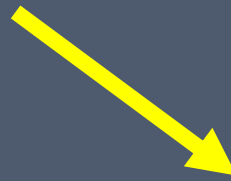


# HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

*LESSON 7 – EARLY TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE  
(UP TO THE PRINTING PRESS)*

# FROM GOD TO US

INSPIRATION



CANONIZATION



TRANSMISSION



TRANSLATION

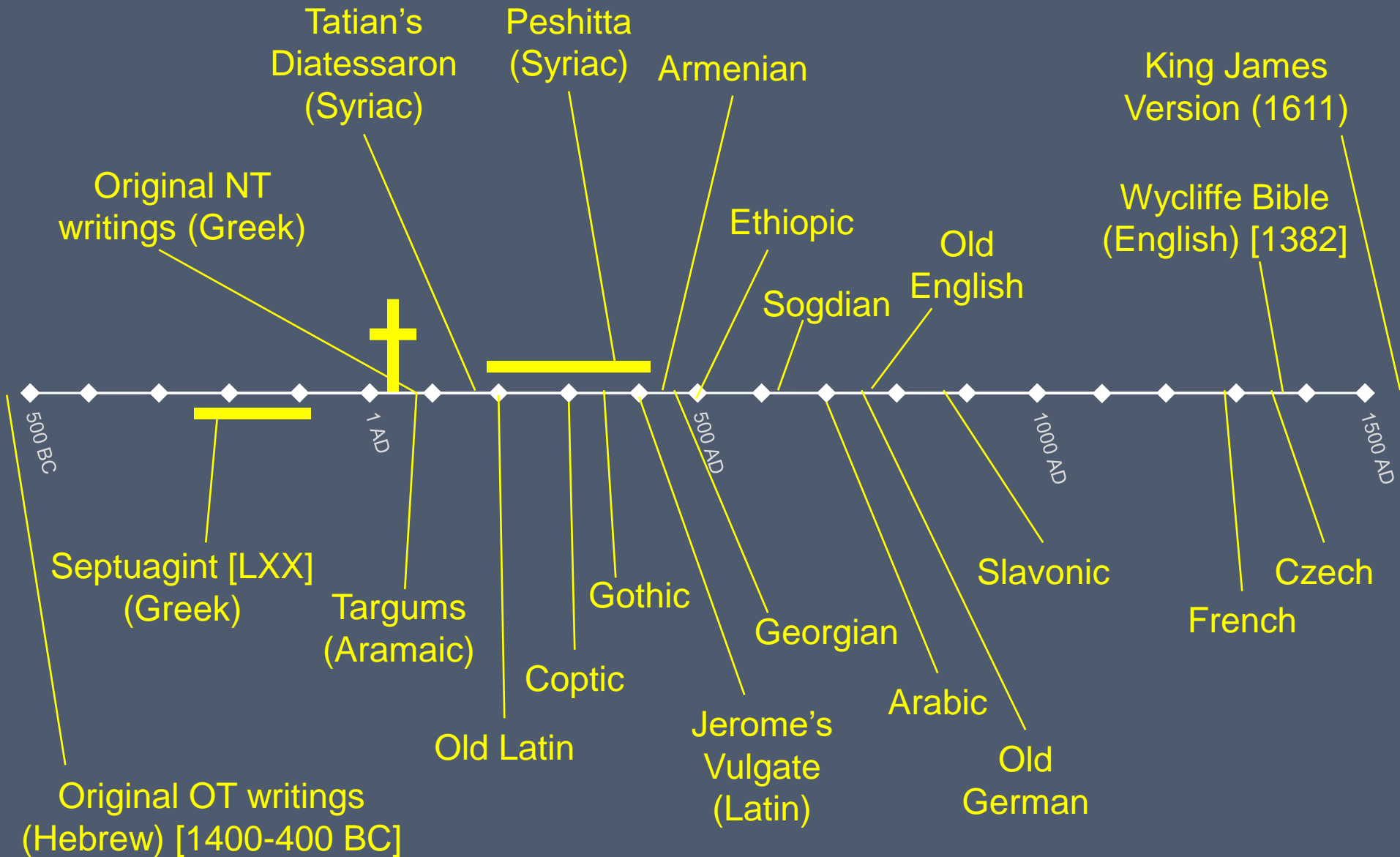
# Translation of the Bible

# Definitions

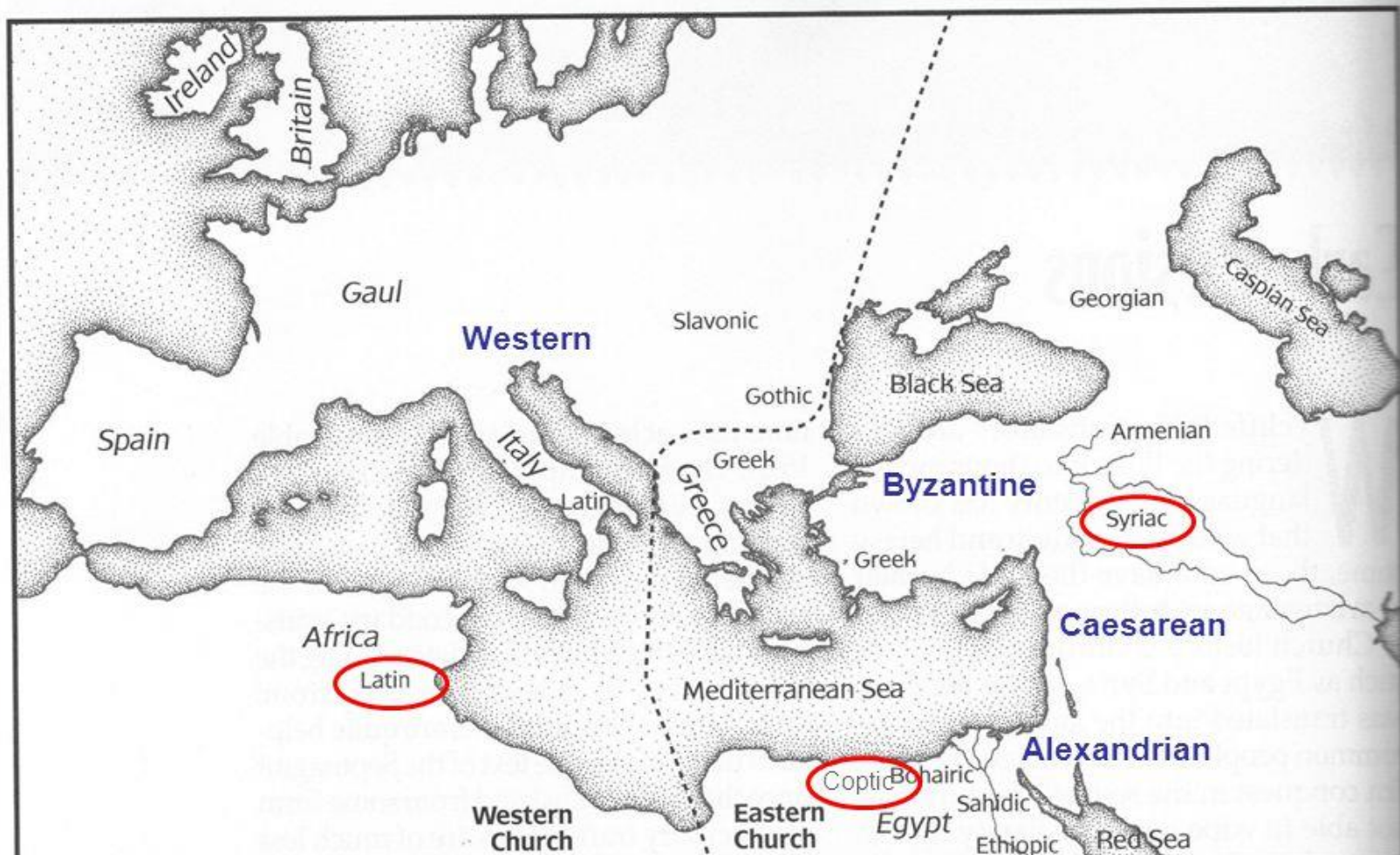
(from Geisler, 258)

- **Translation** – the rendering of a given literary composition from one language into another
  - **Literal translation** – an attempt to express, as far as possible, the exact meaning of the original words of the text being translated (word-for-word)
  - **Paraphrase** – a free or loose translation (idea-for-idea)
- **Transliteration** – the rendering of the letters of one language into the corresponding letters of another
- **Version** – a translation from the *original language* into any other language
- **Revision** – a translation from the original language that has been carefully and systematically reviewed and critically examined with a view to correct errors or make other necessary emendations
- **Commentary** – an explanation of Scripture

# Timeline of Bible Translations



# Areas of Early Versions



# *Syriac Versions*

- **The Syriac language**
  - A Middle Aramaic dialect (sometimes referred to Christian Aramaic)
  - Spoken over much of the Fertile Crescent and Eastern Arabia
  - First appeared in 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, major literary language from 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> centuries in Middle East
- **Role in early church**
  - In Antioch in Syria the disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11:19-30)
  - Extant manuscripts produced during the first six centuries AD
  - Widest spread Bibles in early church having manuscripts from Lebanon, Egypt, Sinai, Mesopotamia, Armenia, India and even China.
- **Syriac versions**
  - Old Syriac
  - Peshitta (common version)
  - Philoxenian
  - Harclean
  - Palestinian

