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Spring 1996

Genesis

La Salle University Art Museum

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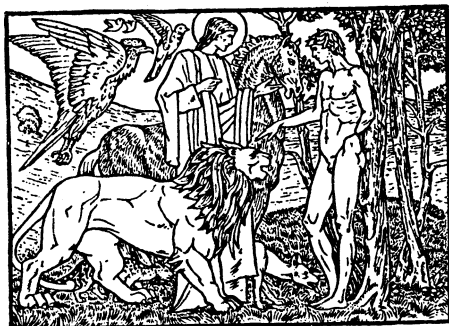
Recommended Citation

La Salle University Art Museum and Burke, Brother Daniel FSC, "Genesis" (1996). *Art Museum Exhibition Catalogues*. 34.
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בראשית
GENESIS

בראשית GENESIS



La Salle University
Art Museum
March 15 - May 29, 1996

GENESIS

The Book of Genesis speaks of beginnings—of the universe, of humanity, and, mainly, of Abraham and his first descendants, the People of Yahweh. But the opening chapters of the Book tell of creation and the fall of “the man” and “the woman” in the Garden—and these episodes are what spring to the popular imagination with any reference to Genesis. And justly enough. For few Books of the Bible can match these first chapters for psychological insight, high drama, or theological depth. The issues, too, are fundamental: our ultimate origins and our relation to the creator, the relation of man and woman, the source of evil in the human rejection of creatureliness, the patient goodness of God.

The dominant impression in the Creation story is of God’s uncomplicated and serene omnipotence: ‘And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.’ In the succeeding “days,” the immensity and scope of His creative activity is emphasized, what cosmologists today speak of in terms of billions of light years and trillions of miles. And finally there is God’s satisfied pleasure in his creation: “And God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.”

When Adam and Eve enter the scene as the acme of creation, there are again the notes of omnipotence and a sharing beneficence: “Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness, to have dominion...” And image implies a knowing mind and a will to chose freely. Thereafter, it is the abuse of these faculties by pride and disobedience that leads to the Fall and punishment—but not without the promise of continuing care and redemption. This pattern of fall, punishment, and continued, even covenanted, care is repeated for Cain, the family of Noah, the builders of Babel’s tower, indeed in all the up’s-and-downs of God’s dealings with His people.

It was natural enough, then, that these themes should attract the early illustrators of the Bible in the first generations after Gutenberg. But, as even our small exhibition of prints and of illustrated Bibles from the Susan Dunleavy Collection suggests, their fascination took somewhat different forms within the general conventions established early in the Cologne Bible of Heinrich Quentell (c. 1478) and the Nuremberg Chronicle of Hartmann Schedel (1493) (See Special Exhibition Room - No. 1) The notion of creation ex nihilo was, of course, an inherently puzzling one to represent. The early illustrators attempted to harmonize the process they portrayed

simply with accepted medieval notions of the universe's structure as a series of concentric spheres. The other pattern which naturally suggested itself was a series of scenes following the six days described in the first chapter of Genesis. Full-page woodcuts of the six scenes thus became a standard introduction to the Book of Genesis and to the whole Bible, as can be seen in our Coverdale Bible, 1535. (See Case I - No. 3)

The climactic scene in such series, of course, is the creation of man and woman. The Lord is conceived of more anthropomorphically in the second telling of human creation in Chapter II, now forming his chief work from the clay of the earth, giving Adam the breath of his spirit, or, as in Michelangelo's supreme portrayal in the Sistine Chapel, touching him with the power of life. The creation of Eve from the side of Adam presented greater difficulty for the illustrator. But even in the naively literal representations of early woodcuts, there are implications of more abstract ideas. Thus, as Eve arises fully formed from Adam's side, there are suggestions, admittedly among other notes of male dominance, of Eve's equality with Adam. As medieval theologians observed, she comes not from his head to be his superior nor from his feet to be his inferior, but from his side to be his equal.

And there is implied another commonplace of medieval commentary—that Eve comes as a symbol of the Church to be born from the pierced side of the Second Adam. (See Case I - No. 2) In the matter of equality, the painting exhibited here by the Flemish artist Gillis De Hondcoetter (d. 1638) (See No. 7) is most unusual. It complements the usual depictions of Adam naming the animals of Paradise (Gen II, 19-20), by showing Eve alone blessing them.

