

## Wycliffite Bible

2° f°: Friday Numeri (fol. 2)  
 wilneþ to speken (fol. 11)

Parchment (FSOS). Fols: i (numbered fol. iii) + 386 (numbered fols iv, 1-385) + i (numbered fol. 386; fol. 387 assigned to the rear pastedown). Flyleaves and pastedowns medieval parchment. Fol. iv has been cut down to less than the width of a column. Overall: 387 mm x 265 mm. The main body (so not item 1) in double columns, each column 260 mm x 85-87 mm, with 10 mm between columns, in 58 lines to the column. In item 1, the text is laid out in four columns but the folios have been ruled as a single text block of 41 long lines (the scribes sometimes writing a forty-second line below the last line); the ruling is in clear black ink and there are signs of prick-holes in line with the vertical borders in the bottom margin, 60mm below the last line. This contrasts with the few signs of prickings in item 2, which are much closer to the edges of the folio. The main part is bounded and ruled in black ink. Written in gothic textura semiquadrata, excepting item 1, probably by a single scribe. Punctuation by point, punctus elevatus, and virgula (the last often red-slashed).

## CONTENTS

1. Fols 1-9: *[H]ere begynneth a Rule that tellith in whiche Chappiters of the Bible ye may fynde the Lessouns . . .*, the calendar of readings for the year, both temporale and sanctorale.

Ed. FM, 4:683-98, though the text here regular differs and has different section divisions. Mary Dove, *The First English Bible. The Text and Context of the Wycliffite Versions* (Cambridge, 2007), 259-60, notes that this is the later version of the lectionary. It is in a slightly later hand from the main text. Explicit at l. 7 of fol. 9, with rest of page blank.

Fol. 9<sup>v</sup>: blank.

2. Fols 10<sup>ra</sup>-385<sup>ra</sup>: ‘Broþer ambrose to me þi litle 3iftes partitly berende haþ brou3t wiþ and ri3t . . . [fol. 12<sup>rb</sup>] In þe firste made god of no3t heuen’ and erþe . . . [fol. 307<sup>ra</sup>] Mathew of Iewerie born as he is put first in ordre so first he wrot . . . [fol. 307<sup>rb</sup>] þe boc of Ieneracoun of Ihesu crist þe sone of dauid sone of abraham --- I come soone amen come þou lord Ihesu þe grace of oure lord Ihesu crist with 3ou alle amen?’

The Wycliffite Bible, early version, ed. FM, 1:61-4:681 (left-hand column); and used as the base text from Baruch 3:20 onward in Conrad Lindberg, ed., *The Earlier Version of the Wycliffite Bible Volume[s] 6[-8]*, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis Stockholm Studies in English 29, 81, 87 (Stockholm, 1973-97), with reproductions, 6, facing 300 (fol. 254<sup>v</sup>); 7, facing 192 (fol. 307); 8, facing 288 (fol. 344). This manuscript is conventionally given the siglum X, following FM (see 1:xxxvi & li). On the nature and quality of the text here, see Henry Hargreaves, ‘The Wycliffite Versions’, *The Cambridge History of the Bible Volume 2* (Cambridge, 1969), 387-415 at 395-96, 405-6; Sven L. Fristedt, *The Wycliffe Bible Part 1* (Stockholm Studies in English 4, Stockholm, 1953), 107-14, with the reproduction, plate xiii (111, fol. 310), and Dove, *The First English Bible*, 259-60, noting that the text is ‘the most conservative’ of surviving manuscripts; she proposes a date of ‘c. 1390-1400’. She reproduces fol. 71 as fig. 5 (89).

The text includes the Prayer of Manasses and III Ezra but lacks the Prayer of Solomon (fol. 220<sup>ra</sup>) and Laodiceans. It follows Ker’s usual order, except that Ephesians appears after II Thessalonians (fol. 358<sup>vb</sup>) and the Catholic Epistles precede Acts (fol. 365<sup>tb</sup>).