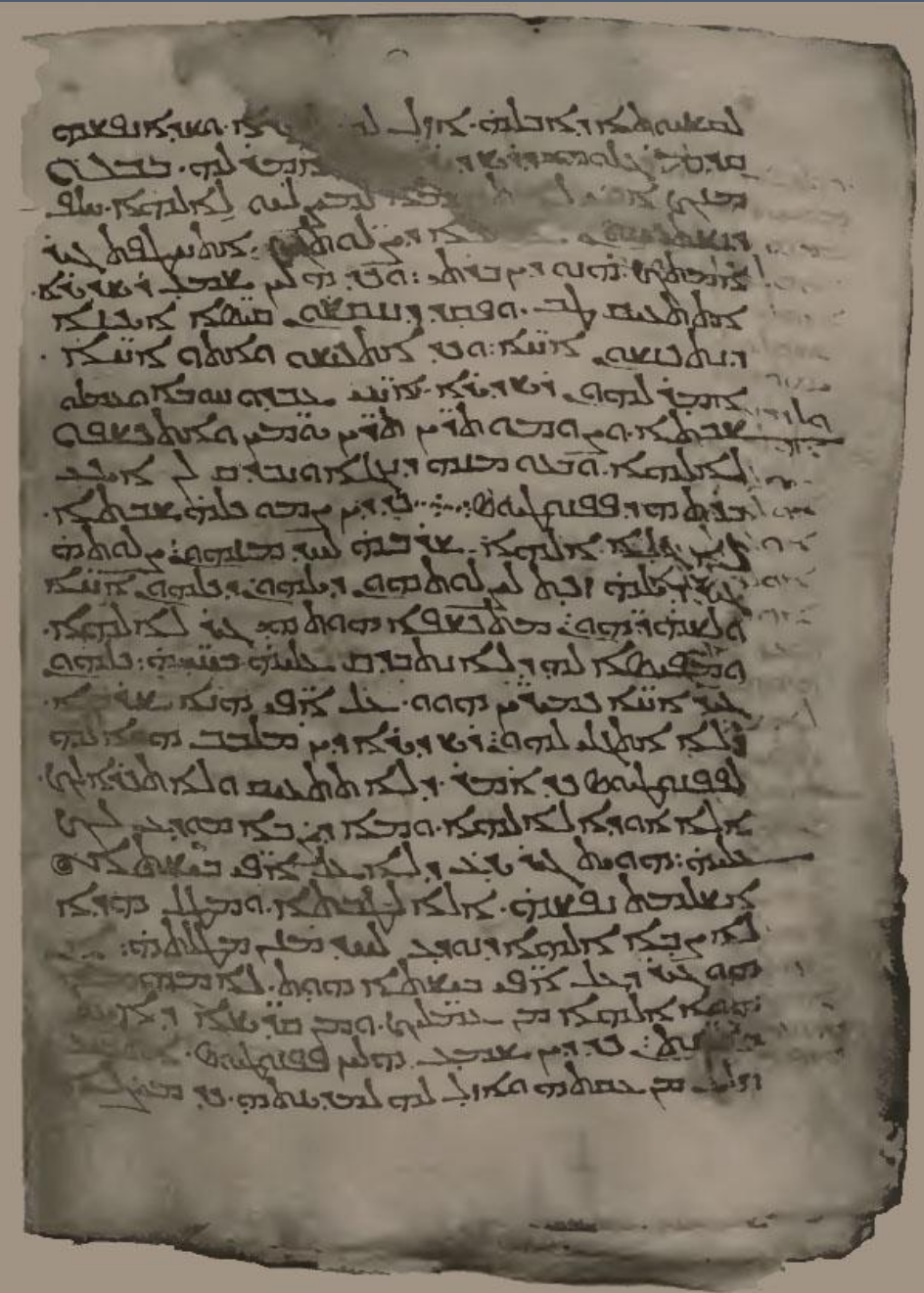


## Old Syriac Manuscripts: Sinaitic Syriac - Syr<sup>s</sup>

Date: late 4<sup>th</sup> Century

Text: gospels

This 4<sup>th</sup> century palimpsest contains a text believed to be from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. It was overwritten in 778 AD with a biography of female saints and martyrs. This manuscript is the oldest surviving copy of the gospels in Syriac. And it is one of two (Curetonian Gospels) manuscripts that predate the Peshitta (the standard Syriac version).





# ***Tatian (c. 120-180 AD)***



- Syrian Christian writer and theologian
- His most influential work was the *Diatessaron* (Gr. “through the four”), a harmony of the four canonical gospels. His harmony became the standard for all Syriac versions until the Peshitta of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. It also showed up in some recensions in Latin, High German, and Middle English. No copies extant today
- Claimed by Eusebius and other church fathers to be a heretic (ascetic & gnostic).

Image from

[http://www.forerunner.com/churchfathers/X0038\\_10.\\_TATIANS\\_ADDRESS\\_.html](http://www.forerunner.com/churchfathers/X0038_10._TATIANS_ADDRESS_.html)