The treatment of the life of Adam and Eve in the Garden and their eventual Fall has an interesting range and depth. There is, in particular, the masterpiece of Dürer's engraving of Adam and Eve, 1504 (see No. 5), perhaps the finest engraving of any artist, which stresses the perfection of existence in Eden before the Fall. Here the elk, rabbit, cat, and ox signify the "humors" of the human personality (melancholic, sanguine, choleric, and phlegmatic), now in perfect balance but on the verge of disorder. In a similar fashion, the series of complementaries—Adam and Eve, cat and mouse, parrot and serpent, ash tree and fig tree—are about to collapse into evil confusion. But in this instant, however, we have a last glimpse of man and woman as the image of God in primitive innocence, as the crown of creation by Renaissance humanists like Pico della Mirandola and artists newly

enthusiastic about classical figure studies of the nude. More typical of later illustrations of the critical moment of the Fall is the dominance of evil and the punishments of eventual death. Thus, we have the skeletonizing of the Tree itself in the 1543 engraving of Hans Sebald Behan (See No.6) or the coarsening of the figures of Adam and Eve by other artists. Nevertheless, echoes of idyllic, pre-lapsarian innocence—or, simply the Renaissance preoccupation with the nude—continue in the graceful illustration of Bernard Solomon or Romeyn De Hooge, and even in the Berriman Bible (Philadelphia, 1796) one of the earliest American illustrated Bibles. The theme of test-fall-punishment- but-promise-of-renewed-care, as mentioned earlier here, continues in other episodes of the Book of Genesis. We have added here only sample illustrations from the accounts of Cain and Abel and of Noah.

Among the rarest books in the present exhibition, special attention should be drawn to the Coverdale Bible (Cologne, 1535), the first complete Bible printed in English; the first edition of Luther's Low-German Bible (Lubeck, 1533), with splendid illustrations by Erhard Altdorfer; the *Nuremberg Chronicle* (1493), the first printed world history.

Br. Daniel Burke, F.S.C.

Special Exhibition Gallery

1. *The Holy Bible* (Authorized King James “she” version) Conteyning the Old Testament and the New: Newly translated out of the Original Tongues: and with the former Translations diligently compared and revised by his Maiesties speciall Commandment.

Printed by Robert Barker, London, 1613, 1611.

First folio edition.

(Contains presentation inscription to the Earl of Buckingham.)

The woodcut genealogies, maps, and Adam and Eve image here illustrated (purchased separately and bound into the earlier versions) are by the historian John Speed (1552?-1629).

This version of the Bible is said to be the foundation of all English prose as the Luther Bible was for the German vernacular. Under the leadership and sponsorship of James I, forty scholars, organized into six companies, began the task of translation in 1607. Influenced by numerous former English translations such as Tyndale, Coverdale, and especially the Geneva and Douay-Rheims New Testament, this translation became the sole recognized version of the Bible in English for the Anglican Church until the revised version of 1881-1885. It is thought that the use of two printing offices, set up to produce as large an edition as possible, accounts for the slight editorial and typographical differences between the “she” and the “he” version. The former reading in Ruth III:15: “She went into the city,” the latter reading: “He went into the city.” The Dunleavy Collection also includes the “He” version.

2. *Die Gantze Bibel ... (The Complete Bible)*

Edited by Edm. Cam. Rudolphi

Printed by Christoffel Froschauer, at Zurich, 1556

One of the twenty-seven editions of the Bible printed by Froschauer who, after 1521, was the chief printer for the Protestant Swiss Reformer, Huldreich Zwingli. The text is based on Martin Luther's translation of the bible of 1534 but adapted to the Swiss dialect. Many of the 320 woodcut illustrations are attributed to Veit Rudolf Specklin (monogram VS) after designs by Hans Holbein the Younger. The latter originally executed such Biblical drawings to illustrate Froschauer's large folio edition of the Bible in two volumes of 1531; sixty-eight of these were later used to illustrate Melchior and Trechsel's Historiarum Veteris Testamenti Icones ad vivum expressae of 1538.

3. *The Holy Bible*

Philadelphia, printed for Berriman & Company by Jacob R. Berriman, 1796.

Engraving by F. Shallus (1774-1821), American.