It includes the prologues found in the early version, up to and including the Gospels but has none after that. The Psalter regularly has added marginal glosses up to Ps. 72 (and once afterwards, to Ps. 101).

The resulting order of contents is therefore: [fol. 10-11<sup>ra</sup>] Jerome's prefaces (a version of RB 284 and 285 combined), edited by Conrad Lindberg, using this MS as the base text, *The Middle English Bible: Prefatory Epistles of St. Jerome* (Oslo, 1978), 60-171 (even pages), [fol. 11<sup>rb</sup>-26<sup>ra</sup>] Genesis, [fol. 26<sup>ra</sup>-37<sup>vb</sup>] Exodus, [fol. 37<sup>vb</sup>-46<sup>vb</sup>] Leviticus, [fol. 46<sup>vb</sup>-59<sup>ra</sup>] Numbers, [fol. 59<sup>ra</sup>-69<sup>va</sup>] Deuteronomy, [fol. 69<sup>va</sup>-vb] FM 1:544-46 (cf. RB 311), [fol. 69<sup>vb</sup>-77<sup>ra</sup>] Joshua, [fol. 77<sup>ra</sup>-84<sup>vb</sup>] Judges, [fol. 84<sup>vb</sup>-85<sup>vb</sup>] Ruth, [fol. 85<sup>vb</sup>-86<sup>rb</sup>] FM 2:1-5 (cf. RB 323), [fol. 86<sup>rb</sup>-96<sup>va</sup>] I Kings, [fol. 96<sup>va</sup>-104<sup>vb</sup>] II Kings, [fol. 104<sup>vb</sup>-114<sup>va</sup>] III Kings, [fol. 114<sup>va</sup>-124<sup>ra</sup>] IV Kings, [fol. 124<sup>rb</sup>-va] FM 2:313-316 (cf. RB 328 and 326), [fol. 124<sup>va</sup>-132<sup>vb</sup>] I Chronicles, [fol. 132<sup>vb</sup>-133<sup>ra</sup>] FM 2:385-86 (cf. RB 327), [fol. 133<sup>ra</sup>-143<sup>rb</sup>] II Chronicles ending with Prayer of Manasses, [fol. 143<sup>rb</sup>-vb] FM 2:478-79 (cf. RB 330 and 329), [fol. 143<sup>vb</sup>-146<sup>va</sup>] I Ezra, [fol. 146<sup>va</sup>-150<sup>va</sup>] Nehemiah (II Ezra), [fol. 150<sup>vb</sup>-155<sup>ra</sup>] III Ezra, [fol. 155<sup>ra</sup>-rb] FM 2:576 (cf. RB 332), [fol. 155<sup>rb</sup>-158<sup>ra</sup>] Tobit, [fol. 158<sup>ra</sup>-rb] FM 2:602 (cf. RB 335 and 336), [fol. 158<sup>rb</sup>-162<sup>ra</sup>] Judith, [fol. 162<sup>ra</sup>] FM 2:636 (cf. RB 341 & 343), [fol. 162<sup>ra</sup>-165<sup>vb</sup>] Esther, [fol. 165<sup>vb</sup>-166<sup>va</sup>] FM 2:670-72 (cf. RB 344 and 357), [fol. 166<sup>va</sup>-174<sup>vb</sup>] Job, [fol. 174<sup>vb</sup>-175<sup>va</sup>] FM 2:736-38 (cf. RB 6637 and 414) [fol. 175<sup>va</sup>-192<sup>va</sup>] Psalms, with rubricated titles throughout, [fol. 192<sup>va</sup>] FM 3:1-2 (cf. RB 457), [fol. 192<sup>vb</sup>-199<sup>rb</sup>] Proverbs, [fol. 199<sup>rb</sup>] FM 3:53 (cf. RB 462), [fol. 199<sup>rb</sup>-201<sup>va</sup>] Ecclesiastes, [fol. 201<sup>va</sup>-202<sup>vb</sup>] Song of Songs, with rubricated titles, [fol. 202<sup>vb</sup>] FM 3:85 (cf. RB 468), [fol. 202<sup>vb</sup>-207<sup>va</sup>] Wisdom, [fol. 