# *Nestorius* (c. 386-450 AD)

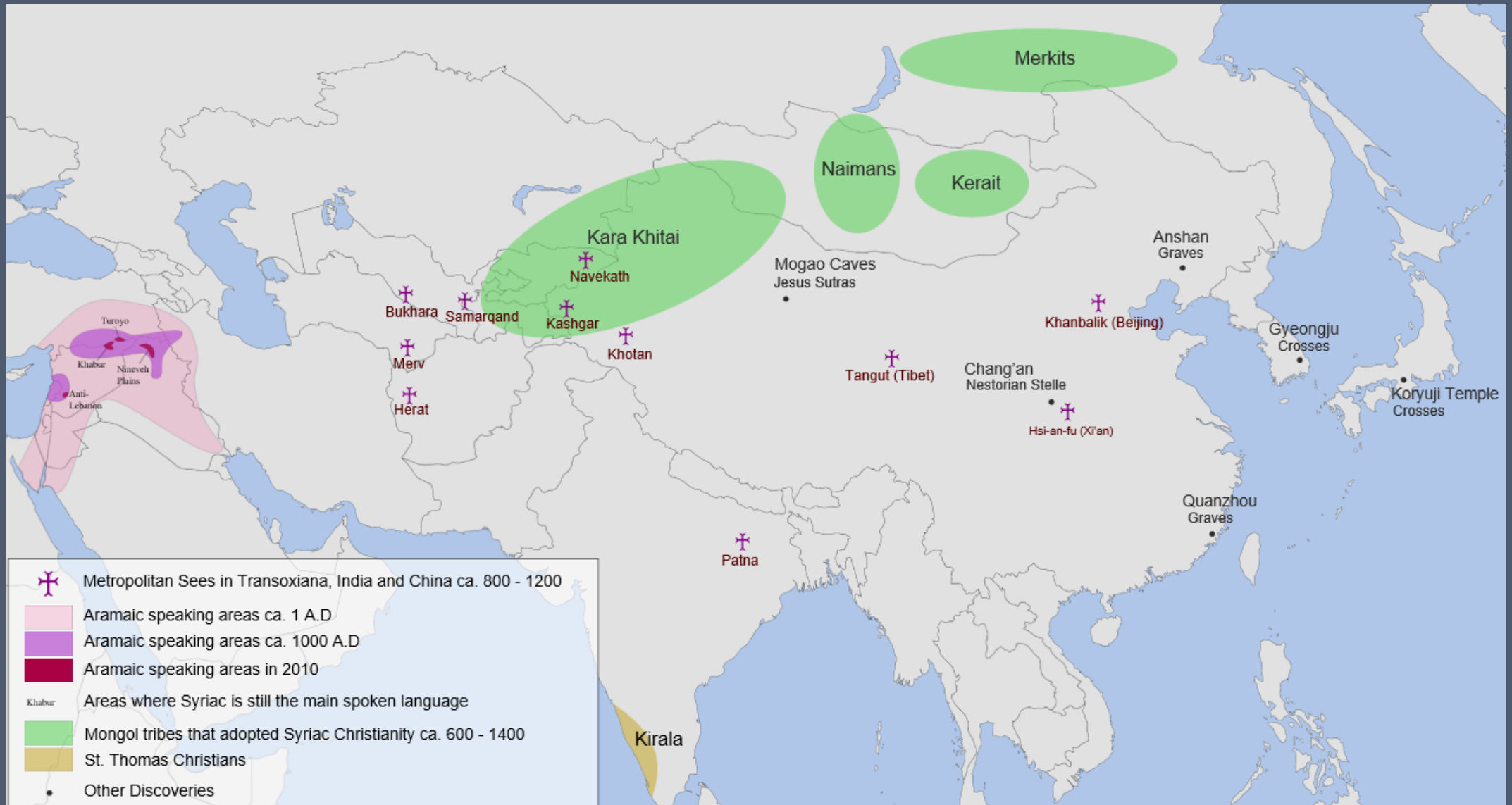
- Archbishop of Constantinople from 428-431 when he was condemned as a heretic
  - Nestorianism refers to a teaching that Christ has two natures: divine & human
  - Unclear whether Nestorius actually taught that
  - Fervently defended his orthodoxy while in exile until formally anathematized in 451
- Many of his followers (the Church of the East) relocated to Persia following the so-called Nestorian Schism (~431-544)
- This began the church's movement (with her Syriac Scriptures) eastward into India, China, Mongolia, Korea & Japan



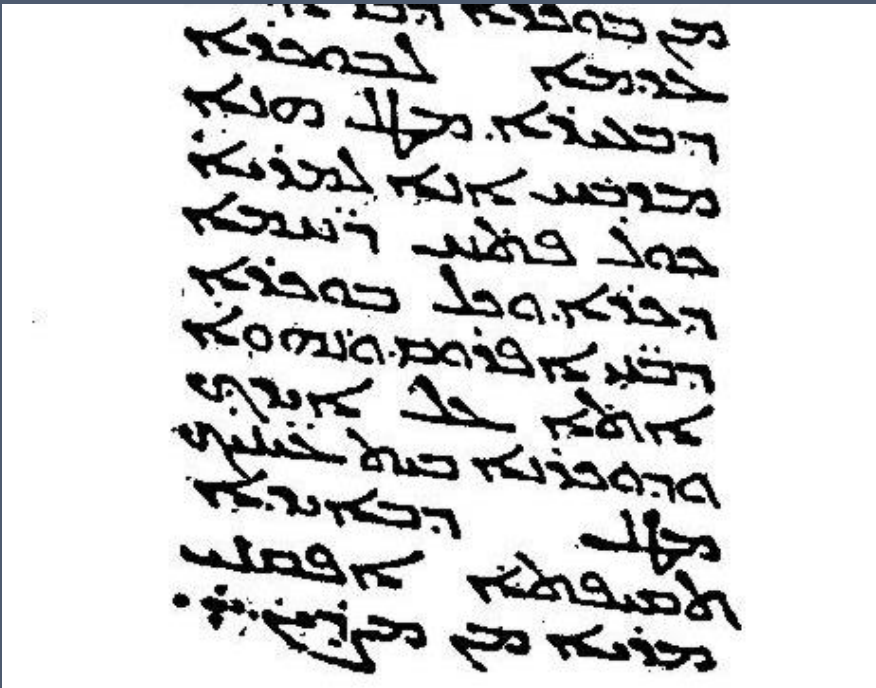
Image from Wikipedia



# Syriac Geographic Distribution



# Syriac Peshitta - Syr<sup>P</sup>



- The name Peshitta means simple, or common
- The original Peshitta NT did not contain 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude and Revelation. These were added in the Harclean text of 616AD.
- Wide circulation during the mid-late 5<sup>th</sup> century (even to China!)
- Became the authorized version of the two main branches of Syriac Christianity (the Jacobites and the Nestorians)
- Had great missionary influence on the Armenian, Georgian, Arabic & Persian translations

