

JEAN DE SALLIGNAC [JOHANNES SALLINEUS], Commentary on the Book of Zephaniah
In Latin with Hebrew, illuminated manuscript on parchment
France (Paris?), c. 1540-1550

iii (paper) + 48 + ii (paper) folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, top outer recto, 1-48 (collation i-vi⁸), ruled in red ink with full-length vertical and horizontal bounding lines (justification 109-110 x 59-60 mm.), written in black ink in an elegant French humanist hand in seventeen long-lines, with differentiation of text size distinguishing between biblical text and commentary on ff. 6-47, SIX ILLUMINATED INITIALS of two to three lines in blue, red, or pink highlighted in white on liquid gold grounds with flowers and foliate motifs and with full rectangular borders drawn in black ink and liquid gold (ff. 1, 4, 6, 20v, 33v), a few traces of erasure correction in the text, slight staining on ff. 1 and 4, otherwise in pristine condition. Bound in seventeenth-century mottled calf over pasteboard, gilt-stamped spine with five raised bands, gilt-stamping along the edges of the boards, marbled endpapers and flyleaves, red-tinted edges, card with lion rampant inkstamp above "Sir T. P / Middle Hill / 795" pasted on the recto of the second of the three front flyleaves and two inscriptions, "Interpretatio manuscript prophetiæ Sophoniæ" and "Phillipps MS 795" on the recto of the following flyleaf. Dimensions 148-149 x 98 mm.

This elegantly written and handsomely illuminated manuscript is probably the unique copy (surely unpublished and unstudied) of a hitherto unknown work by an important French humanist and Catholic biblical scholar. In pristine condition, this was likely the presentation copy for the book's dedicatee, Jean de Guise, the first Cardinal of Lorraine, a minister of state to two French kings, and a patron of intellectuals and the arts. In keeping with contemporary humanist approaches to biblical scholarship, this commentary focuses on the language of the original Hebrew.

PROVENANCE

1. The evidence of decoration suggests that this manuscript was copied and illuminated in France, most probably Paris. The style of the illuminated initials suggests a dating in the first or second quarter of the sixteenth century. Additional evidence supports a narrower date c. 1540-1550, while Cardinal Jean de Guise was serving as the commendatory abbot of Marmoutier.

The opening dedication, "Clarissimo principi Ioanni à Lotharingia Cardinali Ioannes Sallineus" (f. 1) identifies Jean de Guise (1498-1550) as the work's dedicatee; the rich illumination and very fine quality of this present manuscript suggests this was a presentation copy. Since he is identified as a cardinal in this inscription, this book must have been created for him between 1518, when he was created the first Cardinal of Lorraine, and his death in 1550.

As a patron of art and learning, Jean de Guise was a friend and protector of such early sixteenth-century luminaries as Desiderius Erasmus, Clément Marot, and François Rabelais. He may have come into contact with Jean de Sallignac in his capacity as commendatory abbot of the Benedictine Abbey of Marmoutier from 1540 until his death in 1550. Sallignac was a monk of this abbey (though he was likely based in Paris, where

he had gone to study and teach in the 1530s), and his dedicatory preface makes reference to the time "aliquot ante annos" [several years previously] when "Maiorimonasterio præesses" [you were taking charge of Marmoutier] (f. 3v), suggesting that this book may have been produced between 1540 and 1550.

2. Belonged to Charles Chardin (1742-1826), French bookseller and bibliophile. The English bibliographer and bibliophile Thomas Frognall Dibdin (1776-1847) wrote of him in the second volume of his *Bibliographical, Antiquarian and Picturesque Tour of France and Germany* (London, 1829) that "M. Chardin is the last surviving remains of the OLD SCHOOL of booksellers in Paris" whose "taste consists principally in a love of ornamented MSS. and printed books UPON VELLUM" (pp. 400-401). Chardin sold the book (along with more than 120 others; for a full list see Phillipps's *Catalogus librorum*, 1837, pp. 9-10, 32*) to Sir Thomas Phillipps in his sale on 9 February 1824; lot 329 in *Catalogue des livres rares et précieux, de manuscrits, de livres imprimés sur vélin, etc. de la bibliothèque de M. Chardin*, Paris, 1823 (p. 32 in this catalogue).
3. Belonged to Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872); his lion rampant inkstamp surmounting "Sir T. P / Middle Hill" and his number "795" appears on the recto of the second front flyleaf and the inscription "Phillips MS 795" appears on the recto of the third front flyleaf. Phillipps was an English antiquary and book collector renowned for having amassed the largest nineteenth-century collection of manuscripts. Fittingly self-described as a "vello-maniac," he collected over 100,000 manuscripts and in doing so nearly bankrupted himself and his family.
4. Phillipps sale, London, Sotheby's, April 30, 1903, lot 721 (*Bibliotheca Phillippica: Catalogue of a Further Portion of the Classical, Historical, Topographical, Genealogical and Other Manuscripts and Autograph Letters, of the Late Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bart. F.R.S. etc.*, p. 97).
5. Lot 62 in Maggs Bros. sale no. 395 in June of 1921; see *Manuscripts, Incunables, Woodcut Books, and Books from Early Presses*, London, 1920, p. 28.
6. Belonged to St. John's Kirk in Perth, Scotland; their MS 4; briefly described in Ker and Piper, 1992, p. 162.

