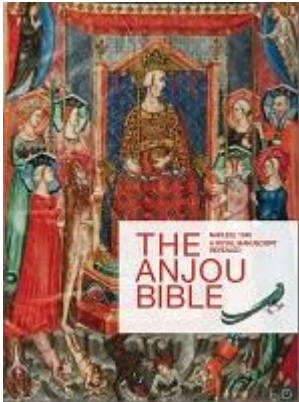


The Anjou Bible: Naples 1340: A Royal Manuscript Revealed, ed. by L. Watteuw and J. van der Stock. (Corpus of illuminated manuscripts). Peeters, dist. by David Brown Book Company, 2010. 335 p. col. ill. ISBN 9789042924451 (cl), \$123.00.



This book documents the history and restoration of a little-known manuscript created at the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily during the late Middle Ages, commissioned by Robert I of Anjou as a wedding gift for his granddaughter and heir Joanna I. The book is composed of two sections. The first includes twelve essays with supporting visual documentation reflecting multidisciplinary research by noted experts, examining the historical context, scientific analysis, conservation, digitization and rebinding of what is now known as The Anjou Bible. All the illuminated folios of the manuscript illustrate the second section, which is followed by a roster of the individual folio pages and single-page biographies of Robert I and Johanna I. Published under the auspices of Illuminare - Centre for the Study of Medieval Art, it is volume eighteen in the *Documenta Libraria* series.

As an international center of art and culture, the Royal Court of Naples not only played a primary role in realizing sovereignty for Johanna I, the first queen of the Angevin Kingdom of Naples and first woman to rule a key European territory, but was also a proving ground of artistic ideas leading to the Renaissance. Under Angevin patronage, art, religion and ideology were at the service of an environment where politics directed by nascent humanism began to replace chivalry. The growing influence of Giotto, who painted in Naples from 1328 to 1332 at the invitation of King Robert I, is apparent in the work of the principal illuminator of the Bible, Cristophoro Orimina. Ormina's work spanned the richest period in the history of Neapolitan medieval art from 1335 until about 1365.

The parchment folios of the Bible arrived in Brabant some 500 years ago and now reside in the vault of the Maurits Sabbe Library of the Theology Faculty (K.U.Leuven). The folios were taken apart during the two year restoration process and exhibited for the first and last time at the M - Museum in Leuven, Belgium, in late 2010. Its conservation provided an opportunity to digitize all the folios using the latest technologies and at the highest possible resolution. A complete digital book companion to the exhibition was created and is now online, ensuring accessibility to the general public and specialists alike. While the online publication may lead to further insights (assuming the website will always be available), the book stands alone due to its extensive scholarship, and it is important to libraries already invested in the *Documenta Libraria* series as well as rare-book librarians, art historians, historians and conservators with an interest in late medieval manuscripts and their legacy for the emerging Renaissance.

Andrea Walton, MA, MLS, krw1@nyu.edu