4. *The Nuremberg Chronicle* (LiberChronicarum),
1493

Text by Hartman Schedel

Printed by Anton Koberger, Nuremberg,
Germany.

Lent by Bryn Mawr College Canaday Library

The Nuremberg Chronicle was the first illustrated printed encyclopedia of world history and geography and includes the earliest printed map of Europe and the first views of many cities. It is thought that the idea for the series of circles was perhaps suggested by the opening illustration in Heinrich Quentell's Cologne Bible of 1478 and the *Supplementum Chronicarum* of Philip Foresti of Bergamo, Venice, 1483. Anonymous woodcut illustrations (hand colored at a later date).

a. "Creation of the Sky and Earth"

Attributed to Michael Wolgemut
(1434-1518), German.

b. "Work of the Second Day" (Outer ring = primeval matter, "yle"; blue ring = water; red ring = fire; white ring = ice; center ring = night and day).

c. "The work of the Fourth Day"

d. "The Creation of Adam"

5. Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), German

The Fall of Man, 1504

Engraving

Possibly an unlisted state coming between the fourth (Meder 11 c) and the fifth state (Meder 111 a) with three scribbles heavily marked in upper right sky in front of the mountain goat.

6. Hans Sebald Beham (1500-1550), German
Adam and Eve, 1543
Engraving
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. William Sherwin

7. Gillis Claesz De Hondecoeter (c. 1570-1638),
Dutch
Eve Blessing the Animals
Oil on panel
De Hondecoeter's paintings frequently show a meticulous rendition of animals in scenes concerned with Noah's Ark or Orpheus charming the wild beasts with his lyre. The subject of Eve blessing the animals is most unusual and is not a part of traditional Christian iconography.

8. Simone Cantarini (1612-1648), Italian
The Fall of Man
Etching

9. Andries Van Buysen (Active 1707-1745), Dutch.
After Gerard Hoet, The Elder
The Fall
Engraving

10. Michael Wolgemut (1434-1518), German
Adam and Eve After The Fall
Woodcut illustration from *The Nuremberg Chronicle*, 1493
Lent by Dr. James Tanis

11. Alexandre Faiguere (1831-1900), French
Cain Carries The Murdered Abel
Etching from the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*

12. Jan Sadeler (1526-1583), Flemish
After Michael de Coxie
*Adam And Eve Lamenting theDeath
of Abel*
Engraving
Lent by Dr. James Tanis
This episode does not occur in the Bible, but an apocryphal legend has it that his parents mourned for him a hundred years (Peter Comestor 12th century historian).

13. J. Mynde (Active 1740-1770), British
*The Ark Floating Upon The WatersOf
The Deluge*
Engraving
Lent by Dr. James Tanis

14. John Martin (1789-1854), English
The Covenant, 1838
Mezzotint

Outside Entrance Display Case

15. Arthur Geisert (Contemporary), American

The Ark 1987

Etching

Purchased with funds donated by the Art Angels

16. *The Creation*

*Lines from the Old Testament and from Paradise
Lost by John Milton As Told To Adam By the
Archangel Raphael.*

Wood engravings by Elfriede Abe

(Manchester, Vermont: Elfriede Abbe, 1977)

Hall Book Cases

I The Creation

1. *De Bible Vth der Vthleggine Doctoris*

Martini Luthers yn dyth dudesche...

Printed by Ludowich Dietz, Lubeck 1533, 1534

Woodcut illustrations by Erhard Altodorfer, (1512-1561), German

The first Low German edition of Luther's Bible, translated by his colleague, Johann Bugenhagen, and issued just before Luther's own first complete edition of 1534.

2. *Biblia Pauperum*

Venice: Giovanni Andrea Vavassore, c.1510

One of the few block books (picture and text cut on a single block of wood) printed in Italy.

The *Biblia Pauperum* contained Old Testament illustrations on one side of the page with parallel illustrations from the New Testament on the opposite side. Here the creation of Eve in the Old Testament coming from the side of Adam was thought to parallel the birth of the church from the pierced side of the crucified Christ in the New Testament.

3. *The Coverdale Bible*

The Byble that is, the holy scrypture of the olde and new testament, faythfully translated into Englyshe by [Miles Coverdale.]

Koln, Eucharius Cervicornus and Johannes Soter, 24 October 1535.

First folio edition.