TEXT

ff. 1-3v, [Dedicatory preface] incipit, "Clarissimo principi Ioanni à Lotharingia Cardinali Ioannes Sallineus. S. P. D. Cvm Daudis Cimhi in prophetas minores commentarios vertere, tibi que Princeps clarissime dicare instituissem ... a te non prorsus negligi intelligam. vale";

ff. 4-5v, *Argumentum*, incipit, "Qvo tempore hanc scripsit prophetiam Sophonias, erant ex Iudæis per multi ... longe abhorrens, non potuit";

ff. 6-20, [Commentary on Zephaniah 1] incipit, "Sermo domini cum Sophonia habitus, qui patrem quidem Chusi ... Quoniam consumptionem. 1. breui perdet omnes regionis incolas. Chal. vertit. prorsus absumet";

ff. 20-33v, [Commentary on Zephaniah 2] incipit, "Caput 2. Disquirite hæreant ne vllę in animis vestris labes ... Et nulla est alia præter me";

ff. 33v-47, [Commentary on Zephaniah 3] incipit, "Caput 3. Væ turpitudine fœdatæ et inquinatæ ... cum iod et hirec. *Finis*";

ff. 47v-48v, blank but ruled.

This manuscript contains the Book of Zephaniah (or Sophonias) in Latin with a commentary by Jean de Sallignac (identified in the dedication on f. 1 as "Ioannes Sallineus"). As Sallignac acknowledges in his dedicatory preface, this work draws on the commentary on the Hebrew Book of Zephaniah written by the renowned Hebrew grammarian and rabbinic scholar David Kimhi (c.1160-c.1235). Sallignac's commentary was probably produced in conjunction with the publication in 1539 of a Hebrew edition of the Book of Zephaniah with commentary, *Sophonias cum commentariis Rabbi David Kimbi* (printed in Paris by Robert Estienne), an edition to which Sallignac contributed, but this manuscript's Latin presentation of the text and commentary appear to be unique.

Descended from a noble family, Jean de Sallignac (d. 1563) was a monk of the Benedictine Abbey of Marmoutier, near Tours, who studied at the University of Paris where he earned a doctorate in theology. During his time at the University, Sallignac ran afoul of the Faculty of Theology on more than one occasion for his possession of books that were suspected of being heretical, and for his adherence to the new exegetical approach championed by humanists like Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, grounded in the philological study of the Bible. Though his own religious sympathies were at times in question, Sallignac was later called upon to arbitrate disputes arising from rising tensions between Catholics and Huguenots in France, most notably at the 1561 Colloquy of Poissy, where he was one of five doctors of theology invited by Catherine de Medici. He died in October of 1563 at the Collège de Marmoutier, in Paris.

Sallignac was a disciple of François Vatable (d. 1547), a French humanist and theologian learned in Greek and Hebrew, who was professor of Hebrew at the *Collège Royal* in Paris, where Sallignac was himself a lecturer in Hebrew. Vatable taught students to read the Hebrew Bible with a philological and grammatical emphasis characteristic of Catholic Hebrew scholarship, though Paris theologians objected to the teaching of the Bible outside of the Faculty of Theology. Vatable never published any of his own work, but his students contributed notes from his lectures to various editions of Biblical books – and two controversial Biblical editions – printed by Robert Estienne (1503-1559), including the *Sophonias cum commentariis Rabbi David Kimbi*. It is possible that this was the nature of Sallignac's involvement in the Hebrew edition of Zephaniah.

In his preface to the commentary on Zephaniah and in his focus on the particular language of the Hebrew original, Sallignac's work, like that of his other humanists, stressed the importance of recovering and reading biblical texts in their earlier or original languages. At the same time, he explained that his goal for this commentary is to offer a more approachable text, rendered largely in Latin and relatively unencumbered by "submolestæ istæ grammaticorum præceptiones" (somewhat troublesome rules of grammarians) (f. 2), so that he can disclose and explain the obscurities of Zephaniah's prophecies.

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