

**399. Oxford, Bodleian Library**  
**MS Laud Misc. 509 (1042)**  
“OE Heptateuch”

With **248** London, British Library  
Cotton Vespasian D. xxi (Part 2)  
[Ker 344, Gneuss 657]

**HISTORY:** Written in second half of 11c. The manuscript contains the OE prose translations of the Pentateuch, Ælfric’s abbreviated version of Joshua, Ælfric’s homily on Judges, and Ælfric’s letters to Æthelwærd, Wulfgeat, and Sigweard. Of the Pentateuch, only the first half of Genesis (= chaps. 1–24) and second half of Numbers (= chaps. 13–26) are likely to be by Ælfric himself; the rest is by several anonymous translators (Jost 1927: 218–19; Raith 1952; Morrell 1965: 12–13; Marsden 2000); the translations follow the Vulgate text with a few Old Latin “interventions” (Marsden 1994). Text of Laud is Crawford’s “L”, Pope’s “Z” (Pope 1967–68: 85). Laud once formed a single volume with Part 2 of BL Cotton Vespasian D. xxi [248] (OE prose Life of St. Guthlac), which was separated by Cotton between 1603 and December 1606 (Tite 1992: 136–37); there is a separate contents list for the Laud part (f. i verso) and Vespasian (second old flyleaf), both reflecting the post-separation situations. The unseparated volume was acquired by Cotton from the Old Royal Library; it is no. 129, “Bookes written in tholde Saxon tonge two. thone of the Pentatuiuk and saints Lyves, thother of medicine” in the pre-1542 catalogue (Public Record Office, Augmentation Office, Misc. Books 160 [E. 315/160]); “129” appears on f. 2r, top in Laud, partly cut off (see Carley 1992: 64; Ker reads “159”; see also Ker 1938: 132–33). The “Book of Medicine” is “Bald’s Leechbook,” BL Royal 12 D. xvii [298], which shows “129” on f. 1r (it could not have been part of the same physical book since it is not only much earlier than Laud/Vespasian but also of a much larger format). By the time of the 1621 Cottonian catalogue it is described as “Liber Genesis et pentateuchum Saxonice bound with my armes and claspes in 4to” (BL Harley 6018, f. 148v; Claudius is no. 81 and Vespasian is part of no. 80 on f. 53r). Cotton lent the part now Laud Misc. 509 to “Mr Lyll of Cambrig” [William Lisle] before 23

April 1621, when it had still not been returned. Ker ascribes to Lisle the responsibility for loss and transfer to Laud and thence to the Bodleian, but Richard James, who did not work for Cotton until 1624, copied extracts from Laud when it was still in the Cotton collection (Bodleian MS James 18 [3855], f. 66r). From correspondence between Lisle and Cotton preserved in BL Cotton Julius C. iii, it is apparent that Lisle returned the book before 1625 (Lisle's 1623 title page conspicuously proclaims that he had returned Laud ["The Originall remaining still to be seene in S<sup>r</sup> Robert Cottons Librarie, at the end of his lesser copie of the Saxon Pentatevch"; see Crawford 1922: 15], but he borrowed it again, still having it on 16 March 1630/1, two months before Cotton's death (details in Graham 2000: 285–92; see also Ker 1938: 133; Tite 1992: 110–11). Lisle had out in 1623 and returned about 1625 Cotton's illustrated Hexateuch (now BL Cotton Claudius B. iv [182]). Lisle collated Laud and Claudius and made numerous entries in both manuscripts, including an extensive addition of OE text from Claudius on f. 24r-v (Crawford 1922: 3; Graham 2000: 293–302). Lisle published from Laud his translation, *A Saxon Treatise concerning the Old and New Testament* [= the Letter to Sigeward, item 10 below] (London: John Haviland for Henrie Seile, 1623 [STC 160]). Archbishop Laud obtained the Heptateuch from Lisle's library after his death in 1637, along with three other books of his (Laud Misc. 201 [Lisle's transcription and translation of an OE psalter], 381 [ff. 2v–116r are Lisle's extensive transcriptions from Laud 509], and 636 [401]; on Lisle's unrealized plans for more extensive publication of OE biblical texts, see Graham 2000: 309–13). Laud's inscription of ownership is on f. 1r, dated 1638, and the book retains its original Laudian binding; it was given by him to the Bodleian in 1639. Formerly Laud E. 19 (on pastedown, inside front cover).

**CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION:** iv + 141 + ii; foliated i–iv, 1–143. On ff. 120–141 paginated 1–43 (versos only, 1–5) and cancelled on rectos, a feature also found in Part 1 (ff. 1–17) of *Vespasian*. Both the foliation and the pagination in Laud appear to be in the same hand and similar to Lisle's (the pagination coincides with the text he edited), while the pagination and foliation are different and distinct hands in *Vespasian* and neither resembles Lisle's. Flyleaves are early modern vellum, all probably together when book was in Cotton's possession, now upside down and reversed (see flyleaf i verso, which was a pastedown at some earlier time and has a note to a binder). Since the time of the reversal of ff. i–iv, they and f. 1 seem to have undergone water

damage together and f. 1 has been repaired with similar vellum at an early date. The flyleaves do not share the worm damage of ff. 1ff. F. i has on the verso (upside-down) a Cottonian "Catalogus Tractatus" with the last item, Ælfric's 'de veteri Testamento et Nouo', running to 'fol. 141'. Fragments of pasteboard adhering to f. iv verso suggest it served as pastedown in the Cottonian binding (Graham 2000: 292), and this side still shows partly legible instructions to a binder. F. i recto has a table of contents added by Lisle, 'The Saxon pentateuch. &ct.', presumably after this part left the Cotton collection: "It would appear that L'Isle must have removed Cotton's binding from the volume and given it a binding of his own, retaining and reusing Cotton's endleaves in the process, but turning them over and around" (Graham 2000: 293). Ff. 142–143 are early modern vellum back flyleaves.

Parchment mostly stiff with a fair sheen but varies considerably in quality. Page size 211 x 137 mm. (f. 131 trimmed off irregularly at top). Writing area 160 x 90 mm. Pricked (pricks about 7 mm. in from the edge) and ruled for 29 lines on ff. 1–33 and for 26 lines on ff. 34–141 (double bounding verticals in both margins). Main hand has small, regular ductus, continuing throughout except for two brief hand changes, at f. 15r/8–v/11 and another at f. 17r/11–23 (to 'arian') (apparently same pen and ink at those points). The main hand also wrote the "Guthlac" text in Cotton Vespasian D. xxi [248]. Main ink varies from very dark brown to light brown (lighter towards the end of the book). Initials in green or brownish-red, interpretive rubrics in alternating lines of metallic silver and vegetable red. OE text glossed heavily but intermittently in Latin from the Vulgate by a nearly contemporary Anglo-Caroline hand (ff. 3r–5v, 18v–23v, 50r–61v, 65v–67r, 69rv, 72r, 73v–76r, 82r–86v, 91v–97v, 98v–104v, 108v–109r), including several OE words, ff. 66v/6, 112r/8 (index to Latin gloss, Smith 1985). Added running heads and marginal indices of 13c/14c in lead and ink. An early modern hand imitating Insular minuscule (Lisle) has added corrections and additions from Claudius B. iv in OE, e.g., ff. 5v, bottom, 24rv, 75v, 78v, 79r, 84v, 85r, 98r, 100v, 106r, 123v, 124r. Same hand also noted the misbound folio 133 (supplying catchwords on ff. 132v, 133v) and began to number the chapters and verses of Genesis (ff. 3r–12v) but soon gave it up. 17c leather binding with Laud's arms, in poor condition (front and back covers detached). Previously, Laud part had been rebound by Cotton in his arms (see above).

**COLLATION:** I<sup>10</sup> 6 gone (ff. 1–9); II–V<sup>8</sup> (ff. 10–41); VI<sup>8</sup> 4 and 5 half-sheets (ff. 42–49); VII<sup>8</sup> (ff. 50–57); VIII<sup>8</sup> 3 and 6 half-sheets (ff. 58–65); IX<sup>8</sup> (ff.

66–73); **X**<sup>8</sup> 3 and 6 half-sheets (ff. 74–81); **XI**<sup>8</sup> 3 and 6 half-sheets (ff. 82–89); **XII**<sup>8</sup> 4 and 6 half-sheets (ff. 90–97); **XIII**<sup>10</sup> 5 and 6 half-sheets (ff. 98–107); **XIV**<sup>8</sup> (ff. 108–115); **XV**<sup>8</sup> 3 and 5 half-sheets (ff. 116–123); **XVI**<sup>8</sup> 3 and 6 half-sheets (ff. 124–131); **XVII**<sup>10</sup> 9 and 10 added half-sheets; resewn as quire of 10, but originally a quire of 8, with present 9 and 10 belonging with Quire **I** of Vespasian; f. 133 is misbound and belongs after f. 139 (ff. 132–141). See the “Collation” of BL, Cotton Vespasian D. xxi [248].

**CONTENTS:** (contents ed. Thwaites 1698 [except items 9 and 10], based on Laud; and Crawford 1922 [except item 9], based on BL Cotton Claudius B. iv [182], collated with Laud)