207<sup>va</sup>-220<sup>ra</sup>] Ecclesiasticus, with biblical prologue marked off at start (as in many Latin bibles), [fol. 220<sup>rb</sup>] FM 3:224-25 (cf. RB 482), [fol. 220<sup>va</sup>-235<sup>ra</sup>] Isaiah, [fol. 235<sup>ra</sup>-va] FM 3:342-43 (cf. RB 487 and ?6205), [fol. 235<sup>va</sup>-252<sup>rb</sup>] Jeremiah, [fol. 252<sup>rb</sup>-253<sup>vb</sup>] Lamentations, with the last chapter separated as 'The orisoun of jeremye', [fol. 253<sup>vb</sup>] FM 3:484 (cf. RB 491) [fol. 253<sup>vb</sup>-256<sup>ra</sup>] Baruch, with the last chapter separated as 'The epistil the whiche jeremie sente to the caitifes...' [fol. 256<sup>ra</sup>-271<sup>vb</sup>] Ezekiel, [fol. 271<sup>vb</sup>-278<sup>rb</sup>] Daniel, [fol. 278<sup>rb</sup>-280<sup>va</sup>] Hosea, [fol. 280<sup>va</sup>-281<sup>rb</sup>] Joel, [fol. 281<sup>rb</sup>-283<sup>ra</sup>] Amos, [fol. 283<sup>ra</sup>-rb] Obadiah, [fol. 283<sup>rb</sup>-vb] Amos, [fol. 283<sup>vb</sup>-285<sup>ra</sup>] Micah, [fol. 285<sup>ra</sup>-vb] Nahum, [fol. 285<sup>vb</sup>-286<sup>rb</sup>] Habakkuk, [fol. 286<sup>rb</sup>-287<sup>ra</sup>] Zephaniah, [fol. 287<sup>ra</sup>-va] Haggai, [fol. 287<sup>va</sup>-290<sup>ra</sup>] Zechariah, [fol. 290<sup>ra</sup>-vb] Malachi, [fol. 291<sup>ra</sup>-300<sup>rb</sup>] I Maccabees, [fol. 300<sup>rb</sup>-307<sup>ra</sup>] II Maccabees, [fol. 307<sup>ra</sup>-rb] FM 4:1 (cf. RB 590), [fol. 307<sup>rb</sup>-317<sup>rb</sup>] Matthew, [fol. 317<sup>va</sup>] FM 4:86-87 (cf. RB 607), [fol. 317<sup>va</sup>-324<sup>ra</sup>] Mark, [fol. 324<sup>ra</sup>-rb] FM 4: 141-42 (cf. RB 620), [fol. 324<sup>rb</sup>-335<sup>va</sup>] Luke, [fol. 335<sup>va</sup>-vb] FM 4: 233-34 (cf. RB 624), [fol. 335<sup>vb</sup>-344<sup>ra</sup>] John, [fol. 344<sup>ra</sup>-348<sup>ra</sup>] Romans, [fol. 348<sup>ra</sup>-352<sup>ra</sup>] I Corinthians, [fol. 352<sup>ra</sup>-354<sup>va</sup>] II Corinthians, [fol. 354<sup>va</sup>-355<sup>vb</sup>] Galatians, [fol. 355<sup>vb</sup>-356<sup>vb</sup>] Philippians, [fol. 356<sup>vb</sup>-357<sup>va</sup>] Colossians, [fol. 357<sup>va</sup>-358<sup>rb</sup>] I Thessalonians, [fol. 358<sup>rb</sup>-vb] II Thessalonians, [fol. 358<sup>vb</sup>-360<sup>ra</sup>] Ephesians, [fol. 360<sup>ra</sup>-361<sup>ra</sup>] I Timothy, [fol. 361<sup>ra</sup>-vb] II Timothy, [fol. 361<sup>vb</sup>-362<sup>ra</sup>] Titus, [fol. 362<sup>ra</sup>-rb] Philemon, [fol. 362<sup>rb</sup>-365<sup>rb</sup>] Hebrews, [fol. 365<sup>rb</sup>-369<sup>va</sup>] Catholic Epistles, [fol. 369<sup>va</sup>-380<sup>rb</sup>] Acts, [fol. 380<sup>rb</sup>-\*κ] Apocalypse.

