



Projet Erasmus+ Namur - Marsala

" Patrimonia "



A la découverte du patrimoine historique, architectural et culturel

Orval Abbey



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ABSTRACT

The legend : Orval – Gold Valley

A lovely legend is connected to the history of the abbey and explains where its name and coat of arms come from.

Mathilde of Canossa, countess of Tuscany and duchess of Lower Lorraine, while visiting the lands of Orval, let accidentally her wedding ring fall into the fountain of the valley: she started praying the Holy Virgin to get it back. A trout immediately appeared on the surface, carrying in its mouth the precious ring decorated with three diamonds. Mathilde thus exclaimed: “Vraiment, c’est ici un Val d’Or” (Here lies really a Gold Valley), and, grateful, she decided to create a monastery in this holy place.



The countess is at the same time rarely and often mentioned in Orval: the fountain bearing her name is a location that cannot be missed. The legendary trout, however, is omnipresent in and around the abbey: on the bottles, on the glasses, on art ironworks,



People retell the legend, but what do we know about Mathilde?

Mathilde of Canossa is a central character in Italian medieval history because of her major role in the period when the emperor’s temporal power faced the pope’s spiritual power.

This warrior (she is sometimes nicknamed the Italian Joan of Arc) served Pope Gregory VII, then Pope Victor, faced Emperors Henry III and Henry IV. She ruled over a great part of the center and north of Italy, handling her lands with an iron fist while promoting compromise. Her imprint can also be found in cultural and... gastronomic areas.

In the Vatican, only three women are buried in the St. Peter Basilica : Queen Christina of Sweden, Princess Maria Clementina Sobieska and Mathilde of Canossa.

The result of a long history

165 million years ago, when the sea was covering our regions, deep into the water, was created the ochre-colored rock, called "rock from France", that would serve for the building of the monastery. Fifteen thousand years ago was dug the valley where the abbey would find its place, because of the last ice age.

Three thousand years later, the first trees appeared: Scotch pines, birches, then beeches: a whole forest, that men started clearing between 1800 and 1200 before the Christian era.

Except a few Merovingian graves that have been found around the source, there is no trace of housing before the arrival of the first monks.

The history of the abbey starts in 1020 when a few Italian Benedictines chose a valley to build what will soon become a centre of Christian fervor. Several times destroyed, the abbey came back to life.

In 1926, the Abbey raised a last time, when Cistercian monks from Sept-Fons in Allier rebuilt on the ruins left by the French Revolution and created a brewery and a dairy to fund the rebuilding.

This work is managed by a monk from the Soligny-la-Trappe abbey, a former Belgian contractor from Ghent, Dom Marie-Albert van der Cruyssen, who will eventually become the first abbot of the new monastery.

The new building is founded on the remains from the 18th century.

The abbatial church, raised to the rank of a basilica, was consecrated in 1948.



Sitemap



Lieux à visiter

- 1- Accueil et boutique (entrée libre)
- 2- Projection audiovisuelle et salle d'exposition
- 3- Musée de la pharmacie
- 4- Jardin des plantes médicinales
- 5- Vieux chêne d'Orval
- 6- Communs Abraham : savoir-faire brassicole
- 7- Fontaine Mathilde
- 8- Église cistercienne médiévale
- 9- Cloître médiéval
- 10- Salle du Chapitre
- 11- Entrée du musée de l'Abbaye

Lieux réservés à accès limité

- A) Eglise
- B) Hôtellerie
- C) Aile des retraitants
- D) Chalet
- E) Brasserie
- F) Fromagerie
- G) Ateliers monastiques
- H) Communauté monastique
- I) Chapelle des scouts



