

**SAINT JEROME, *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum*; Liturgical Commentary by an unknown author**  
**In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment**  
**England, c. 1230-50**

ff. iv (i-ii, modern paper, iii-iv, earlier paper) + 136 + iv (i-ii, early paper, iii-iv, modern paper) on parchment, modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto, 1-94, 94bis-135, apparently complete (collation, i-v<sup>12</sup> vi<sup>12</sup> [-9 through 12 following f. 68, cancelled with no loss of text] vii-xi<sup>12</sup> xii<sup>12</sup> [-9 through 12, likely cancelled with no loss of text]), no catchwords or signatures, ruled in lead with the top two and bottom two horizontal rules full across and full-length single vertical bounding lines (justification, 122-118 x 82-80 mm), written below the top line in an upright gothic bookhand in twenty-three long lines, red rubrics, one-line alternately red and blue initials, two-line alternately red and blue initials with pen decoration in the contrasting color, f. 1, four-line parted red and blue initial with red and blue pen decoration, ff. 1, 68, 69, 135v, darkened, ff. 1v-2, and 94, stained, outer margins, ff. 69v-70, larger stains over text, which remains legible, ff. 50-59v, partially detached, cockled, trimmed, f. 1, heading cut away, f. 130, part of an addition to the text in the bottom margin trimmed, occasional minor loss of pen decoration at the bottom edge, but otherwise in very good condition. Bound in nineteenth-century brown leather, marbled pastedowns and endpapers, smooth spine with title in gilt, "English illuminated Manuscript/ c. 1260," slight wear to corners and edges, boards bowed, but in good condition. Dimensions, 145 x 109 mm.

This is the only known copy of an unpublished, and indeed unstudied, liturgical commentary by an anonymous author, possibly the author's own copy, together with Jerome's glossary of biblical names. Its small format suggests it was used by a well-educated cleric (associated with Oxford?), who took his pastoral responsibilities seriously. Its study offers the opportunity to make an important contribution to our knowledge of the liturgy and pastoral care in England in the thirteenth century.

## PROVENANCE

1. The evidence of the script and pen decoration support an origin in England in the second quarter of the thirteenth century; the script is written below the top ruled line, suggesting a date after c. 1230, but the script and decoration are conservative, and the manuscript may have been copied not long after that date. On f. 135, discussing the rainy hyades (Greek nymphs who were changed into stars, and were said to bring rain) there is a reference to a word in English, "scures," probably "sciures" or showers ("... que lingua anglica possunt dici scures ..."). Given its contents, it is tempting to suggest that this manuscript was made for a cleric studying in Oxford, a city that certainly had an established commercial book trade at this date. The script generally supports this provenance, although without additional evidence it is only a possibility.

The format of this manuscript, it should be noted, is unusually small, clearly setting it apart from earlier monastic manuscripts of similar texts (cf. for example Yale, Beinecke Library, MS 315, that includes Johannes Belet's *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*, from the late twelfth century, 232 x 161 mm.), and from most manuscripts including texts used at the University. Its small size would have made it a convenient book for a cleric to have at

hand while travelling (and we can imagine from the wrinkling of the parchment that it may have been exposed to rain, although this of course could have been a modern occurrence).

2. Erased inscription f. 135v, "Thomas <...> Belcher his book 1822" (Ker and Piper, 1992, p. 571).
3. Front flyleaf, f. iii verso, engraved bookplate with motto, "Libera terra liberque anima," of Francis Edward Freeland (1870-1946), Major General of the British Army and a known collector.
4. Clipping from Quaritch Sales catalogue glued to front flyleaf, f. iv, describing it as "Promptuarium clericorum," England, about 1260-70 (then bound in "old calf").
5. Belonged to the Wigan Public Libraries in the United Kingdom, where it was acquisition number 36,646; in ink, front flyleaf, f. iii verso: "Bought from Quaritch, October, 1899, H <T>. F." (Henry Tennyson Folkard, librarian of Wigan, who was responsible for the purchase of a number of medieval manuscripts); front flyleaf, f. i verso, stamp from "Wigan Public Libraries"; front cover, sticker labeled, "Case 13"; two library exhibition labels laid in; in ink, front flyleaf, f. iv verso: "36,646"; described while at the Wigan library (Ker and Piper, 1991, p. 571).

