

c. The Wyclif Bible:

The Translation of Wyclife came near the end of his life, certainly after 1380 although he had preached and worked with the Bible for years and certainly had done a lot of work in his own ministry since 1360. It is hard to say what the full statment of his motives may have been but we can say that he was, first of all, interested in the spiritual well-being of the English people, and after that in decreasing the influence of the Roman church and building a strong national spirit around eternal truths. What else may have entered...I do not know. Naturally from my theological position I credit the first of these a great deal more than the latter two. Of the work itself we may note the following:

--It translated the text of the Latin vulgate, from human observation a very poor Vulgate...

--It followed the Latin often in grammatical sequence even when it was not good English!

--It was, however, vernacularized so that just about any of the people in England could have read it with good comprehension rather easily.

--How much Wyclif might have done is not known. Nicholas of Hereford did a good bit of the Old Testament...other helpers may have worked on the New.

--There were two editions of it...the first much less polished, the second done in better form and being the one of which the greater remains are today.

--It included the Apocrypha

--It was enthusiastically received, valued highly, and although produced by hand was put out in sufficient numbers that in spite of persecution, burning, etc . almost two hundred copies are extant today.

--It became the model or ideal for a translation that the "ploughman" could read and inspired the work of Hus and many others in the matter of getting out the Scripture.

Here, from the BOOK OF BOOKS are two versions of the Lord's Prayer...the first from an early Saxon work and the second from Wyclif. Don't feel badly if you cannot read them easily:

"Faeder ure thu the eart on heofenum, si thin nama gehalgod;
to becume thin rice. Gewurthe thin willa on eorthan swa swa on
heofenum. Urne daeghwamlicam hlaf syle us to daeg; and forgyf
us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgifadh urum gyltendum; and ne galaed
thu us on costnunge. Ac alys us of yfele. Sothlice.

"Our fadir that art in heuenes: halowide be thi name/ thi kyngdom
come to / be thy wille done: as in heuene & in erthe/ gif to us this
day: oure brede ouer other substance/ and forgyve to us oure dettis:
as we forgyuen to oure dottours/ and leede us not into temptacion
but delyuer us from al euyl amen/

In the first of these I have not been able to indicate all diphthongs and in the second I have had to omit a couple of marks that my typewriter does not have on it. But that will give you a feeling for the primitive text of that time.