



# The Saxon Genesis: An Edition of the West Saxon Genesis B and the Old Saxon Vatican Genesis

*A. N. Doane, Alger Nicolaus Doane*

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Toward the middle of the 9th century, an unknown poet composed a version of Genesis in the Old Saxon tongue. For centuries its existence was surmised, but only in the late 19th century, with the discovery of a fragment of the Old Saxon original in the Vatican Library, did scholars know for certain that the Old English fragment known as "Genesis B" formed the core of a longer, lost Saxon poem. A.N.Doane's edition of the two texts, the Old English and the Old Saxon, brings them together as witnesses of one of the most original and striking vernacular productions of the early Middle Ages. This edition treats both texts on an equal footing and to integrate them historically and critically the "Genesis B" text, Doane shows, represents not a "translation" of the Saxon original into Old English (the two languages are mutually intelligible), but an end point in a process of reworking, recopying, and anglicization. The result is a poem partly Saxon, partly English. Viewed together, the two texts tell us a great deal about the preoccupations and attitudes of their composers and audiences. Doane provides extensive notes, a glossary, and a critical introduction to the history, language, meter, and sources of the texts. His general literary introduction sets the theological and cultural context of the poems. This edition should help to bridge the gap between Germanists and Anglicanists in the consideration of the original Saxon Genesis.

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