

**PRINCIPIA SAXONICA: OR, AN  
INTRODUCTION TO ANGLO-SAXON  
READING, COMPRISING ÆLFRIC'S  
HOMILY ON THE BIRTHDAY OF ST.  
GREGORY; WITH A PRELIMINARY ESSAY  
ON THE UTILITY OF ANGLO-SAXON**

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Principia Saxonica: or, An introduction to Anglo-Saxon reading, comprising Ælfric's Homily on the Birthday of St. Gregory; With a preliminary essay on the utility of Anglo-Saxon by L. Lengley

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**L. LENGLEY**

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ON  
THE UTILITY OF ANGLO-SAXON.  
ILLUSTRATIONS FROM ALFRED'S BEDE AND THE  
SAXON CHRONICLE, AND  
A COPIOUS GLOSSARY.  
BY  
L. LANGLEY, F.L.S.



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"Anglo-Saxon and Gothic ought long ago to have made a part of the education of our youth."—*Horne's Tracts*.

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LONDON:  
ROBERT TYAS, 50, CHEAPSIDE.  
1839.

465.

TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE EARL FITZWILLIAM.

*MY LORD,*

*To no one can this little work be inscribed with more propriety than to Your Lordship. From the venerable institutions of our Saxon ancestors Your Lordship derives the title to which your conduct in public and in the privacy of domestic retirement adds so much real dignity and lustre. Whilst, too, Literature and Science enjoy in Your Lordship an enlightened and zealous patron, Your Lordship has ever cherished an earnest*

*desire to promote the higher and better interests of mankind, by diffusing, in richer abundance, the benefits and blessings of the Gospel, whose propitious introduction, celebrated in the Homily now presented to the public, rescued our Saxon forefathers from idolatry and barbarism, and opened the way to the present greatness of our noble land. Long may Your Lordship continue to throw a protecting arm over the sacred cause of Religion and Virtue, as well as lend the fostering hand to Learning and the Arts.*

*I have the honour to subscribe myself, with every sentiment of gratitude and respect,*

*My Lord,*

*Your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant,*

**LARRET LANGLEY.**

**Brampton, August 1, 1838.**

## P R E F A C E.

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THE Anglo-Saxon Homily on the Birth-day of St. Gregory forms one of a series of Homilies and Sermons translated from the Latin, and adapted to the use of the Anglo-Saxon Church, by Ælfric, then a monk, but afterwards consecrated to the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury, as successor to Siric, or Sigeric, in the year 996. To this ornament of his age and the church are ascribed several other valuable works in theology and philology, which, while calculated to render eminent service to his contemporaries, prove to succeeding times that the mantle of Alfred did not fall to the ground, and that the impulse which his labours and example communicated, in that benighted era, to literature, long continued to be felt. The general object of Ælfric, in the preparation of these Homilies, was, according to his own



statement, the prevention of heresy, and the correction of that tendency to errors, delusive and dangerous, which, even at so early a period of the history of the Anglican Church, manifested itself in varied but unequivocal forms.

This Homily, like too many other valuable documents, long slumbered in the obscurity of MS., until, in 1709, it was rescued from oblivion and given to the world, with the accompaniment of a translation, by Miss Elstob,—a name worthily associated with the catalogue of learned females of whom England can boast. The "*dulcis et indefessa comes*" of her Brother's University studies, Miss Elstob devoted herself to Letters with an enthusiasm and zeal—with an entireness of purpose and a perseverance of effort—which but few of those who profess to despise female talent and feminine attainments, exhibit or possess. Would that her example might stimulate and her success encourage some of the numerous female aspirants after literary distinction, at the present day, to follow her steps in the same laudable career!\*

\* To the instance of Miss Elstob, may be added the more recent, but not less honourable, labours, in the same department, of Miss Gurney, of Keswick, Norfolk, characterized by Dr. Ingram as "the Elstob of her age." To this learned lady is due the credit of having produced the first literal version of the Saxon Chronicle, printed, at Norwich, in 1819, though never published.

In again presenting the Homily to the public, with the appendage of a copious Glossary, instead of a Translation, the sole object of the Editor is to promote, in however subordinate a capacity, a cause in which he has long felt a deep and undiminished interest,—the cause of Saxon Letters. Considering the Homily simply in this relation, and as offering, in the importance of its subject and the comparative purity of its dialect, a pleasing and profitable exercise for the student, the Editor has confined himself to matters purely philological, and has carefully avoided all the great theological and ecclesiastical questions which it might be made to originate, and into the discussion of which Miss Elstob has so fully and learnedly and zealously entered. Historical disquisitions have also been omitted, on similar grounds, and for the additional reasons, that the tendency of such disquisitions to almost interminable extension appeared incompatible with the wish and the design of producing that novelty in Saxon Literature,—a cheap book;—and that it seemed desirable to arouse, rather than to lull, a spirit of research, and to lead the inquiring mind to historical investigation,—always profitable, and peculiarly interesting when directed to the annals of our own country and to the records of our forefathers. The

Extracts from Alfred's Translation of Bede, and from the Saxon Chronicle, have been appended with the twofold object of extending, in some degree, the course of Saxon Reading, and of affording a collateral and almost contemporaneous illustration of facts and dates.

With regard to the Glossary, it may be remarked that, though not so rich as some others in elucidations from the cognate dialects, it may, without presumption, be considered not inferior to any yet published in its development of the composition and structure of the Anglo-Saxon, and in references to the treasures of criticism and philology which we now so abundantly possess. In its preparation, copious use has been made of Mr. Thorpe's excellent *Analecta*, and of Mr. Kemble's elaborate *Glossary to Beowulf*,—by which, as well as by their other erudite labours, these two eminent scholars have rendered the most important services to Saxon Literature. It is hoped, therefore, that the Vocabulary will be found calculated not only to facilitate the translation of the Homily, but also to communicate an extensive knowledge of the general principles of the language. The Gothic etymons of Saxon terms are occasionally assigned, not for unmeaning display, but to convey some notion of the origin and formation of