Anonymous woodcut illustrations, possibly crude copies of the work of Hans Sebald Beham (1500-1550), German.

This publication was the first complete Bible printed in English. Dedicated to Henry VIII, though not published under royal license, it is thought of as more of an editing of former versions rather than an original translation. The New and much of the Old Testaments are thought to be largely Tyndale's translation, but Coverdale also relied on the Vulgate of Pagninus' Latin Bible (1527/28), Luther's German Bible of 1534, and the Swiss-German version of Zwingli and Juda (1527-1529).

Coverdale's version of the Psalms is still used by the Anglican and Episcopal Church in the Book of Common Prayer. It has been said that perhaps "no subsequent version, ... has surpassed the Coverdale Bible in beauty of language."



4. *Biblica Historia Latinis Epigrammatibus
Illustratae*

By Georgius Aemilius

Frankfurt, Egenolph, 1539

First Edition

Illustrated with woodcuts by Hans Sebald Beham

5. *Genesis* (Authorized Version)

Woodcut illustration by Paul Nash

Solo: The Nonesuch Press, 1924

II The Fall

1. *Veteris et Le Nouveau Testamenti*

Figurae/L'Ancien

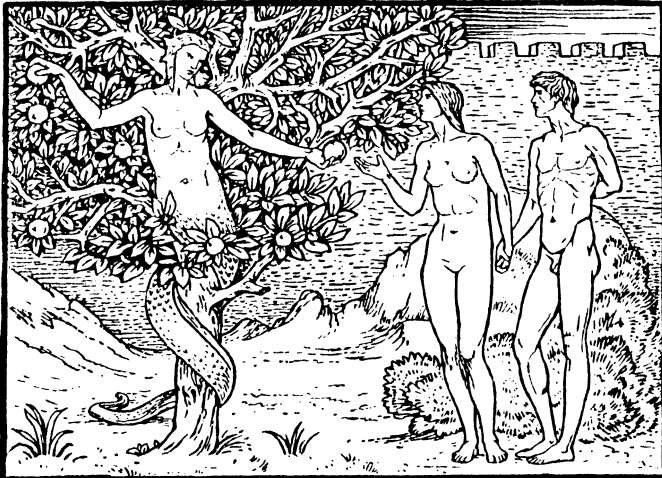
Engraved illustrations by Pierre Mariette

Paris: Pierre Mariette, c.1650

2. *Figure Del Vecchio Testamento*

Woodcut illustrations by Gabriel Simeoni

In Vinezia: Presso gli heredi di Nicolo Bevilaqua & Compagni, 1574



3. *Americae Tertia Pars*

Memorable provinciae Brasiliae Historiam...
Part III

Engraved illustrations by Theodor de Bry
Francofurti: Joannem Wechelum, 1592
Lent by Bryn Mawr College Canaday Library

4. *The Holy Bible* (Authorized King James version)

Printed by John Bill and Christopher Barker,
London, 1669.

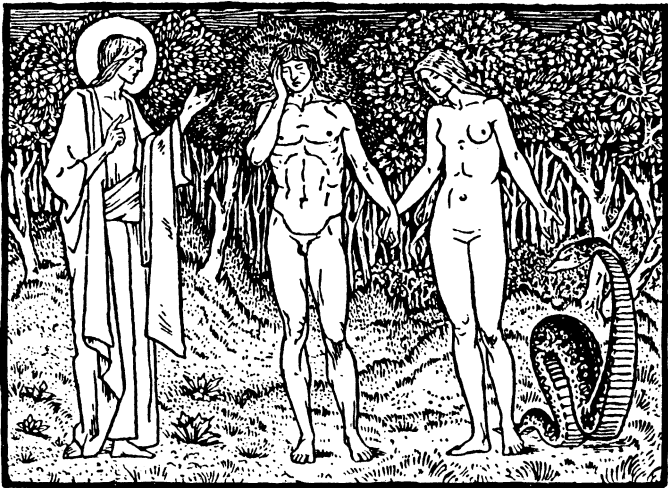
Engraving by Frederick-Hendrik van der Hove
(c. 1628-1695), Dutch.

5. *A Compleat History of the Holy Bible*

Volume I (of 3)

By Laurence Howel. London, 1718

Engravings by J. Sturt (1658-1730), English



6. *Biblia Sacra*

Edited by Robert Estienne (Robert Stephanus)

Published by Jean de Tournes, Lyons, 1554.

