"Review of The Anjou Bible: A Royal Manuscript Revealed, Naples 1340"

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entry prepared for the forthcoming Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint. The four words considered are each treated under six categories: (1) Greek literature, (2) papyri and inscriptions, (3) LXX, (4) Jewish literature in Greek, (5) NT; and (6) early Christian literature (with the latter two categories combined in one instance). As promised by the title of the reference work for which this article was prepared, the emphasis is on both the history and the theology of the Greek word group across these diverse corpora. The historical analysis makes full use of the papyri, inscriptions, and evidence from Qumran. The theological analysis is carried out largely (but not exclusively) in sections 3 (LXX) and 5 (NT), and there the significance of the LXX for the theology of the NT and early Christian literature is clearly shown. A bibliography at the end of this article lists the relevant scholarship in English, French, German, and Italian.

The importance of the LXX for NT exegesis is explored in the final article by Nicklas under four headings: (1) citations of the LXX in the NT, (2) additional forms of intertextuality, (3) linguistic influence, and (4) deuterocanonical/apocryphal writings and the NT.

The volume concludes with an index of references (OT, NT, Intertestamental Literature, Philo, Josephus, Papyri and Inscriptions, Fathers of the Church, Greek and Latin Literature).

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LIEVE WATTEEUW and JAN DER STOCK (eds.), The Anjou Bible: A Royal Manuscript Revealed, Naples 1340 (Documenta Libraria 39; Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts 18; Low Countries Series 13; Leuven: Leuven University/Peeters, 2010). Pp. xii + 334. €85.

This collection of twelve essays about the Anjou Bible was prepared as part of a research and conservation project of the Illuminare–Centre for the Study of Medieval Art (KU Leuven). The essays were presented at an international colloquium on November 1–2, 2010. The final third of the volume contains illuminated folios of the Anjou Bible and a bibliography.

The Anjou Bible, housed in Leuven University’s Maurits Sabbe Library since 1970, is a large medieval codex commissioned in 1340 by King Robert of Naples of the House of Anjou, a French dynastic house that ruled large portions of central and southern Europe from 1266 to 1435. He intended it to be a gift for his granddaughter Joanna and her fiancé and cousin, Andrew of Hungary. This illuminated Latin Bible is important for the history of Italian art and for understanding the culture and society of medieval southern Italy. The codex made its way to Paris at the end of the fourteenth century and then on to the Arras College Library in Leuven in the early sixteenth century. It was one of the Bibles consulted by theologians who produced the Leuven Vulgate in response Trent’s naming the Vg the official biblical text in 1546 and calling for a new edition. It survived plundering during the French Revolution and was preserved in the library of the Major Seminary of Mechelin from 1821 until the closing of the seminary in 1970. (See the essay by Frans Gistelinck, “The Anjou Bible: A Treasure from the Maurits Sabbe Library in Leuven.”)
Essays that address topics in biblical studies are the following. John Lowden ("The Anjou Bible in the Context of Illustrated Bibles") sketches the history of illuminated Bibles, beginning with a Syriac manuscript of the late sixth or seventh century and the Latin manuscript Codex Amiatinus from Northumbria, England, around 700, through the Carolingian Bibles, to the flourishing production of illustrated Latin Bibles in the thirteenth century. He then explains the unique features of the Anjou Bible, including its images and production.

Luc Dequeker ("The Anjou Bible and the Biblia Vulgata Lovaniensis, 1547/1574") describes the sources and critical work of Johannes Hentenius for the 1547 edition of Biblia Vulgata Lovaniensis and of Franciscus Lucas Brugensis for the 1574 edition of Biblia Vulgata Lovaniensis. Humanists at Antwerp tried to create a new multilingual Bible that would contextualize the Vg simply as one possible rendering of the original text. Brugensis was supplied with sixty to seventy additional manuscripts of the Vg with which to prepare his edition. Both Hentenius and Brugensis had the Anjou Bible as one of the manuscripts they used in preparing their editions. Dequeker presents his case for why the Anjou Bible should not be identified with Codex Bessarionis, which had been given to Henricus van Zomeren in 1462 by Cardinal Bessarion.

Pierre Delsaerdt ("Arras College Library: The Academic Habitat of the Anjou Bible for Three Centuries") notes how Franciscus Lucas examined the Anjou Bible for variants from the Vg text with which he was familiar, and such data was published as Notationes in Sacra Biblia in 1580 by Christopher Plantin in Antwerp. He describes how Nicolas Ruterius, bishop of Arras, founded the college and donated the Anjou Bible along with his library.

Essays addressing topics in art history are the following. Cathleen A. Fleck ("Patronage, Art, and the Anjou Bible in Angevin Naples [1266–1352]") explains that King Robert patronized Italian artists such as the Neapolitan Cristophoro Orimina, who portrayed him as a just and wise king and thus enhanced the legitimacy of his rule and that of his successor, Joanna. Alessandro Tomei and Stefania Paone ("Paintings and Miniatures in Naples: Cavallini, Giotto and the Portraits of King Robert") question whether the images of the Anjou Bible serve an ideological message for the royalty, whereas Michelle A. Duran ("The Politics of Art: Imaging Sovereignty in the Anjou Bible") argues that King Robert used these images as well as his skill as a preacher to legitimate his dynasty. Nicolas Bock ("A Kingdom in Stone: Angevin Sculpture in Naples") explains how the rulers invested in funerary architecture in churches in Naples that promoted the royal ideology. Alessandra Perriccioli Saggese ("Cristophoro Orimina: An Illuminator at the Angevin Court of Naples") describes how Orimina drew on the monumental paintings of Cavallini and Giotto for his illuminations.


This collection is of interest to biblical scholars insofar as it provides material on the interplay of text and image in the history of biblical interpretation and their use for ideological purposes by monarchs in the fourteenth century.

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