When

From September 17th to December 5th 2010

Opening times

Open from Tuesdays to Sundays from 11.00 to 18.00 hrs.
Thursdays from 11.00 to 22.00 hrs.
Educational groups with a reservation are welcome from 9.00 hrs.
Closed on Mondays and on November 1st

Admission

€10: Anjou Bible + Robert Devriendt + Mayombe (from October 8th 2010) + Park Abbey
€9: Anjou Bible + Robert Devriendt + Mayombe (from October 8th 2010)
€7: concessions
€5: groups with guide (min. 15, max. 25 people)
€3: 13 -18 year-olds
€22: families (max. 2 adults + max. 3 visitors aged 13 -18)
Free: children aged under 13 accompanied by an adult

Visitors in a group + introduction

€60 + admission
€40 + €1 per pupil: secondary schools
€35 + €1 per pupil: primary schools
€50 + combination ticket: Anjou Bible + Park Abbey

B-Day Trip

Special train fare to Leuven for the exhibition **The Anjou Bible - Naples 1340 – a royal manuscript revealed**. The B-Day Trip includes travel by train to and from Leuven in 2nd class from any Belgian station plus a ticket for the exhibition.

On sale at all NMBS stations. Free for children under the age of 12.

Information and tickets: + 32 2 528 28 28 or www.b-excursions.be

Publications

The Anjou Bible. A Royal Manuscript Revealed. Naples 1340, Peeters Publishers, Leuven. Series: *Corpus of Illuminated manuscripts*, ed. Lieve Watteuw and Jan Van der Stock, K.U.Leuven, Leuven, 2010. Hardcover.
ISBN 978-90-429-2445-1

Joppe, de boekenworm. Verhalen verborgen in een middeleeuws handschrift

Katharina Smeyers, illustrations An Smeyers, published by Davidsfonds / Infodok, €19.95
ISBN 978-90-5908-383-7

Reflections 10. The Anjou Bible: €7.5

The organizers

The Anjou Bible - Naples 1340 - a royal manuscript revealed is an initiative of Illuminare - Centre for the Study of Medieval Art (K.U.Leuven), Art Sciences Research Unit and M, Leuven.

The *Anjou Bible* project is an initiative of Illuminare - Centre for the Study of Medieval Art, Art Sciences Research Unit (K.U.Leuven)

in cooperation with:

- the Maurits Sabbe Library – Theology Faculty (K.U.Leuven)
- the Royal Institute for Art Patrimony Brussels (KIK-IRPA)

The meticulous conservation of the impressive manuscript has been financed in full by the InBev-Baillet Latour Fund.

Illuminare - Centre for the Study of Medieval Art (K.U.Leuven) was founded in 1983 as the Centre for the Study of Flemish Illuminators. The Centre is currently broadening its field of research. The focus of Illuminare's research objectives is Southern Netherlandish manuscript production from ca. 1350 to 1550 with the emphasis on Gothic illumination, pre-Eyckian illumination, Burgundian book illumination and the Ghent-Bruges tradition. The Centre also studies the history of conservation, bookbindings, printmaking and nineteenth-century book illumination. Over the last few decades Illuminare has mounted several doctoral projects, inventorization campaigns, colloquia and exhibitions. In 2009 it was the driving force behind the exhibition *Rogier van der Weyden 1400|1464 – Master of Passions* at M Leuven.

Scientific committee

The scientific committee responsible for the Anjou Bible project (2008-2011) is made up of Prof. Jan Van der Stock, Prof. Barbara Baert, Dr. Lieve Watteeuw, Dr. Catherine Reynolds (London), Annelies Vogels, Prof. John Lowden (London), Prof. Leo Kenis, Dr. Etienne Dhondt, Dr. Luc Knapen, doctorand Veronique Vandekerchove, Myriam Serck, Christina Ceulemans and Dr. Dominique Vanwijnsberghe.

With the support of



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Colloquium

Miniatures and Music at the Court of Anjou Naples - ca. 1340

November 1st and 2nd 2010

Over the last two years the Anjou Bible has been the subject of detailed stylistic, iconographic, codicological and historical research for the very first time. Innovative research techniques were applied when carrying out the laboratory research, conserving the 338 folios and making them accessible digitally.

The international colloquium *Miniatures and Music at the Court of Anjou Naples - ca. 1340* will shed light on the context and artistic production in Naples at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The colloquium is the culmination of the Anjou Bible research project. It is an interdisciplinary forum for various approaches to historio-cultural research into the Anjou Bible (musicological, art historical and book historical aspects). It juxtaposes the interaction between the visual language, patronage and reception of illuminated codices and the musical repertoire at the royal court. It brings together in Leuven experts from research institutes at home and abroad.

Information and registration: www.bijbelvananjou.be

Keynote lecturers

John Lowden, Courtauld Institute, London

Dinko Fabris, Centro Ricerche Musicali di Casa Piccini, Bari

Cathleen Fleck, Washington University, Saint Louis (U.S.A.)

Alessandra Perriccioli, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, Naples

Lieve Watteeuw, OE Kunstwetenschappen, Illuminare, K.U.Leuven

Pedro Memelsdorff, ESMUC, Barcelona

Nicolas Bock, University of Lausanne

The organizers

The colloquium is a platform for three scientific research institutes. It is being organized jointly by Illuminare – Centre for the Study of Medieval Art (K.U.Leuven), the Alamire Foundation (K.U.Leuven, International Centre for the Study of Music in the Low Countries) and the University of Antwerp (UA, Research Group 'Book, Library and Information', Institute for Education and Information Sciences).

Other scientific partners involved in the colloquium are the Royal Institute for Art Patrimony Brussels (KIK-IRPA) and the Royal Library of Belgium (Brussels), Manuscripts Department. These two institutions have made a fundamental contribution to the Anjou Bible research and conservation project (2008-2010).

Contact

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Autumn at M

Leuven Museum

Leuven's new museum, known as M, is already a major attraction in the heart of the city. The impressive building with its clean lines designed by leading Belgian architect Stéphane Beel, integrates historical and contemporary architecture around a tranquil garden. The roof of the museum affords a wonderful view of the city.

The museum houses historical artworks centred around a magnificent collection of late-Gothic paintings and sculptures and a nineteenth-century fine arts collection. M is also an important platform for contemporary and historical art projects across a range of disciplines: painting and sculpture, photography, video and film, design and architecture are the subject of temporary exhibitions and collection presentations. These exciting and surprising combinations of early and contemporary art make a visit to M an extraordinary experience.

www.mleuven.be

Mayombe. Masters of Magic

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Mayombe is a forested area to the north of the mouth of the River Congo. Leo Bittremieux, a Missionary of Scheut, lived there from 1907. In the decades that followed Bittremieux sent hundreds of sculptures and other objects to Belgium along with the corresponding documentation. They were destined for Leuven University's ethnographic museum where they were to serve partly to help train colonials. When the university was split into two at the end of the 1960s, some of the objects were consigned to the care of the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL). The missionary also sent a sizable collection of ethnography to the Museum of the Belgian Congo in Tervuren.

These priceless witnesses of the Yombe culture are now preserved in collections belonging to the K.U.Leuven, the UCL and the Royal Museum for Central Africa. To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the independence of Congo, M is bringing them together again for the first time in an exhibition.