## TEXT

ff. 1-68v, *Incipiunt interpretationes hebraicorum nominum secundum Ieronimum. De libro Genesis, incipit, "Athiopiam [sic] tenebras uel calignem, Assiriorum dirigencium ...; ... f. 67, De Apocalipsi Iohannis, incipit, "Asia elatio. Amen uere siue fideliter ... Sodoma pecori tacenti" [ends top f. 68; remainder and f. 68v, blank];*

Jerome, *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum* or *Liber de nominibus Hebraicis*, here lacking Jerome's preface and beginning with the first entry for Genesis; ed. P. de Lagarde, 1959, using five manuscripts from the late eight through the fourteenth century; see also Dekkers, 1961, no. 581; Stegmüller, 1950-1980, no. 3305, listing eight manuscripts; earlier edition in Migne. PL, vol. 23, coll. 771-858; English translation of the preface by Fremantle (see Online Resources).

The text of Genesis was copied out of order so that on f. 6v, "Magdael" [ed. p. 69, line 26] is followed by "Rema" [ed. p. 70, line 24], then continues to f. 7v, "Sennaar" [ed. p. 71, line 16], which is followed by the missing entries, "Madianei" to "Rebba" [sic, for Rebecca, ed. 70, line 25], followed by a few entries for S, then continuing with T through Z, followed on f. 9rv with the missing entries for S ("Sydoma-Semrom" [ed., pp. 71, line 17-72, line 11]). Exodus begins on f. 9v. Generally seems to follow the edition (some entries omitted, many spelling changes); Apocalypse lacks the final entry for "Zabulon" in the edition (p. 160, line 8), and the entries for the apocryphal epistle of Barnabas found in some manuscripts are not present here (ed. p. 161).

Jerome's *Book of Interpretations of Hebrew Names* is a glossary that explains the etymologies of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek proper names in the Bible. It was written by Jerome c. 389/391 shortly after he moved to Bethlehem, in preparation for his translation of the Bible from Hebrew. The order of the work is partially alphabetical, beginning with the names beginning

with "a" in Genesis, followed by "b" and so forth through the alphabet, and then beginning again with the entries beginning with "a" in Exodus, and continuing through the biblical books, ending with the Apocalypse. The entries for each letter however are not completely alphabetical, but are instead arranged in the order that they occur in the biblical text (so for example, the entries for Genesis begin: "Aethiopiae" [Gen. 2:13], "Assyriorum" [Gen. 2:14], "Adam" [Gen. 2:16], "Abel" [Gen. 4:2], and so forth).

The text was a popular one, and survives in numerous manuscripts. It was expanded and re-arranged in a number of versions in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The most widely circulated version beginning "Aaz apprehedens," found in almost all copies of the Bible after c. 1230, in contrast with Jerome's text is completely alphabetical, a-z, and is, in addition, much expanded over Jerome's original (discussed in Dahan, 1996, d'Esneval, 1981, Murano, 2010, and Poleg, 2013). It is therefore of interest to have a copy from this date, just at the time when we might suppose that Jerome's original version was beginning to be eclipsed (Jerome's version in fact continued to be copied through the fifteenth century, testifying to its usefulness, and perhaps the prestige of Jerome's name, despite the circulation of newer versions).

The Church Father Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus (c. 347- c. 419) was known as "vir trilinguis" due to his knowledge of Hebrew, Greek and Latin. In 382 Pope Damasus commissioned him to write a new translation of the New Testament and the Psalms. Subsequently, in 388, he settled in Bethlehem, and embarked on a new translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew. The *Liber interpretationes hebraicorum nominum*, included in this manuscript, together with his *Hebraicae quaestiones in libro Geneseos* ("Book of Hebrew Questions on Genesis"), and his translation and adaptation of an earlier work by Eusebius, the *Liber de situ et nominibus locorum hebraicorum* ("On Sites and Names of Hebrew Places"), are all closely focussed on the text of the Bible, and were clearly products of Jerome's study of the biblical text and of Hebrew in preparation for his translation.

ff. 69-134, Liturgical Commentary;

ff. 69-78v, incipit, "Locorum que orationi sunt dicata alia sunt sacra alia sancta alia religiosa sacra ... ; ... f. 70v, incipit, "Ieiunimum aliud est carnis aliud mentis ... si cum eis regnare uelimus"; f. 71, incipit, "Festum philippi et iacobi semper inter pascha et et pentecostes celebrator quod est tempus leticie et gaudii ... Nota quod in quibusdam ecclesiis sepulture uenduntur et pro campanarum pulsatione donationes queruntur peccatum est ac si sacramenta uenderentur. Nota quod nocturna ..."; f. 73, incipit, "Beatus benedictus officium noctis aliter celebrant nec tamen dissentit ... Deinde secuntur sanctorum suffragia quia quamdiu uiuimus tanquam in lubrico posui sumus et a demonibus impugnamus et ideo sanctorum suffragiis semper egemus."

