

ENHG dialect Bible translations: Explanation

I gave you three parallel texts, asking you to evaluate key dialect features. As promised, these are real challenges. In fact, I don't have much info on these texts: they are scans I did some time ago, and I really only know that they are transcribed from unpublished hand-written manuscripts. As a number of you noted, there are features that look archaic in both texts, and they are relatively early.

The middle text.

Well, at least two of them are challenges. If you have paid attention in class, you will have immediately looked at the texts first of all for the Second Sound Shift. The middle text does not show consistent II. Lv, even between vowels — look at *suke-* for *suche-*, *waket* for *wachen*, *gerupen* for *gerufen*, etc. So, game over for the second text: Low German.

The other two both show considerable shift, such as *uch* for Modern German *Euch*, *daz*, and so on, along with shifted forms of the examples above. We don't have much probative evidence on greater shift than we find in the central areas. The text on the left has *creft-* with initial /k/ and the one on the right *críst*. So, the level of shift in both texts looks typical of central dialects. Let's just take those in turn with selected examples of the other criteria:

The text on the left.

	Yes	No
monophthongization		<uo> throughout
diphthongization		sine, uff, uch
syncope/apocope		sorget, suchende, genade, geschicht

The text on the right.

	Yes	No
monophthongization	nuchtern, suchende	bruoder
diphthongization	zeit	uch
syncope/apocope	gnade	suchende, lauffet, sorget

What the heck is going on?, a budding specialist in the science of historical linguistics and the art of Germanic languages might well ask.

The text on the left, in fact, lacks most of the changes associated with ENHG — it's almost like MHG. Since it lacks both monophthongization and diphthongization, a lot of you figured it was probably Alemannic. That's a good guess, but these could also be signs of an **early** text.

While the text on the left isn't terribly variable in this tiny sample, the one on the right is highly variable. But it is showing signs of monophthongization AND diphthongization, which suggests East Central as a likely locus. Still, there are oddities, like <đ>.

Notes:

- Almost everybody had some trouble deciphering the text. I didn't take off for that. I wanted to give you a chance to wrestle with real data but didn't want to punish you for not being experts.
 - *uch* = *Euch*
 - *beseunge* = *besehung*
 - In such texts, they sometimes don't write some vowels, so *brmdend*.
That's a stressed vowel, so not likely to be really lost.
- Some folks switched monophthongization and diphthongization: *uf* > *auf* (diphthongization), while *bruoder* > *bruder* (monophthongization).