Fol. 385<sup>rb</sup>-vb was originally blank but ruled.

Added text:

Fol. 385<sup>va</sup>b: A list of books of the Bible, incomplete for the New Testament (ending at Galatians), added in bastard secretary, s. xv<sup>3/4</sup>.

COLLATION 1<sup>8</sup> (with one added as fol. 9) 2-48<sup>8</sup>. Horizontal catchwords under the inner column near the bounding line; for large portions of the book, catchwords appear at the foot of each verso in the first half of each quire, as well as on the final leaf. All leaves in the first half of each quire originally signed, although most cut away, quires 2-8 with a letter and arabic number, the rest with arabic numbers for both quire and leaf. In these systems, quires 6 and 8 are e and g, and quires 9-48 = 8-47.

TEXTUAL PRESENTATION AND DECORATION At the opening of Jerome's prologue, a thirteen-line champe in blue and violet with gold leaf, with a bar style demivinet with buds; a space for a heading left unfilled. At the openings of the books, five-line blue lombards with red flourishing (once red and violet), leaf and flower patterns, with marginal extensions; at the opening of chapters, similar but more restrained two- and three-line examples. Chapter numbers typically within the column in alternate red and blue lombards. Running titles indicate books in alternate red and blue lombards, and each page, above the top line crossing the central tram-lines, has an identification of the book in alternate blue and red in the text hand. The text is divided by red-slashed capitals, except in the Psalter, where there are headings and one-line red and blue lombards at versals. See AT no. 439 (44), dating c. 1440 (*sic*).

BINDING Brown leather over unbevelled wood, s. xv. Sewn on six thongs taken straight into the board as in Pollard's Figure 4, but unstaggered. Recesses and nailholes for two straps on the upper board, marks left by square supports for the clasps to which they attached at the centre of the lower board. A ChCh bookplate on the front pastedown. Marks from a large chain staple in Watson's position 4 (for its significance, see PROVENANCE).

PROVENANCE There are some signs of early and later use. Apart from the textual additions and corrections, which are fairly dense in the first 120 folios and again in the final folios, there is a more cursive script that annotates, adds cross-references in the Psalter and, in the early part of the volume, adds a leaf-shaped nota mark (eg fol. 31, 45<sup>v</sup>, 52, 53, 53<sup>v</sup>, 55, 57, 61 (with Latin original noted), 64, 79, 91<sup>v</sup>, 92<sup>v</sup>, 101, 130<sup>v</sup>, 134, 141, 170, 175, 214, 364, 380). Another reader demonstrates interest in the tale of the Judgement of Solomon by making two pen and ink drawings in the margin (fol. 106). Much later, a reader writing in a humanist-influenced script in brown ink (s. xvi<sup>med</sup>) notes a comparison with the 'versio Gallicana' (fol. 275<sup>v</sup>, next to Daniel 8:5, glossing 'buc of goet'). Considering the likely date of the annotation, it is legitimate to wonder whether this might be the work of Robert Clay, who is identified as a previous owner in an inscription at the front pastedown: 'Anno domini 1575 Eduarde Saunders off flower [i.e., Flore, Northants.] 1575 The twentieth daye of Maye beinge in the yere of our Lorde god 1575 and in the sevententhe yere \of the raigne/ of our most gracious soueraigne Ladye Quene Elizabeth On Robert Claye then vycar of Flower in the countye of Northampton did geve this Byble vnto me Eduarde Saunders of the same parishe and countye' (the front pastedown; Saunders also). On Clay, vicar of Flore from 1570 to 1579, and still alive in 1599, see Henry Isham Longden, *Northamptonshire and Rutland Clergy from 1500*, 3 vols (Nottingham, 1938), 3:145. At top right of the back pastedown, a price written (s. xvi<sup>med</sup>): 'praecium 3-6-8'; presumably this was what Clay paid for the volume.

