Bibliotheca Corvina Virtualis

2015/10/05

The library of King Matthias Hunyadi was the first and most significant royal Renaissance-era library in Europe outside Italy. Contained within the library were 2,000 volumes at the time of Matthias' death but following that, the majority of the codices had either been destroyed or scattered all over. At present, 216 corvinas are kept by libraries across Europe and the United States.

In spring 2015, National Széchényi Library launched a comprehensive academic project, in order to virtually reconstruct King Matthias' (born in 1443, reigned: 1458-1490) onetime world-famous collection in Buda, the so-called Corvina Library. Contained within the first and most significant royal Renaissance-era collection in Europe outside Italy were 2,000 volumes at the time of Matthias' death but following that, the majority of the codices had either been destroyed or scattered all over. At present, 216 corvinas are kept by libraries across Europe and the United States.

The Hungarian national library considers it as its mission to show this unique treasure in its entirety to the academic world and to the interested general public. Within the framework of a website, Bibliotheca Corvina Virtualis (BCV) will gradually make accessible digital shots taken of the surviving corvinas. In addition to that, BCV, the academic content of which will cover the history as well as the literary and artistic significance of the Corvina Library, aims at becoming a virtual research center of book culture at the royal court in Buda. Invited research fellows include both the Hungarian and international researchers specializing in the Renaissance era.

The website will be launched in January 2016 but before that, the project will be announced officially at the Hungarian Pavilion for Expo Milano, on October 9, 2015, during an international conference entitled "A Home of Arts and Muses. The Library of King Matthias Corvinus". Lecturers of the conference include Hungarian and Italian researches who will report on their latest research findings.

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