1. ff. 1r-3r/18 Ælfric, “Preface to Genesis” (Letter to Æthelwærd): **INCIPIT PREFATIO GENESIS ANGLICE** | [Æ]LFRIC MUNUC GRET ÆDELWÆRD EALDORMANN EAD[MOD]|lice. þu bæde me leof þ<æt> ic sceolde ðe awendan of | [ly]dene on englisc þa boc genesis’ [beginning damaged and letters lost near right edge, lines 1–12 of f. 1r and on corresponding lines of f. 1v] (ed. Wilcox 1994: 116–19).
2. ff. 3r/18–37r/23 Genesis: **INCIPIT LIBER GENESIS ANGLICE** | ‘ON ANGINNE GESCEOP GOD HEOFENAN AND EORÐAN. SEO EORÐE | soþlice wæs ydel 7 æmtig’ (gl: ‘erat i<n> anis 7 uacua’). [Divided into main sections with rubrics at ff. 6r/21, 9r/23, and 24v/18 (see Withers 1999: 116–18)]. Section divisions by large initial, without rubrics, thereafter. One leaf missing after f. 5.]
3. ff. 37r/24–65v/12 Exodus: **Ellesmoth on hebreisc. exodus on grecisc. exit<us> | on lyden. utfæreld on englisc.** | ‘ÞYS SYND ISRAELA BEARNA NAMAN ÐE MID IACOB E | foron on egipta lánd hig foron ealle mid hira hiwun’ [divided into sections by large initials].
4. ff. 65v/12–72r/2 Leviticus: **Her onginneð seo þridde boc. þe ys | genemned. on ebreisc uaiecra. 7 leuiticus. | on grecisc. 7 ministerialis on lyden. þæt is | þenungboc on englisc. for þa<m>. þa sacer- | da þenunga sind þar awritene.** | ‘DRIHTEN CLIPODE TO MOISE on þære halgan | wurdungstowe 7 þus c<wæ>ð. Sege (gl: ‘dices’) israhela | bearnu<m>; gif hwilc eower (gl: ‘S<i> qui `s´ ex uob<is>’) wille gode offrunga (gl: ‘optulerit’) | bringan’.
5. ff. 72r/3–82v/2 Numbers: **Her onginð seo boc þe ys genemned on | ebreisc. uagedaber þ<æt> ys on lyden numerus. | 7 on englisc getél. forþam þe israhela bearn | wæron on þære getealde: | ‘DRIHTEN**

SPRÆC WITODLICE TO MOISE ON SINAI | dune on þære halgan stowe on þa(m) forman | dæge þæs æfteran monðes (gl: 'i(n) tab(er)-nac(u)lo fēderis p(r)ima | die s(e)c(un)di mensis') [section division at large initial on f. 76r].

6. ff. 82v/3–98v/11 Deuteronomy: **Her onginð seo boc þe is genemned on ebreisc. | helleadabarim 7 on grecisc . deut[e]ronomiu(m). 7 on | lyden secunda lex. 7 on englisc. seo æftre á.** | 'ÐIS SINT ÐA WORD ÐE MOISES SPRÆC to eallu(m) israhe-|la folce begeondan iordane on þa(m) feld westene (gl: 'hec s(un)t u(er)ba quę m(oyses) locut(us) est ad omne(m) isr(ae)l | trans iordanen in ca(m)pestri solitudine')' [section divisions by large initials].
7. ff. 98v/12–107r Joshua: (incipit in margin, by main hand, no break in text): **INCIPIT LIBER IOSVE.** 'Hit wæs `geworden ` æfter moyses forðsiþe drihten spræc to iosue | nunes suna' (gl: 'es[t] factu(m) po(st) moisi morte(m) d(omi)n(u)s loqueret(ur) ad iosue | nun fili(us)') [f. 107v blank].
8. ff. 108r–115v/10 Ælfric, Homily on Judges: **DE LIBRO IVDICVM ANGLICE.** | 'ÆFTER ÐAM ÐE MOYSES SE MĒRA HERETOGA þæt | godes folc gelædde of pharanones þeowette ofer | ða readan sá'.
9. ff. 115v/10–120v/1 Ælfric, Letter to Wulfgeat: **Nis þis gewrit be anum | men awriten ac ys be eallum.** | 'Ic ælfric abbod on ðisu(m) engliscu(m) gewrite freondlice | grete mid godes gretinge. wulfget æt ylman dune' (ed. Assmann 1889: no. 1).
10. ff. 120v/2–141v Ælfric, "On the Old and New Testaments": **Incipit libellus de u ` e ` teri testamento et nouo.** | 'Ðis gewrit wæs to anu(m) men gediht ac hit mæg swa ðeah | manegum fremian. | ÆLFRIC ABBOD GRET FREONDLICE SIGWERD æt east heolon. | Ic secge þe to soðan þ(æt) se bið swiþe wis se þe mid weorcu(m) | spricð.' Divided at f. 131v/21: **EXPLICIT DE VETERI TESTA-|MENTO. INCIPIT DE NOUO TESTAMENTO.** | 'IC SEGE ÐE NV SIWERD Ðæt ic her gesett hæbbe þas | feawa bysna of ðan ealdan bocum on þære ealdan gecyðnyse under moyses. á' [f. 133 belongs after f. 139] (ed. Crawford 1922: 15–51; excerpts ed. Wilcox 1994: 124–25).

**PHOTO NOTES:** F. 1r is darkened and mostly illegible on fiche. The rubrics with alternating red and silver lines: the silver lines on ff. 3r, 37r, 82v do not show up on fiche.

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