The person to whom Clay gave this manuscript was the son of the MP Robert Saunders of Flore (on whom see S. T. Bindoff, *History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1509-58*, 3 vols (London, 1982), 3:274 and P. W. Hasler, *History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1558-1603*, 3 vols (London, 1981), 3:346), and thus was a nephew of the Marian supporter and judge, Sir Edward Saunders and his brother, Lawrence, a Marian martyr (see J. H. Baker and Tom Betteridge respectively in *Oxford DNB*). As well as the inscription, Saunders signed the manuscript at fol. iii<sup>v</sup> (beneath an earlier pair of Latin verses), at the upper margin of fol. 1, and at the rear pastedown with his motto 'Solatur conscientia et finis'.

Saunders's youngest son by his wife Frances Tiringham (Walter C. Metcalfe ed., *The Visitations of Northamptonshire...* (London, 1887), 195-96), also Edward, came up to Christ Church in 1581, and earned the degrees of BA and MA in 1582/3 and 1586, respectively. He was rector of Green's Norton (Northants.) until his death in 1631, aged about 67 (*AO*, 1314). There is, in the margin of fol. 1 of the manuscript, a note of his

donation, presumably in his own hand (it is certainly not that of his father): ‘Liber Ecclesiae Christi ex dono Edouardi Saunders Armigeri de Flower in Com: Northamptoniae’. Though the note is undated, we can use the material evidence of the binding to surmise a date of donation: the chain-staple, 55mm in length and 20mm wide, is unusual among those used at ChCh but it identical in dimensions to some of the staples provided for the printed books given by Mildred, Lady Burghley (on which, see Introduction); her donation was made in 1586, the year of Saunders’ MA, suggesting he gave the book at the time of his graduation.

That the manuscript was not, like all other early arrivals, re-chained in the early seventeenth century must be a function of its bulk: it was presumably stored sitting on its side, while its smaller colleagues were to be stored upright, and its abnormality meant altering its chaining was considered unnecessary. That it remained in its horizontal position into the eighteenth century is suggested by its position in the 1676 Catalogue (see Appendix I).

The manuscript was seen and catalogued by James (52) as MS 1: ‘Biblia Anglice vel Saxonice’. The manuscript contains, at front pastedown, the shelfmark relating to the 1676 Catalogue, ‘D.1’ (see Appendix I); it also has the New Library shelfmark ‘E.4’ (the latter in Edward Smallwell’s hand) at both top left of the front pastedown and top right of fol. iii. Smallwell also notes at top centre of fol. iii: ‘The Old & New Testament in Wickliffe’s Translation. Vide G10’, cross-referencing this manuscript with our MS. 146, where a similar note occurs.

Attached to the same folio is a letter from Josiah Forshall, dated 14 July but without a year (fols i-ii), thanking the Dean and Chapter for loan of the manuscript for collation and praising the quality of its text. Behind this lies a tale which is reconstructed by Dove, *First English Bible*, 143 where she comments that ‘unfortunately, Forshall and Madden do not make use of the Christ Church Bible in the Old Testament. Forshall was to blame for this: after visiting Oxford to locate bibles in the Earlier Version, he reported that Christ Church had none. Madden later notes: “This was a fatal mistake”.’ So, Forshall’s letter to the Dean (which presumably dates from the early 1830s, but after 1832 as that is when Madden, described here as ‘Sir F. Madden’, was knighted) stating that ‘in point of completeness [it] has only one or two others equal to it’ was akin to atonement for his earlier oversight.

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