# Latin Geographic Distribution



# Latin Versions

## 1. Old Latin (*vetus latina*)

- A. First translations into Latin were in the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century in North Africa
- B. Early versions were wooden and literal translations
- C. Extant witnesses date from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century
- D. Typically Western text type
- E. Many variants within the surviving manuscripts

## 2. Latin Vulgate

- A. Name means 'common'
- B. Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome in 382 AD to revise the Latin Bible
- C. Starting with a Latin base, Jerome changed only some distorted parts based on original languages
- D. Pope Clement VIII issued an authentic edition of Jerome's Vulgate in 1592. The Clementine Vulgate is still the official Latin Bible of Catholic church
- E. Over 8,000 manuscripts extant



# Scilliton Martyrs (July 17, 180 AD)



- A group of 12 North African Christians (7 men, 5 women)
- Executed for their Christian beliefs on July 17, 180 AD
- “Saturninus the proconsul said: What are the objects in your carrying case?”  
“Speratus said: Books and letter of Paul, a righteous man.”
- Quotes of 1 Timothy 6:16 & Romans 13:7 in court records are the oldest known written Latin translations of Scripture

# ***Tertullian (c. 155-240 AD)***

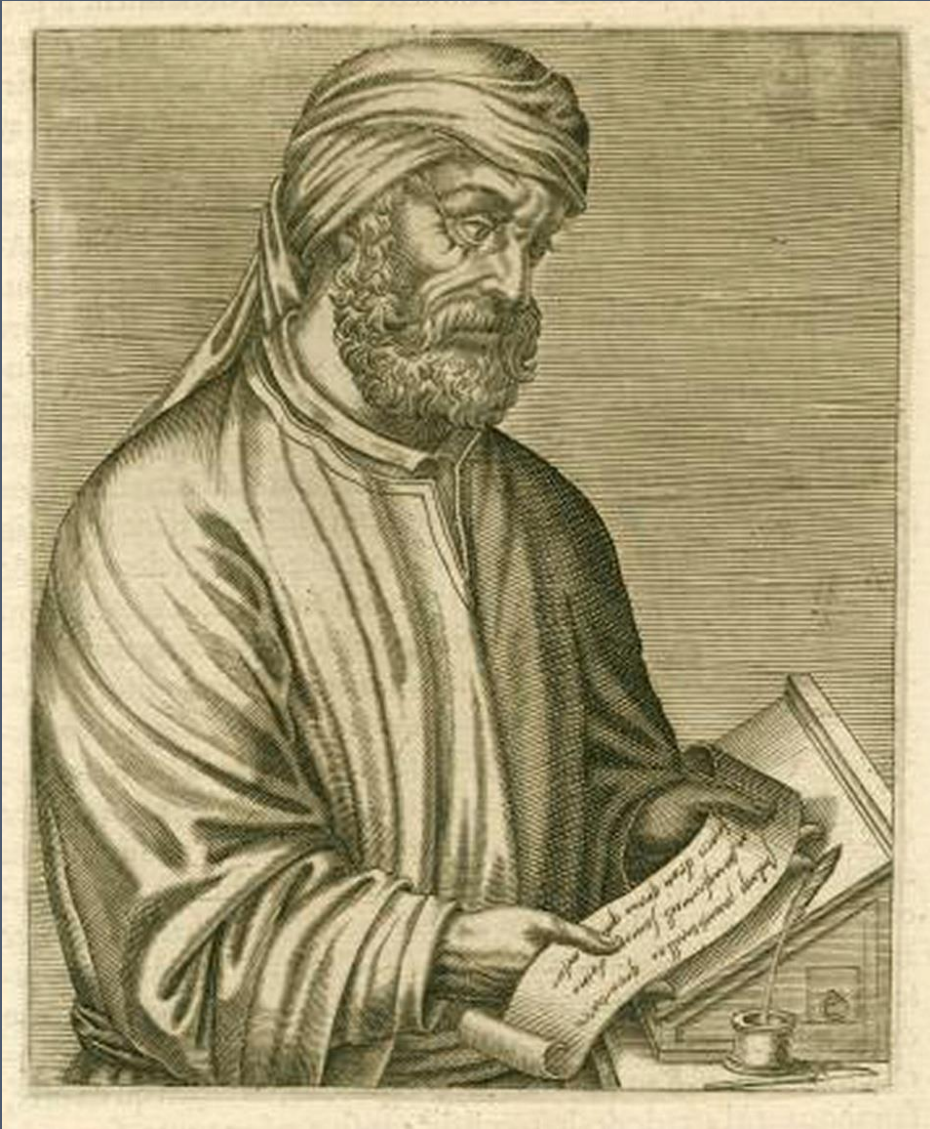


Image from Wikipedia

- Called “the Father of Latin Theology”
- Early Christian author from Carthage in North Africa (modern-day Tunisia)
- First Christian author, whose works survive, who wrote in Latin
- Quoted from entire NT except 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John.
- His quotes are occasionally similar to extant Old Latin manuscripts suggesting a translation of some Scripture into Latin existed in his time
- Fought against heresies of Marcionism and Gnosticism, but later adopted a form of Montanism (new revelations can come from the Holy Spirit through prophets)

# God's Word is for Everyone

“Consult the words of God, our scriptures, which we do not ourselves hold back and which many situations bring to those outside the community.”

