

B.EP.301 Aufbaumodul 2: The Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England

Term: Winter 2013
Time: Thu 12–14
Room: KWZ 0.606
Credits: 6
Prerequisites: Aufbaumodul 1

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Course Description

For all the importance of the New Testament to the liturgy and salvation history, the text of the Old Testament was clearly of great interest to the Anglo-Saxons. It is the stories of the Hebrew Bible which survive in imposing works of alliterative verse, while homilists too turned regularly to Old Testament tales and prophecies. In this seminar, we will seek to discover what drew Anglo-Saxon authors and preachers to the Old Testament.

To this end, we will brush up on patriarchal commentaries and Scripture itself before investigating an array of Old English prose and verse inspired by the narratives of the Hebrew Bible. Navigating homilies, commentaries, and verse retellings, we will address such matters as hermeneutics, foundation myth, heroism, paganism, and gender, while adducing manuscripts, illustrations, and monastic culture. Students will gain a familiarity with Old Testament narrative and its orthodox interpretation, but above all they will develop an insight into the minds and imaginations of Anglo-Saxon clerics and poets who saw a market for these texts.

Assessment

Written exam (90 minutes).

Required Texts and Resources

Texts for this course will be made available on StudIP.

As part of this course, students are expected to familiarize themselves with the most influential passages of the Old Testament. They are advised to use the Douay-Rheims translation, which is based on the Vulgate Latin Bible that was in wide use in the Middle Ages. Other translations are likewise admissible, provided they include the apocrypha. Douay-Rheims is available alongside an early modern redaction of the Latin Vulgate Bible at drbo.org and as a mobile app, though the most authoritative text of the medieval Vulgate is the “Stuttgart Bible”:

Weber, Robert, ed. *Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*. 5th ed. rev. by Roger Gryson. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007.

Students are advised to refresh their memory of the following passages and books:

Gn 1–2	Creation	Ex 3–4	Moses and the burning bush
Gn 3	Fall of Man	Ex 3–12	Ten plagues of Egypt
Gn 4	Killing of Abel	Ex 12	Passover and Exodus
Gn 6–8	Noah's Flood	Ex 14	Crossing of the Red Sea
Gn 11	Tower of Babel	Ex 20	Ten Commandments
Gn 12–21	Abraham and Sarah	Jo 6	Fall of Jericho
Gn 18–19	Sodom and Gomorrah	Jgs 13–16	Samson and Delilah
Gn 19	Lot	1 Kgs 3	Solomon and the newborn baby
Gn 22	Abraham and Isaac	Jdt	Judith
Gn 27	Isaac's blessing of Jacob	Jb	Job
Gn 37–45	Joseph	Jon	Jonah
		Dn	Daniel

Schedule

wk	date	topic	reading	cf.
1	24 Oct	Basic Concepts		
2	31 Oct	Translation & Mediacy I	<i>ÆGenPref</i> ll. 1–57; Anderson	
3	7 Nov	Translation & Mediacy II	<i>ÆGenPref</i> ll. 58–122	
4	14 Nov	Patristics	Gregory, <i>Dialogues</i> (excerpt); <i>HomU 21</i>	
5	21 Nov	Creation	Augustine, <i>De civitate Dei</i> (excerpt); Ælfric, <i>Hexameron</i> (in translation)	Gn 1–3; Jn 1:1–5
6	28 Nov	The Fall of Angels and Man	<i>GenB</i> (i.e. ll. 235–851, in translation)	Gn 3
7	5 Dec	<i>Quid Hinieldus cum Christo?</i>	<i>GenA</i> ll. 1960–2095	Gn 14
8	12 Dec	<i>Exodus</i>	<i>Ex</i> ll. 41b–141	Ex 3–12
9	19 Dec	The Crossing of the Red Sea	<i>Ex</i> ll. 446–547	Ex 13–14
10	9 Jan	<i>Daniel</i>	<i>Dan</i> ll. 495–644	Dn 1–5
11	16 Jan	Apocrypha	<i>Jud</i> ll. 1–111a	Jdt 1–13
12	23 Jan	Formulae & Conventions	<i>Jud</i> ll. 111b–235	Jdt 14
13	30 Jan	Wrap-Up	<i>Jud</i> ll. 236–349	Jdt 14–16
14	6 Feb	EXAM		

Further Reading

Anderson, Rachel. “The Old Testament Homily: Ælfric as Biblical Translator.” In *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation*, edited by Aaron J. Kleist, 121–42. Studies in the Early Middle Ages 17. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007.

Anlezark, Daniel, ed. and trans. *Old Testament Narratives*. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Doane, A.N., ed. *Genesis A: A New Edition*. Rev. ed. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013.

-----, ed. *The Saxon Genesis: An Edition of the West Saxon Genesis B and the Old Saxon Vatican Genesis*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991.

Farrell, R.T., ed. *Daniel and Azarias*. London: Methuen, 1974.

Fox, Michael, and Manish Sharma, eds. *Old English Literature and the Old Testament*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012.

Fulk, R.D., and Christopher M. Cain. “Biblical Literature.” In *A History of Old English Literature*, 2nd ed., 157–76. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Hall, J.R. “Old English *Exodus* and the Sea of Contradiction.” *Mediaevalia* 9 (1983): 25–44.

-----, “The Old English Epic of Redemption: The Theological Unity of MS Junius 11.” *Traditio* 32 (1976): 185–208.

Hill, Thomas D. “The Fall of Angels and Man in the Old English *Genesis B*.” In *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation: For John C. McGalliard*, edited by Lewis A. Nicholson and Dolores Warwick Frese, 279–90. Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975.

Howe, Nicholas. *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.

Karkov, Catherine. *Text and Picture in Anglo-Saxon England: Narrative Strategies in the Junius 11 Manuscript*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Lucas, Peter J., ed. *Exodus*. London: Methuen, 1977.

Marsden, Richard. “The Bible in English in the Middle Ages.” In *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, edited by Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly, 272–95. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

-----, *The Old English Heptateuch and Ælfric’s Libellus de veteri testamento et novo*. Vol. 1: *Introduction and Text*. Early English Text Society 330. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

- Marsden, Richard. *The Text of the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England*. Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 15. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Orchard, Andy. "Conspicuous Heroism: Abraham, Prudentius, and the Old English Verse *Genesis*." In *Heroes and Heroines in Medieval English Literature: a Festschrift Presented to André Crépin on the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday*, edited by Leo Carruthers, 45–58. Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: Brewer, 1994.
- Raith, Josef. "Ælfric's Share in the Old English Pentateuch." *Review of English Studies* n.s. 3, no. 12 (October 1952): 305–14.
- Remley, Paul G. *Old English Biblical Verse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Tolkien, J.R.R., and Joan Turville-Petre, eds. *The Old English Exodus*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1981.