The treatise begins with a chapter on places where prayers are said (a church, temple, tabernacle of God, monastery, etc.), followed by a discussion of liturgical days, processions, fasting (with historical background), including a discussing the practice of fasting on various feasts, including a note that it is wrong to accept money for burial or ringing of the bells. A discussion of the Divine Office begins on f. 72, defining a liturgical nocturn, and noting that the Office described by Benedict is different (i.e. from the secular Office described here with nine psalms and lessons).

There are many similarities (and some direct word for word borrowings) to Johannes Beleth, *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*; ed. Douteil, 1976, and in Migne, PL, vol. 202, chapters 2, 3, 7-9, 20, and 23. The note in this manuscript stating that some churches charge for funerals or ringing of the bells – which is forbidden since one cannot sell a sacrament -- has no parallel in this place in Beleth's text, and reflects the author's pastoral concerns.

The author also drew on other sources; for example, the last sentence in the section of the Divine Office discussing suffrages on f. 78v, is also found in Sicardus Cremonensis, *Mitræ sive Summa de officiis*... [Migne, PL, v. 213, col. 166a].

ff. 78v-93v, incipit, "Officium misse uel missa dicitur a principio usque ad finem ... quos habemus in glorificatione consortes";

Commentary on the Mass including chapters on liturgical vestments (the alb, manipulum, stola), the three languages of the Mass (Hebrew, Greek and Latin), and then a step by step discussion of the parts of the Mass and their meaning, concluding with some legislation, for example, on f. 93, that according to canonical law, no priest can say Mass unless at least two people are present – the priest and a respondent.

The beginning of this section, f. 78v, is based on Beleth, ch. 34, and is followed by eight chapters including discussions of vestments that may be based on Innocent III, *Mysteria evangelicæ legis et sacramenti eucharistiae* (Migne, PL vol. 217:col. 792C-793C) ch. 49-52, and 54; on f. 81, the chapter on the three languages of the Mass is paralleled in ch. 12 of *De officiis ecclesiasticis* possibly by Robertus Paululus (ed. Migne, PL vol. 177, col. 418A), followed by chapters covering topics discussed in Beleth chapters 36-49.

ff. 93v-94, incipit, "In vesperis cantant clerici tamen v psalmos ... clamant polycronitudo basileos id est multum tempores uiuat rex noster";

Chapters on Vespers and Compline, and then on the ending of prayers; cf. Beleth, chapters 52-54.

ff. 94v-132, incipit, "Tempore aduentuum usque ad natiuitatem domini recolitur tempus reuocationis que facta est per legem ..."; ... f. 131v, incipit, "Triplex est ratio quare ad missam mortuorum ... secundum animam tamen uiuunt";

The concluding section is more difficult to classify, but includes a wide range of liturgical topics, including liturgical readings for different times of the year, and the books used for readings (including a chapter on the Bible), chapters on the sung portions of the Office and Mass, and a discussion of the liturgical year, noting principal liturgical occasions and how they are observed, including a very detailed discussion of holy week.

This section follows the structure of Beleth's text (beginning with his chapter 58), but the sections within the text for which no sources were found are of special note. Many of these passages are distinctly homiletic in character, and are almost short sermon outlines; for example on f. 97v, the chapter begins with the observation that, "There are moreover two whose works are used most frequently in Church, David – an adulterer, betrayer, and murderer, and Paul, who

was the worst persecutor, so that others may not despair no matter how they sin," and then continues with a short homily on the topic.

Other chapters in this vein include a discussion of the reasons why there are four fasts during the year (f. 126, "Multa sunt rationes quare quarter in anno fiant ieunia ..."), Verses on f. 130, incipit, "De iacobus binis non abigat amodo qui uis/ Hic satus alpheo reliqua suit et zebedeo/ Quem prius audisti fratrem memor assere christe ...", and on the four ways of praying for the dead, f. 130v, "Quatuor modis subuenitur mortuis oratione elemosina ieiunio missarum celebratione ..."

ff. 132-134, incipit, "In festo sancti michaelis solvitur merces servorum. Si seruus bene meruerit plenam mercedem accipit ..."; 133v, incipit, "Nvptie facte sunt in cana galilee et erat mater ihesu ibi ... et non causa libidinis explende":

A passage on the feast of St. Michael, homiletic in character (rents were traditionally paid on the feast of St. Michael), followed by a discussion of marriage.