- Tertullian, *Apology*, 31.1

How can they consult that which they cannot read?

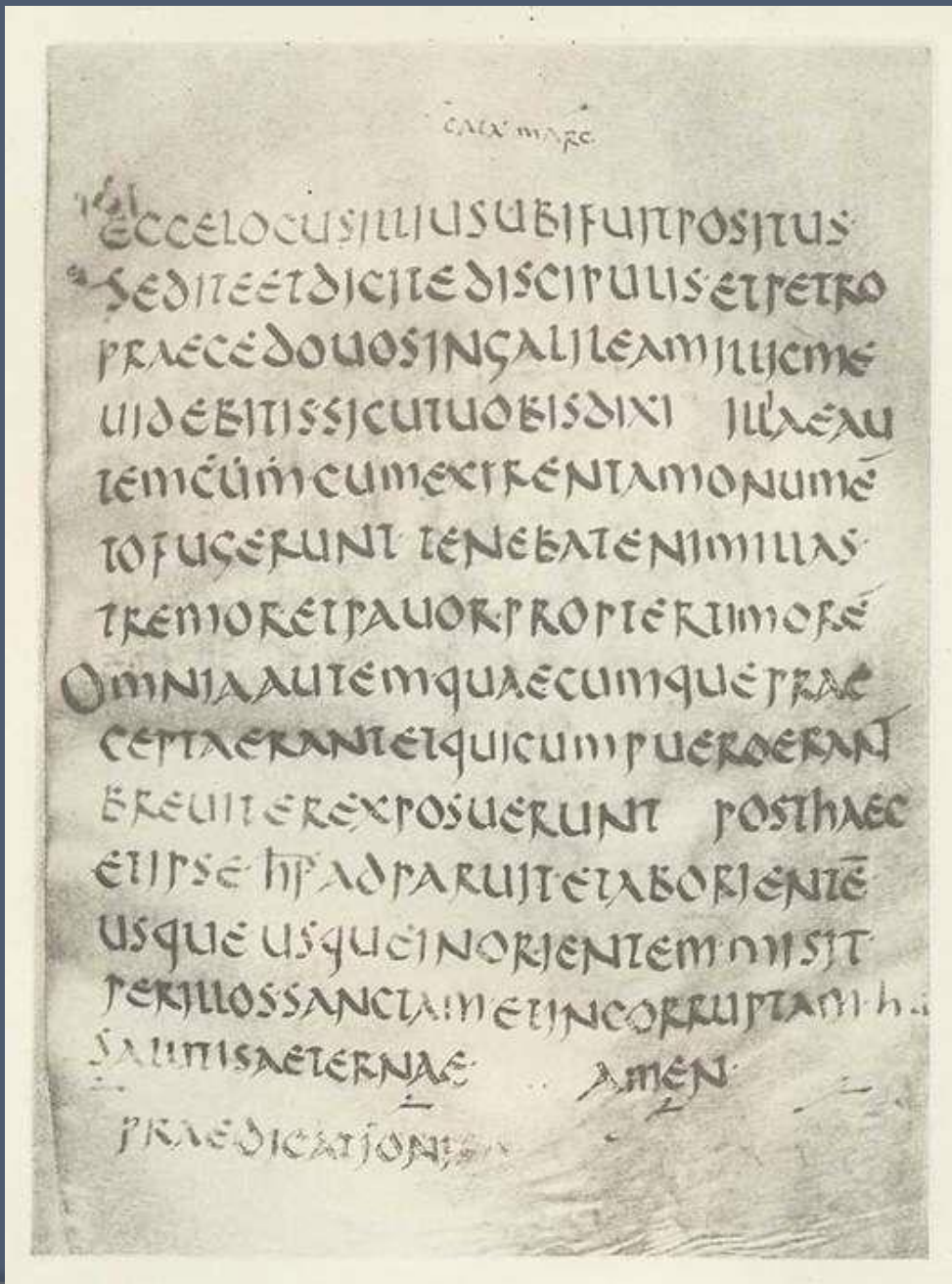


# *Cyprian (c. 200-258 AD)*



Image from Wikipedia

- Early Christian author and Bishop of Carthage in North Africa (modern-day Tunisia)
- Pre-eminent Christian writer in Latin until Jerome and Augustine
- Numerous biblical quotations in his works from 248-258 AD provide evidence for a Latin translation of the NT in Africa at that time
- Surprisingly little overlap with Tertullian's quotations indicates a variety of Latin translations at that time
- Martyred on September 14, 258 AD for not sacrificing to pagan deities
  - His only answer to examination was, "Thanks be to God!"
  - Knelt down, prayed, blindfolded himself and was beheaded



Ending of Mark

Image from Wikipedia

## Old Latin Manuscript: k - Codex Bobbiensis

Date: ~400 AD

Text: Matt & Mark fragments

The most important of the African Old Latin manuscripts. It was likely copied from a 2<sup>nd</sup> century papyrus. This manuscript contains the intermediate ending of Mark (shown here).

Contains similar readings to Cyprian of Carthage



# ***Old Latin Manuscript: gig - Codex Gigas***

**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> century**  
**Text: entire Bible**

One of the largest manuscripts (20x36 inches), it's name means "giant." It is sometimes called the Devil's Bible because of the illustration (pictured on the right page).







