Changes in the English Language

A Comparison of Old, Middle, and Modern English

Luke 2:1-19

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| **Key to Pronunciation** þ - pronounced "th" ð - pronounced "th" æ - pronounced as a flat "a" (as in "cat") ȝ - pronounced "y" or "g"  |

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|   | Old EnglishWessex Gospels | Middle EnglishWycliffe | Early Modern EnglishKing James |
| 2:1 | Soþlice on þam dagum wæs geworden gebod fram þam casere augusto. þæt eall ymbehwyrft wære tomearcod;  | Forsoþe it is don, in þo daȝis a maundement wente out fro cesar august, þat al þe world shulde ben discriued,  | And it came to passe in those dayes, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. |
| 2:2 | þeos tomearcodnes wæs æryst geworden fram þam deman syrige cirino.  | þis firste discriuyng was maad of ciryne iustise of cirie  | (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was gouernor of Syria) |
| 2:3 | and ealle hig eodon. and syndrie ferdon on hyra ceastre;  | & alle wenten þat þei shulden make professioun, eche bi hymself in to his cyte  | And all went to bee taxed, euery one into his owne citie. |
| 2:4 | þa ferde iosep fram galilea of þære ceastre nazareþ: on iudeisce ceastre dauides. seo is genemned beþleem  | soþli & Joseph steȝede vp fro galilee of þe cite of naȝareþ, in to Jude, in to a cite of dauid þat ys clepid beþlem,  | And Ioseph also went vp from Galilee, out of the citie of Nazareth, into Iudaea, vnto the citie of Dauid, which is called Bethlehem |
| 2:5 | forþam þe he wæs of dauides huse. and hirede þæt he ferde mid marian þe him beweddod wæs. and wæs geeacnod;  | for þat he was of þe hous and meyne of dauid, þat he shulde knoulechen wiþ marie spousid to hym wyf, wiþ childe  | (because he was of the house and linage of Dauid,) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. |
| 2:6 | Soðlice wæs geworden þa hi þar wæron. hire dagas wæron gefyllede þæt heo cende.  | soþli it is do whan þei weren þere, þe daȝes ben fulfild þat she shulde bern child  | And so it was, that while they were there, the dayes were accomplished that she should be deliuered. |
| 2:7 | and heo cende hyre frumcennedan sunu. and hine mid cildclaþum bewand. and hine on binne alede. forþam þe hig næfdon rum on cumena huse;  | & she childide hir first goten sone, & wlappede hym in cloþis & putte hym in a cracche, for þer was not place to hym in þe comun stable  | And she brought foorth her first borne son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no roome for them in the Inne. |
| 2:8 | and hyrdas wæron on þam ylcan rice waciende: and nihtwæccan healdende of er heora heorda  | & shepherdis weren in þe same kuntre wakende & kepende þe wacchis of þe niȝt on her floc  | And there were in the same countrey shepheards abiding in the field, keeping watch ouer their flocke by night. |
| 2:9 | þa stod drihtnes engel wiþ hig and godes beorhtnes him ymbelscean: and hi him mycelum ege adredon.  | & lo þe aungil of þe lord stod biside hem, & clernesse of god shoen abouten hem, and þei dredden wiþ gret dreed  | And loe, the Angel of the Lord came vpon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. |
| 2:10 | and se engel him to cwæð; Nelle ge eow adrædan. soþlice nu ic eow bodie mycelne gefean. se bið eallum folce.  | & þe aungil seide to hem, nyle ȝee dreeden, lo soþli I euangelise to ȝou a gret ioȝe þat shall be to alle puple-  | And the Angel said vnto them, Feare not: For behold, I bring you good tidings of great ioy, which shall be to all people. |
| 2:11 | forþam todæg eow ys hælend acenned. se is drihten crist on dauides ceastre;  | for a saueour is born to day to vs, þat is crist a lord in þe cite of dauid  | For vnto you is borne this day, in the citie of Dauid, a Sauiour, which is Christ the Lord. |
| 2:12 | And þis tacen eow byð; Ge gemetað an cild hreglum bewunden. and on binne aled;  | & þis a tocne to ȝou, ȝee shul finden a ȝung childd wlappid wiþ cloþis, & put in a cracche  | And this shall be a signe vnto you; yee shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. |
| 2:13 | And þa wæs færinga geworden mid þam engle mycelnes heofonlices werydes god heriendra. and þus cweþendra;  | & sodeinli þer is mad wiþ þe aungil, a multitude of heueneli kniȝþed, heriende god & seyinge-  | And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heauenly hoste praising God, and saying, |
| 2:14 | Gode sy wuldor on heahnesse and on eorðan sybb mannum godes willan;  | glorie in þe heȝest þingis to god, & in erþe pes to men of good wil  | Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good wil towards men. |
| 2:15 | and hit wæs geworden þa ða englas to heofene ferdon. þa hyrdas him betwynan spræcon and cwædon; Utun faran to beþleem. and geseon þæt word þe geworden is. þæt drihten us ætywde;  | & it is don þat whan aungelis paseden awey fro hem in to heuene, þe shepherdis speeken toqidere seiende, go wee ouer to beþlem & see wee þis wrd þat is maad, þe whiche þe lord made, & shewede to vs  | And it came to passe, as the Angels were gone away from them into heauen, the shepheards said one to another, Let vs now goe euen vnto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to passe, which the Lord hath made knowen vnto vs. |
| 2:16 | and hig efstende comon: and gemetton marian and iosep and þæt cild on binne aled;  | and þei heȝende camen, & founden marie & Joseph, & a ȝung child put in a cracche  | And they came with haste, and found Mary and Ioseph, and the babe lying in a manger. |
| 2:17 | þa hi þæt gesawon þa oncneowon hig be þam worde þe him gesæd wæs be þam cilde;  | soþli þey seende knewen of þe wrd, þat was seid to þem of þis child  | And when they had seene it, they made knowen abroad the saying, which was told them, concerning this child. |
| 2:18 | And ealle þa ðe gehyrdon wundredon be þam þe him þa hyrdas sædon;  | & alle men þat hadden herdd, wondreden, & of þese þingis þat weren seid to hem of þe shepherdis  | And all they that heard it, wondered at those things, which were tolde them by the shepheards. |
| 2:19 | Maria geheold ealle þas word on hyre heortan smeagende;  | forsoþe marie kepte alle þese wrdis, berende togidere in hir herte  | But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. |