THE ANJOU BIBLE

NAPLES | 1340
A ROYAL MANUSCRIPT REVEALED
The Anjou Bible, now kept in the Theology Faculty’s Maurits Sabbe Library of the University of Leuven (Belgium) is a superbly illuminated manuscript created at the Royal Court of Naples in the turbulent fourteenth century. At this time much of Central and Southern Europe was governed by the successful dynasty of Anjou, which continued to expand its territories and encouraged artists and writers like Giotto, Simone Martini, Boccaccio and Petrarch. In 1328, after the death of her father, Joanna of Anjou became the official heir to the prosperous Kingdom of Naples and Sicily. Several years later her grandfather, Robert I, gave Joanna and her young fiancé Andrew of Hungary a precious gift, which became known as the Anjou Bible, a manuscript that is priceless from a historical and art-historical point of view. In addition to Bible texts and splendid miniatures, it contains a wealth of historical information about the house of Anjou and the book’s origins. One of the artists responsible for the magnificent painting was Cristophorus Orimina, the leading illuminator in Naples, who signed the work. The Anjou Bible has now been carefully conserved and studied: the research findings are brought together in this book. Essays by some of the most noted experts in the field describe how the arts were promoted at the court of Robert I of Anjou and also shed light on the Bible’s genesis and on all the research methods and results. This book is richly illustrated and contains all the illuminated folios of the Anjou Bible.
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