Painting by Justus van Gent, circa 1474

# *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

- Early Christian theologian and philosopher
- Bishop of Hippo Regius in North Africa (modern-day Algeria)
- Helped formulate doctrines of grace, original sin, predestination & the Trinity
- Recognized by Catholics as a saint
- Protestants consider him one of the fathers of the Protestant Reformation
- One of the most prolific Latin authors in terms of surviving works
- Stressed an importance of learning Greek, but never mastered it himself

Image from Wikipedia

# Variability in Old Latin

“For the translations of the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek can be counted, but the Latin translators are out of all number.”

- Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 2.11.16

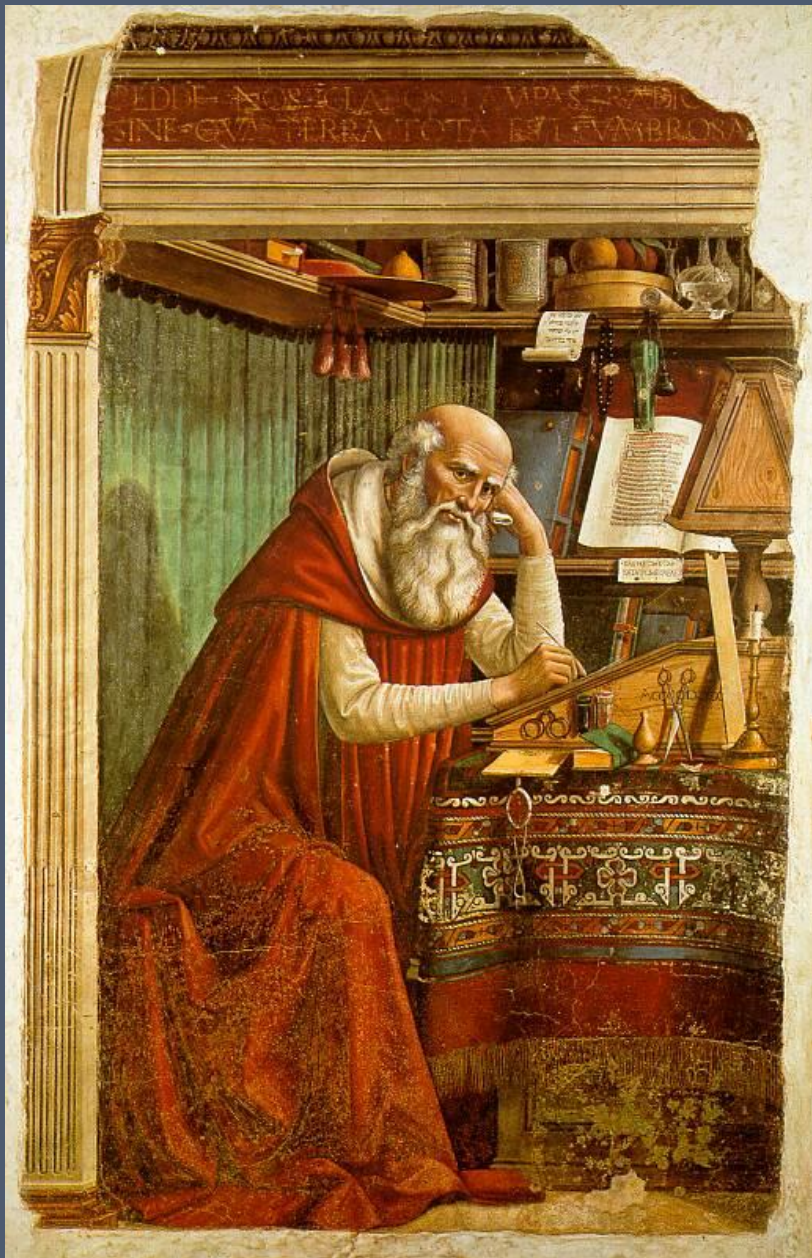
# Variability in Old Latin

“For in the early days of the faith every man who happened to get his hands upon a Greek manuscript, and who thought he had any knowledge, were it ever so little, of the two languages, ventured upon the work of translation.”

- Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 2.11.16



# Jerome (347-420 AD)



St. Jerome in His Study (1480) by Domenico Ghirlandaio

Image from Wikipedia

- Born Eusebius Sophronius Heironymus in northern Italy
- Seriously ill in 374, had a vision which caused him to become deeply devoted to God
- Became a priest and theologian, the protégé of Pope Damasus I
- Commissioned by Damasus to revise the *vetus latina* (old Latin) texts in 382
- In 388 moved to Holy Land, lived in a cave near Bethlehem the rest of his life
- Translated the OT from Hebrew in 390, not LXX, NT from Greek
- Completed 'Vulgate' by 405

# Variability in Old Latin

“If trust is to be placed on Latin originals, let them tell us which ones: there are almost as many as there are manuscripts.”

- Jerome, *Epistula ad Damasum* [376-377 AD]

# Jerome's Revision

“In order that these [gospels] would not differ greatly from the customary Latin reading, I directed my pen only to correct errors which seemed to change the sense, and allowed the rest to remain as it had been.”

- Jerome, *Epistula ad Damasum* [376-377 AD]



# On Elaborate Manuscripts



“Parchment is dyed with purple hue, gold liquefies into writing, books are covered in jewels, and Christ is dying naked before their doors.”

