



Gaïa Prize 2006

The jury of the Gaïa prize, an honorary distinction awarded by the Musée international d'horlogerie and destined to reward prominent personalities who contribute or who have contributed to the promotion of horology, its history and its culture, has named

Mr John H. LEOPOLD

History category

Mr Luigi PIPPA

Craftsmanship category

prizewinners for their overall careers.

John H. Leopold

This historian of Dutch origin, who has made his career as a curator, first of all at the museum of Groningen (NL), then at the British Museum (Curator of Horology), shares his time among the United States, where he is at the moment for his studies, Great Britain and Holland.

Specialist in horological written works of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance periods, he has studied, in particular, works as prestigious as those of Jost Bürgi, of Johann Reinhold and those of the Fremersdorf Collection (he is one of the authors of the catalogue of this collection).

His main work is, indisputably, the retranscription and the study of the manuscript of Paulus Almanus, Paul the German. This ecclesiastic of German origin described the most well-known timepieces of his period.

The richness of the work of John H. Leopold can be found mainly in the calculations and the interpretation of the movements drawn and described by Paulus Almanus. Thanks to the manuscript illustrated with sketches, a real reconstruction of the pieces described could be carried out for watchmakers by reproducing the movements of the timepieces in their entirety with unequalled accuracy. Well beyond the work of the historian, this research enables present watchmakers to understand and reconstruct ancient models. Thus, an important step forward in the history of time measurement could be made, thanks to the works of J.H. Leopold.



Luigi Pippa

This craftsman and watchmaker is well-known for his reconstructions of the Astrarium by Giovanni Dondi, an astronomical clock built at the end of the 14th C. in Padua, which disappeared prematurely in the 16th C. and a description of which remains, richly illustrated with drawings, made up of eleven manuscripts kept in various libraries.

As from 1960, research carried out by Luigi Pippa led him to undertake the reconstruction of three copies of this Astrarium, each one presenting an improvement on the previous one. The third copy, finished in 1985, was purchased by the Musée international d'horlogerie and it is now one of the main pieces of its collection.

The work carried out by Luigi Pippa is of exceptional interest and consists firstly of the study and comprehension of the manuscripts of Giovanni Dondi, of the research of the astronomical indications and mechanisms described and mentioned in the archives, which have allowed a better knowledge of the Italian horology of that period (14th C.), thus making it available to a wide public. Luigi Pippa's knowledge in ancient horology, acquired during his restoration work, has enabled him to consider not only conventional theoretical research work, but also to carry out a reconstruction of the clock, using craftsman's methods, and also respecting the original manuscript.

Luigi Pippa is also the author of several books and catalogues of horology collections.

Two Gaïa awards, two careers, two approaches – one result

To allow the comprehension, reconstruction or the preservation of remarkable pieces which have disappeared or which are still conserved.

The historian becomes a craftsman by analysing the manuscripts and movements which he describes with accuracy and the craftsman becomes a historian by carrying out a critical study of the manuscripts which make his reconstructions possible.

The official presentation of the Gaïa Prize will take place on

Thursday 16th March 2006 at 18.00

at the Musée international d'horlogerie