

4. Bible

Southern Italy (possibly Naples), ca. 1330
Poole 8

646 leaves; 35x24cm. (21.2x15.1cm.); vellum
Red, blue and purple penwork decoration; 127 illuminated initials, 84 of which are historiated with borders
18th-century Italian binding: red velvet over wooden boards with silver gilt mounts bearing St. Bernardine of Siena's monogram of the Holy Name

The decoration of Poole 8 exemplifies southern Italian manuscript production of about 1330. Its eclecticism reflects the great variety of images and styles available to artists working in a sophisticated and cosmopolitan environment.

The contents of the Lilly Bible are complete and include: two prologues (1r-4v); the Old Testament in canonical order (4r- 475v); the New Testament also in canonical order except that the Acts of the Apostles is placed after, rather than before, the Pauline Epistles (475v-592v); a lexicon, known as the "Interpretation of Hebrew Names" (593r-646r) (De Hamel, 113). The Bible itself is made up of forty-nine sexternia and one binion; the lexicon consists of four sexternia and one tertion. Two book plates with the *ex libris* of the Duke of Sussex and the Earl of Derby are pasted on the eighteenth-century parchment wrappers lining the binding (Lathrop C. Harper, catalogue 2, 9). The first prologue, beginning "Fratres . . .," is badly rubbed; the second prologue opens with the words: "Desideri mei desideratus accepi . . ." The foliation is accurate but is incompletely noted; running heads identify the text at the top of each page. Written in a Gothic textualis formata script, each page is arranged in two 38-line columns.

Historiated initials (approximately 5cm. sq.) mark the beginning of each book; decorated initials (approximately 3cm. sq.) mark prologues; smaller blue and red penwork initials indicate chapter openings. In the lexicon, the capital of each alphabetical section is headed by a decorated initial. The opening page of the Bible is framed by a continuous border skirting its perimeter; all other borders extend slightly beyond the length of the writing frame in the left margin. An occasional incipit or explicit is rubricated. A few scribal errors appear; for instance, the Book of Ezekiel is consist-

ently mislabelled "Baruch" in the running heading and some of the prologues begin without decorated initials. In one case (363r), a prologue is headed by an historiated initial—clearly an accident.

The illumination draws on varied stylistic and iconographic sources. The pastel palette (mauve, lavender, light blue, dark blue, green, rust, silver, and gold) is characteristically Italian. The dominant border motif consists of a band of alternating gold and blue panels divided by offshoots from a mauve vine which bear three-pronged leaves. Curling vine tendrils are painted in mauve on thick burnished gold fields with scalloped contours edged in black. This border type reflects northern influences: three-pronged leaves are French; the burnished gold fields surrounding vine scrolls coupled with border panels occur in the Cologne area (Cologne, Cod. 173, 92v; Cod. 1b, 229r). Yet, another Poole 8 border (60r) is decidedly southern Italian with its narrow totemic arrangement of geometric patterns, floral flourishes, minute figures, grotesque faces, and animal imagery. Similar animal imagery appears in the borders of a manuscript containing the "Story of Moses" (Rome, Biblioteca Vaticana, Cod. Vat. Lat. 3550, 31v) dating to 1343-45.

Approximately half of the Poole 8 historiated initials are narrative scenes, while the other half are author portraits: the prophets, David in the Psalms, Paul in his Epistles, and John before his Gospel and letters. The narratives have little background landscape and only an occasional architectural prop. The figures themselves are short and stocky with attention given to facial detail and drapery, betraying a keen interest in illusionism, an Italian characteristic. The figures are often actively engaged, an attribute which connects them with the older Romanesque tradition.

Romanesque influence most strikingly occurs in the initial with five medallions that opens the Book of Genesis (4v). In Romanesque Bibles the beginning of Genesis was introduced by six or seven medallions depicting God creating the world, a format which conveniently fit into the initial "I" of the opening words "In principio . . ." As the tradition took root, the active, full-figure Creator God of earlier Bibles was reduced in later works to a gesturing bust, inactive by comparison. The illustrator of the Poole 8 Genesis initial used this calmer version. A close parallel is provided by the Italian Bible of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, dated to 1320 (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. 215, 4r). The Lilly initial contains five medallions which become progressively compressed as they near

the bottom of the space reserved for the initial. This suggests that the artist was attempting to follow a six medallion model, misjudged the available space, and was simply forced to omit the last medallion.

The subject matter of the historiated initials is closely related to the text, but many of the scenes are nevertheless difficult to decipher. A list of the historiated initials compiled by the librarian of the Duke of Sussex, in *Biblia Sussexiana* (1827) sheds light on certain aspects of the iconography but should be approached with caution. For example, this list identifies the initial beginning the Gospel of St. Mark as an author portrait, while it clearly represents St. John the Baptist in a camel hair tunic, who, as "a voice crying in the wilderness," illustrates the opening of Mark. The martyrdom of Isaiah is a strange choice for use at the beginning of the Book of Isaiah (341r). A precedent for the subject can be found in an early thirteenth-century Oxford Psalter and Hours of the Virgin (London, B.L., Arundel 157, folio 116r) (Morgan, 72-3), although this seated, clothed Isaiah, differs considerably from the Poole 8 presentation of a standing, nude Isaiah, pressed between two boards, and being "sawn asunder" lengthwise.

Both iconography and style prove that the Poole 8 artists had access to northern and southern sources. Their cavalier use of these sources is not uncommon for the fourteenth century, but it does indicate that the Bible must have been produced in an environment with vast resources. Naples, a university town that was made the capital for the Kingdom of Sicily by its thirteenth-century Anjou rulers, would have provided such resources. Northern (especially French) influence would understandably mix with southern Italian traditions in this milieu.