Although we do not know who composed this treatise, it must date after c. 1200, given the sources used, and must be by an author with access to the most important liturgical commentaries of his day, possibly someone associated with the University in Oxford. It seems likely that this may be the author's copy of the text, or if not, certainly one that dates very soon after its composition.

Even this preliminary survey of the text can conclude that the primary source for this treatise is Johannes Beleth, *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*, written in Paris c. 1160-65; it was an extremely influential text that survives in around 180 manuscripts (ed. Douteil, 1976). It is not, however, simply an abbreviation of Beleth's text. The author clearly knew other treatises (although none apparently cited by name), including the *Mitræ* by Sicardus of Cremona (1155–1215), an Italian prelate, historian and writer (ed. Gábor Sarbak and Lorenz Weinrich, 2008), a work of uncertain authorship, possibly by Robertus Paululus (c. 1105-1150) (printed in Migne, PL, vol. 177), and the treatise on the Mass and the Eucharist by Pope Innocent III (1160-1216), *Mysteria evangelicæ legis et sacramenti eucharistiae* (printed in Migne, PL, vol. 217). Further study is necessary, however, to discover all the author's sources, and to uncover the passages that are original to his text.

f. 134rv, incipit, "Erunt homines equales angelis. Si queritis quot homines salui erunt audite gregorium, Tanta illuc ascensura creditur ..."

Notes on angels.

ff. 134v-135, incipit, "Primum nomen dei apud hebreos est hely ... Item omne nomen dei ineffabile quia quantus deus sit dici non potest";

On the ten names of God.

f. 135rv, incipit, "Yades stele sunt in fronte tauri site. Dicte ab yeros quod est ymber quia in eorum ortu scilicet in vere ymbres id est serotine pluuiæ nascuntur. Que lingua anglica possunt dici scruces ..."; f. 135, incipit, "Ex binis constat elementis ..., Si capud ebdomade mensis sit

prima dierum. Ystorie doceas ceptis insistere clerum. Si lecus est resonent eadem psallendi in ore. Principio mensis prima feria proprioere."

Verses, including verses on the rainy hyades.

At least since 1899, when the manuscript was sold by Quaritch, it has been described as a "promptuarium clericorum" (a store-room for clerics), presumably echoing the title (*Promptuarium parvulorum clericorum*) of the first English-Latin dictionary written c. 1440 by Glafridus, a Dominican Friar, and printed by Wynkyn de Worde (and others) and widely disseminated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The use of this supplied title is, however, misleading, since the manuscript in reality contains a copy of Jerome's glossary of Hebrew Names, and an extremely interesting anonymous liturgical commentary – almost certainly unpublished and unstudied. Close examination of this text would be a new and interesting witness to the history of the liturgy and pastoral care in England in the thirteenth century. Manuscripts of this date and type – especially from England-- are very rare on the market.

Liturgical commentaries on the Mass, or more comprehensively on the liturgy as a whole (often entitled commentaries on the ecclesiastical Office, which included the Mass), were an established genre in that can be traced from the ninth-century writings by Amalarius of Metz (c. 770/5-850/3), culminating in the treatise by William Durandus (1230-1296), *Rationale divinarum*, its final form dating c. 1294-1296, the best known medieval liturgical commentary. As a genre these treatises aimed not only to describe liturgical practices, but also to explore their allegorical significance and thus communicate their ultimate meaning.

In the wake of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, called by Pope Innocent III (Pope 1198-1216) as a response to the threat of heresy, especially the Cathar heresy in southern France, there was a renewed effort on the part of the church to meet the pastoral needs of the faithful, stressing the importance of Communion, confession and preaching. This concern for a vital, reformed church, led by an educated clergy, is reflected in the texts included in this manuscript. Jerome's *Interpretation of Hebrew Names*, certainly used in commentaries, was also an invaluable aid in composing sermons. The liturgical commentary answered the needs of priests who needed both to understand the liturgy and its meaning and symbolism, and to be well-equipped to preach to the faithful – both duties well-served by the texts in this manuscript.

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