



## UNIVERSALITAS & PERVASIVITAS

*il costituirsi e diffondersi della S.J. e suoi echi (1540 - 1773)*  
di A. Pisani

Schede autori Sotto attacco

### Augustin Calmet

“Celebrated exegetist; b. at Ménil-la-Horgne, near Commercy, Lorraine, France, 26 Feb., 1672; d. at the abbey of Senones, near Saint-Didié, 25 Oct., 1757. He was educated at the Benedictine priory of Breuil, and in 1688 joined the same order in the Abbey of St-Mansuy at Toul, where he was admitted to profession 23 Oct. of the following year. After his ordination, 17 March, 1696, he was appointed to teach philosophy and theology at the Abbey of Moyen-Moutier. Here with the help of his brethren he began to gather the material for his commentary of the Bible, which he completed at Münster in Alsace where he was sent in 1704 as sub-prior and professor of exegesis.

The first volume appeared in Paris in 1707 with the title "Commentaire littéral sur tous les livres de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament"; the last of the twenty-three quarto volumes, owing to various delays, was published only in 1716. To satisfy the demand for the work a second edition in twenty-six volumes quarto was issued 1714-1720, and a third, enlarged, edition in nine volumes folio 1724-1726.

A Latin translation by Mansi was published at Lucca, 1730-1738, in nine folio volumes, with new editions at Augsburg (1756, eight volumes folio) and Würzburg (1789, nineteen volumes quarto); another Latin translation by F. Vecelli appeared at Venice and Frankfort (1730, six volumes folio). This shows how much the commentary was esteemed. But while it was received with high praise, even by Protestants, critics were not wanting, among whom may be mentioned the Oratorian [Richard Simon](#). It cannot be denied that in spite of its merits and great erudition it is in some respects open to criticism. Difficult passages are often passed over lightly, and too frequently different explanations of a text are set down without a hint to the reader as to which is the right or preferable one.

The work inaugurated a new method of Biblical exegesis, inasmuch as its author very sensibly departed from the general custom of giving an allegorical (mystical) and tropological (moral) interpretation besides the literal, and confined himself to the latter. The most valuable part of the commentary were the introductory prefaces to the several books and 114 learned dissertations on special topics. These he published separately with nineteen new ones in three volumes, under the title "Dissertations qui peuvent servir de prologomènes à l'Écriture Sainte" (Paris, 1720).





## UNIVERSALITAS & PERVASIVITAS

*il costituirsi e diffondersi della S.J. e suoi echi (1540 - 1773)*  
di A. Pisani

Schede autori Sotto attacco

The collection met with such success that two editions were printed at Amsterdam in 1722, the title being changed to "Trésors d'antiquités sacrées et profanes". It was translated into English (Oxford, 1726), Latin (by Mansi, Lucca, 1729), Dutch (Rotterdam, 1728), German (Bremen, 1738, 1744, and 1747) and Italian. In the meanwhile he had prepared two other works closely connected with Biblical exegesis: (1) "Histoire de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament et des Juifs" (Paris, 1718), which went through several editions, and was translated into English (London, 1740), German (Augsburg, 1759) and Latin (ib., 1788); (2) "Dictionnaire historique, critique, chronologique, géographique et littéral de la Bible" (Paris, 1720, two vols. folio), a supplement (also folio) was added in 1728. An improved and enlarged edition in four folio volumes was published in 1730, which has several times been reprinted, the last time in Migne, "Encyclopédie théologique", I-IV. It, too, was translated into Latin and the principal European languages. The English translation by D'Oyley and Colson (1732), revised and with additions by Taylor (1795), went through many editions in a larger and compendious form. In his later years Calmet published some further Biblical dissertations in the "Bible de Vence" (1742).

Among his other published works may be mentioned:

(1) "Histoire universelle sacrée et profane, depuis le commencement du monde jusqu'à nos jours" (Strasburg, 1735, quarto), in which he follows the ideas enunciated in Bossuet's "Discours sur l'histoire universelle"; (2) "Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de la Lorraine" (Nancy, 1728), of great value for the history of that province; (3) "Bibliothèque Lorraine" (Nancy, 1751), containing his autobiography (pp. 209-217); (4) "Commentaire littéral historique et moral sur la règle de S. Benoît" (Paris, 1734). Calmet was a pious religious as well as a learned man. In recognition of these qualities he was elected prior of Lay-Saint-Christophe in 1715, abbot of St-Léopold at Nancy in 1719, and of Senones in 1729; he was also twice entrusted with the office of president or superior general of the congregation. Benedict XIII wished to confer episcopal dignity upon him, but his humility could not be brought to accept the honour."

### Sources

Fangé, Vie du R. P. D. Aug. Calmet (Senones, 1762); Maggiolo, Eloge historique de D. A. Calmet (Nancy, 1839); Digot, Notice biographique et littéraire sur D. Augustin Calmet (Nancy, 1860); Bazelaire, Dom Calmet et la Congr. de Saint-Vanne in Le Correspondant (1845), 703-727, 846-874; Hurter, Nomenclator; Magenot in Vig., Dict. de la Bible, II, 72 sq.

### About this page:

APA citation. Bechtel, F. (1908). Dom Augustin Calmet. In The Catholic Encyclopedia. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved June 5, 2010 from New Advent:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03189a.htm>

MLA citation. Bechtel, Florentine. "Dom Augustin Calmet." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 3. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908. 5 Jun. 2010 <

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03189a.htm> > - Transcription. This article was transcribed for New Advent by William D. Neville - Ecclesiastical approbation. Nihil Obstat. November 1, 1908. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York.

**Vedi anche:** [profilo biografico di Augustin Calmet nel sito dell'Enciclopedia Treccani](#)