The locality and dating of Poole 8 to Naples, ca. 1330, is supported by a comparison with a Neapolitan manuscript now in Paris (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. fonds français 295) dating between 1324 and 1331, which has been associated with the court of Robert of Anjou (1311-43) (Avril, 1984, 73). Like Poole 8, this copy of *Les Faits des Romains* is written in Gothic textualis formata script with Italianate tendencies such as: a figure-eight "g," an uncial "d," and a "-us" sign that does not descend below the line. Frequent hairline flourishes, another detail present in the Paris example, are even more evident in the Lilly manuscript. Elements of the ornament are also similar, for instance, leafy vine scrolls are surrounded

by irregular gold shapes, and fantastic figural imagery grows out of the vine.

A scribal inscription at the end of the Lilly Bible (592r) supports a southern Italian localization. While not specifically pointing to Naples, it does not exclude the possibility. The scribe proclaims: "Ego Justinus magistri Stephani de civitate theani(?) incepti, mediavi et complevi istam bibliam deo gratias et meum pro robore signum feci." [I, Justinus, student of Master Stephanus of the city of Teano(?), began, continued, and completed this Bible, God be thanked, and in corroboration affix my mark.] The scribe, Justinus, has been connected to Naples based on the fact that one Master Stephanus was working there for Robert of Anjou in 1310 (Lathrop C. Harper, catalogue 2, 7). Another source lists a Master Stephanus, copyist of the fourteenth century (Bradley, 265); but, it is unclear whether these two scribes are one and the same, or whether either one was, in fact, Justinus's teacher. The situation is further complicated by the partial illegibility of the city named by Justinus, which has been read variously as Chieti and Termoli, as well as Teano. In any case, these are all southern Italian towns and travelling scribes from any of these places could easily have worked in Naples.

Poole 8 should also be considered in light of the precepts of the Order of Preachers, founded in 1218, since a portrait of a Dominican friar fills an initial to the second prologue on folio 2r and clearly identifies the book as a Dominican Bible. The 54 folio "Interpretation of Hebrew Names," a common addition to the Bible, would have been particularly attractive to Dominicans as a study aid. The large format—indeed sheer bulk—of the Lilly Bible excludes its being of practical use to wandering preachers. Poole 8 is at least four times the size of the normal Dominican travelling Bible, such as one preserved in the Lilly Library (Ricketts 5), a compact edition consisting of 388 thin vellum leaves which measures only 17x12cm. Therefore, Poole 8 must have belonged to one of the stationary centers of the Order. The Lilly Bible's presence in a priory seems borne out by the fact that the Psalms (the basis of the Divine Office) appear to have received the most frequent use, and are marked by excessive marginal glosses in a variety of hands.

The use of gold in the illumination of books produced by the Order was forbidden by an ordinance of the General Chapter of 1239 in response to the vow of poverty; therefore, the Lilly Bible, with a burnished gold background for all 84 historiated initials,

must have been a gift. Gifts were allowed (Hinnebusch, 196).

The number of fourteenth-century Dominican houses important enough to attract wealthy donors is limited. Moreover, the abundance of king imagery in Poole 8 suggests the possibility of royal patronage. Kings appear accompanied by gowned figures wearing master's caps in three initials (123v, 200r, 396r). These royal attendants seem to be allegorical representations of wisdom or, perhaps more specifically, academia. The Anjou Kings were known as patrons of the arts, the university, and the mendicant orders. A king such as Robert of Anjou, a student of divinity, philosophy, and poetry who was called "the Wise" by his contemporaries, may well have perpetuated such an image. Indeed, in 1346 Charles V of France had himself portrayed with a master's cap replacing his crown indicating a desire to be recognized as a wise scholar as well as a king (Boehm, 54). Whether Robert, like Charles V, would have had himself portrayed in this manner is less important than the fact that a royal tradition existed emphasizing scholarship as an attribute of the monarchy.

It seems likely that Poole 8 was given by someone allied with the court to a Dominican center also allied with the court, namely to one of two Dominican priories founded and continually supported by the kings of Sicily. In 1299, Charles II, Count of Provence and King of Sicily, gave the rich library of his son, Louis of Toulouse, to the newly-established priory of St. Maximin in Provence. In 1481, Charles III maintained this tradition and donated a collection of illuminated volumes to St. Maximin (Hinnebusch, 209, 196). Although merely speculation, it is conceivable that the Lilly Bible may have been a part of the prestigious tradition of gifts to the Library of St. Maximin.

Alternatively, Naples's importance to the Dominicans was immediately elevated in 1272 when, given the choice of any priory in the Roman Dominican Province, Thomas Aquinas set up a new *studium generale* in his home priory of San Domenico. Charles II, fulfilling a personal vow, built a magnificent Gothic cathedral on the site in the 1290's. Charles's son, Robert, favored the Franciscan Order, but was known to have completed projects begun by his father and may well have continued to support San Domenico. Certainly, the Royal Court continued support and was actively involved in the canonization procedures of Thomas Aquinas, begun in Naples in 1319. Charles II's widow, Queen Mary, as well as many

members of the court wrote letters testifying to Thomas's saintliness. King Robert and his queen led part of the 1323 celebrations at Avignon when Thomas was officially sainted by Pope John XXII. Many gifts would have been given to San Domenico during these years and, since the date of the Lilly Bible fits stylistically into this period, it may possibly have been made as one of these donations.

PROVENANCE

Earl of Derby and Duke of Sussex in nineteenth century; acquired by George A. Poole, Jr. from Lathrop C. Harper, New York, 1956; Indiana University, 1958

J.R.G.