

**EXODUS AND DANIEL: TWO OLD
ENGLISH POEMS PRESERVED IN
MS. JUNIUS 11 IN THE BODLEIAN
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD, ENGLAND**

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[Caedmon]

EXODUS AND DANIEL

TWO OLD ENGLISH POEMS

PRESERVED IN MS. JUNIUS II IN
THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF OXFORD, ENGLAND

EDITED BY

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Preface

THE present edition of the *Exodus* and the *Daniel* offers simply what the editor regards as needful to the student : (1) an introduction treating in general of the form and contents of the two poems, (2) the text with footnotes on manuscript peculiarities, proposed changes of reading, etc., (3) explanatory notes on difficult passages, (4) a bibliography, (5) a complete glossary.

The introduction is meant to be a *résumé* of those facts and theories that should be known to the student and serve as a basis of intelligent study of the text. This limitation excludes much matter of interest and value, which would properly find a place in an edition made on a different plan: *e. g.* extended discussion of the literary qualities of the poems, their rank absolutely and in comparison with other Old English remains, opinions of critics, antiquities, etc.

The text is given as it stands in the manuscript and the footnotes contain information in regard to erasures, corrections and similar matters whenever these have any bearing on the reading ; also changes of text adopted by former editors or suggested in notes, dissertations, journal articles and the like. A large part of these, especially of those of earlier date, are now shown by increased knowledge of the grammar, vocabulary and metre of Old English to be unnecessary or even impossible, and have only a historical value, but most of them have been included as material for the cultivation of the student in text-criticism. It has not seemed necessary to note cases of approval of previous suggestions, except when they have

been given currency by adoption into a printed text, and all purely external changes, such as variant forms of letters, interchange of *p* and *ð*, *se ðe* or *seðe*, *for þam* or *forþam*, misprints, normalizations, capitals, punctuation, metrical arrangement, etc., have also in most cases been omitted. When any of these have any bearing on the meaning of a passage, they are considered in the explanatory notes, and all changes from the manuscript suggested by the present editor will be found there also.

The notes and glossary are added to enable the student to master difficulties without the loss of time that would result from the lack of such help.

F. A. BLACKBURN.

The University of Chicago.

June 1, 1907.

Introduction

I. THE MANUSCRIPT

THE *Exodus* and the *Daniel* are parts of a poem preserved in a single manuscript, now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and known as MS. Junius 11. A minute description of the volume by F. H. Stoddard was printed in 1887 in the tenth volume of *Anglia*, and supplemented in 1889 by a short article by John Lawrence in the twelfth volume of the same journal.

The book once belonged to Archbishop Usher, who loaned it to Somner¹ for use in making his Dictionary, and afterwards gave it to Junius,² who had it printed and later presented it with other books and papers to the University of Oxford. Its contents are divided into two parts, each in form a single poem, the first containing fifty-five cantos; the second, twelve. The beginnings of the cantos are marked by large initials, spacing or numbering, usually by all three. The book was written in the first half of the eleventh century; the present binding is about four centuries later.

It is plain that we have in the book, in its present form, two pieces of clerical work. This is shown by the following facts.

1. Part I, which contains the first poem, is ruled for 26 lines to the page; Part II, containing the second poem, for 27.

¹ See Somner's Dict. Preface.

² See Junius' edition, *ad lectorem*.

2. Part I was written by one scribe ; Part II by three others.

3. Part I is illustrated with a number of drawings and space is left for many more, which, however, were never added ; Part II is written solidly.

4. We find in Part I, in addition to the drawings, various other proofs that the scribe had planned not only to make a copy of certain matter, but also to produce an artistic book ; in Part II only the former purpose is apparent.

Stoddard holds that we have in the volume not two manuscripts but one, though by different hands, basing his opinion on the size of the page and the likeness in the vellum, and thinks that the rebinding in the fifteenth century was only the putting on of a new cover. But the difference of the two parts is plain, whether the two were put together by binding or by writing them in the same book. I am inclined to the opinion that the book was originally intended for the first part only, that this was left unfinished not only in the matter of illustrations and initial letters, but also in writing, the work of the scribe being from some cause or other interrupted before he had filled the book, and that the pages left unwritten at the end were afterwards utilized by other scribes for writing the second poem. As the first part is a collection of stories, there is no fixed limit to the number that might be used, but we should certainly expect that a poet who had given in their order the stories of the first five chapters of *The Book of Daniel* would not end his work without adding that of the sixth, the story of Daniel in the den of lions, especially as this is the most

striking of all. We might reasonably look also for the stories of the apocryphal chapters xiii and xiv, since they are in the Vulgate. This assumption of incompleteness would also explain the fact that the correction of errors is not so thorough as we should expect in a book written with such care.

As the *Exodus* and *Daniel* are portions of Part I, we are chiefly concerned here with that part, the contents of which are as follows: —

1. Cantos i-xli. — A paraphrase of the first twenty-two chapters of *Genesis*, ending with the sacrifice of Isaac.

2. Cantos xlii-xlix. — The story of the departure of the Hebrews from Egypt and their passage of the Red Sea, taken chiefly from chapters xiii and xiv of *Exodus*.

3. Cantos l-lv. — A paraphrase of the first five chapters of *The Book of Daniel*.

This matter fills a half or two thirds of the space. Large portions were left blank for illustrative drawings, and room was left also for ornamental capitals at the beginning of the cantos. Of the latter the first twenty-five are filled with outline letters, formed for the most part of intertwined griffin-like monsters, the rest with a few exceptions have been roughly filled in with large letters of the ordinary form; a few remain blank. Of the spaces left for pictures about one half of those in the *Genesis* have been filled with drawings in black, red and green ink, both red and green now much faded; the rest are still blank. The manuscript is far the best of all surviving specimens of Old English poetry. It is