First octavo edition.

The first de Tournes Bible to contain 198 woodcut illustrations by Bernard Salomon, called “Le Petit Bernard,” a popular painter at the court of Henry II of France. These woodcuts had first appeared for the Old Testament in Claude Paradin’s *Quadrins historiques*, 1553 and the rest in a French new Testament of the same year. The Biblical text of Robert Estienne, an outstanding French printer and scholar, greatly influenced later texts and became the foundation of the official Roman Vulgate.



III The Expulsion; Cain and Abel

1. *Paradise Lost*

A Poem by John Milton

The text of the first edition...

Illustrated with wood engravings by Mary Groom Great Britain: Golden Cockerel Press, 1937



2. *Biblia Sacra*

Lugduni, Gulielmus Roullius, 1588

The Louvain edition of the Vulgate, edited by
Johannus Hentenius, 1547.

3. *Histoire Du Vieux et du Nouveau Testament*

By M. Basnage

Amsterdam, chez Pierre Mortier, Libraire, 1706

Illustrated with engravings by Romeyn de Hooge

Dutch, 1645-1708)

4. *Biblia Ad Vetustissima Exemplaria...*

Nicolas Bevilaquae, Venice, 1578

The artist for the woodcut illustrations is unknown but they show the influence of Biblical illustrations by Hans Holbein, Bernard Solomon and Pierre Eskrich.



5. *The Book of Genesis*

With illustrations after drawings by F. Cayley
Robinson

London: The Riccardi Press, 1914

6. *The Beginning of the World*

Illustrated with woodcuts by Edward Burne-Joens
(London: Chiswick Press, 1902)

IV Noah and the Flood

1. *Biblia Germanica*

Anton Koberger, Nürnberg, 1483

Volume I

Lent by Bryn Mawr College Canaday Library

This is one of the earliest printed illustrated Bibles. The first illustrated Bible was published by Jodocus Pflanzmann around 1475 with only historiated initials for illustrations. For this Bible in High German, Koberger used the woodcuts of the Anonymous illustrator of Heinrich Quentell's Cologne Bible of c. 1478. These woodcuts became the prototype for most Bible illustrations of the next several generations, though oftentimes the cuts were reduced in size.

2. *Biblia Sacra*

Illustrated with woodcuts by Master C.S.

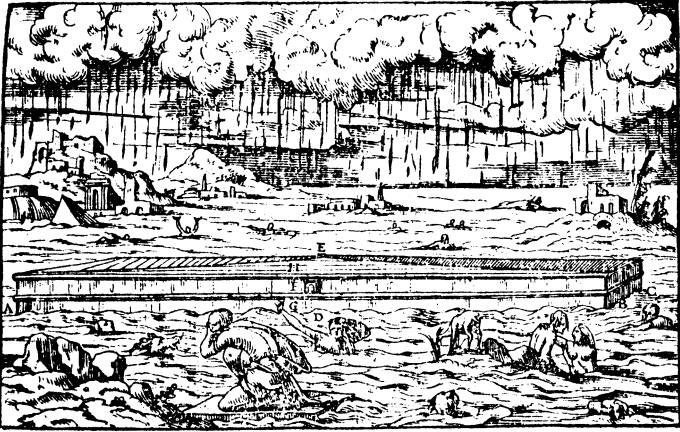
Lyons: G. Rouille, 1563

3. Anonymous

The Sacrifice of Noah After The Deluge

From a Bible Plate Book

Holland, Circa 1700?



4. *Figures De La Bible*

Illustrated with engravings by Matthaeus Merion

Amsterdam: Nicolaus Vischer, 1650

5. *The Chester Play Of The Deluge*

Edited by J. Isaacs, with engravings on wood by David Jones

Great Britain: Golden Cockerel Press, 1927

Caroline Wistar

With the exception of the woodcut of the Flood above,
(See IV, No. 2), the text illustrations are from Edward
Burne-Jones (See Case II, No. 6)

Genesis Exhibition

We wish to give special thanks to Dr. James Tanis, Director of the Bryn Mawr College Canaday Library for his constant enthusiasm, interest and prompt willingness over some fifteen years to loan material to our special exhibitions in the La Salle Art Museum.