- Jerome, *Epistulae* 22.54

5<sup>th</sup> century Old Latin manuscript *Codex Veronensis* with purple dye and gold lettering [image from Wikipedia]



Illustration of Ezra at start of OT

## ***Vulgate Manuscript: A - Codex Amiatinus***

Date: 716 AD

Text: entire Bible

- Considered the most important & most accurate manuscript of the Vulgate
- Weighs 75 pounds!
- Very important in the counter-reformation. Protestants translated from the original languages but none of them in the 16<sup>th</sup> century were older than Amiatinus in Latin, so the Catholics claimed theirs was the authority.
- Moved to Rome in 1587 where it was the primary source in the revised Vulgate of Popes Sixtus and Clement.

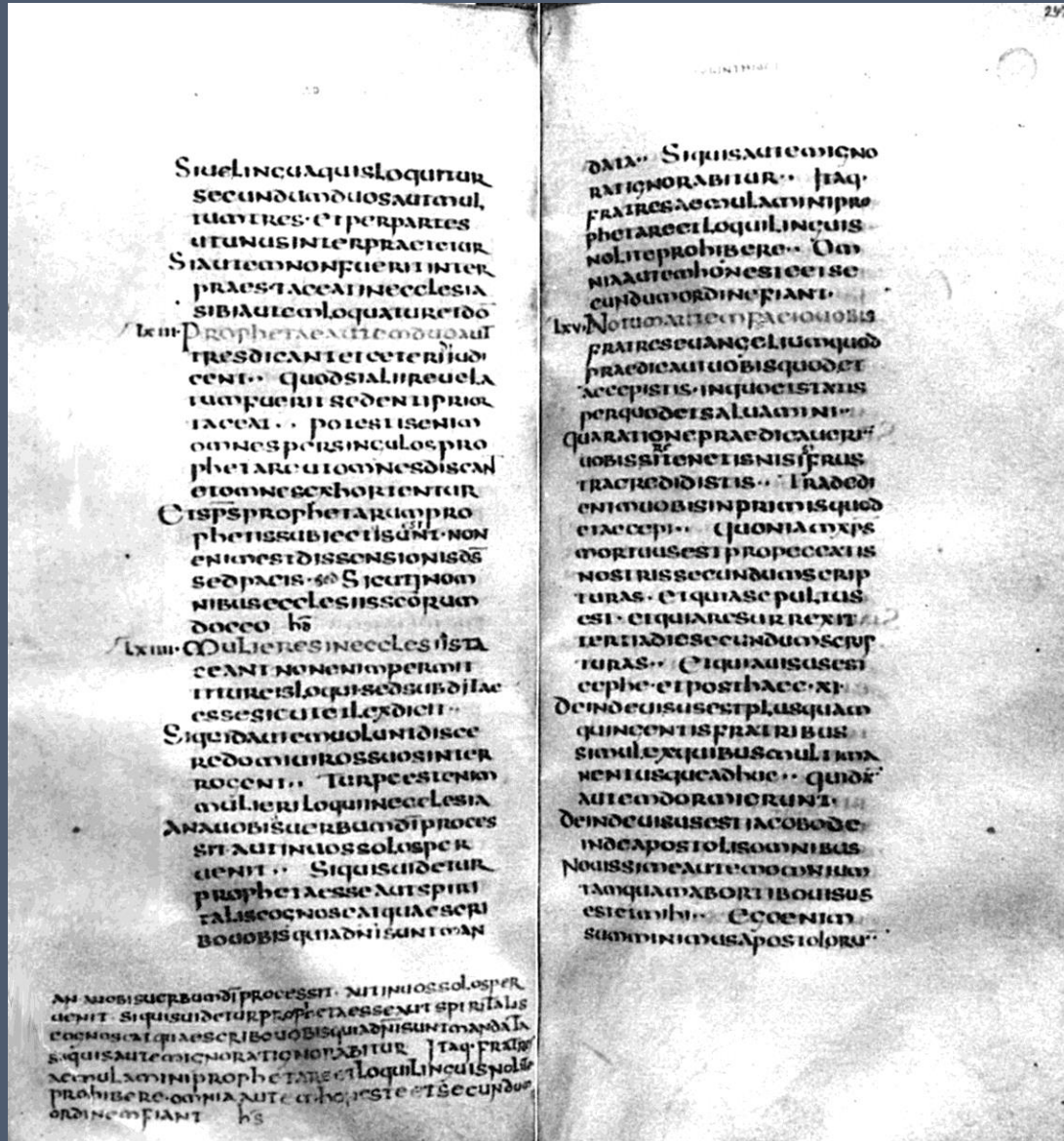


# Vulgate Manuscript: F - Codex Fuldensis

Date: 546 AD

Text: entire Bible

- Considered the second most important manuscript of the Vulgate
- The oldest complete witness to the *Diatessaron* of Tatian. The harmony of the *Diatessaron* is used instead of the four individual gospels.
- The oldest witness to the spurious *Epistle to the Laodiceans*, falsely attributed to Paul & located after Colossians



# Coptic Versions

## 1. The Coptic language

- A. The latest stage of the Egyptian language
- B. The Egyptian language for over 3500 years before Arabic took over
- C. Uses an adapted Greek alphabet plus 6-7 demotic symbols
- D. Several dialects according to location along Nile River

S = Sahidic

B = Bohairic

F = Faiyumic

M = Mesokemic or Oxyrhynchite

A = Achmimic

L = Subachmimic or the dialect of Lycopolis

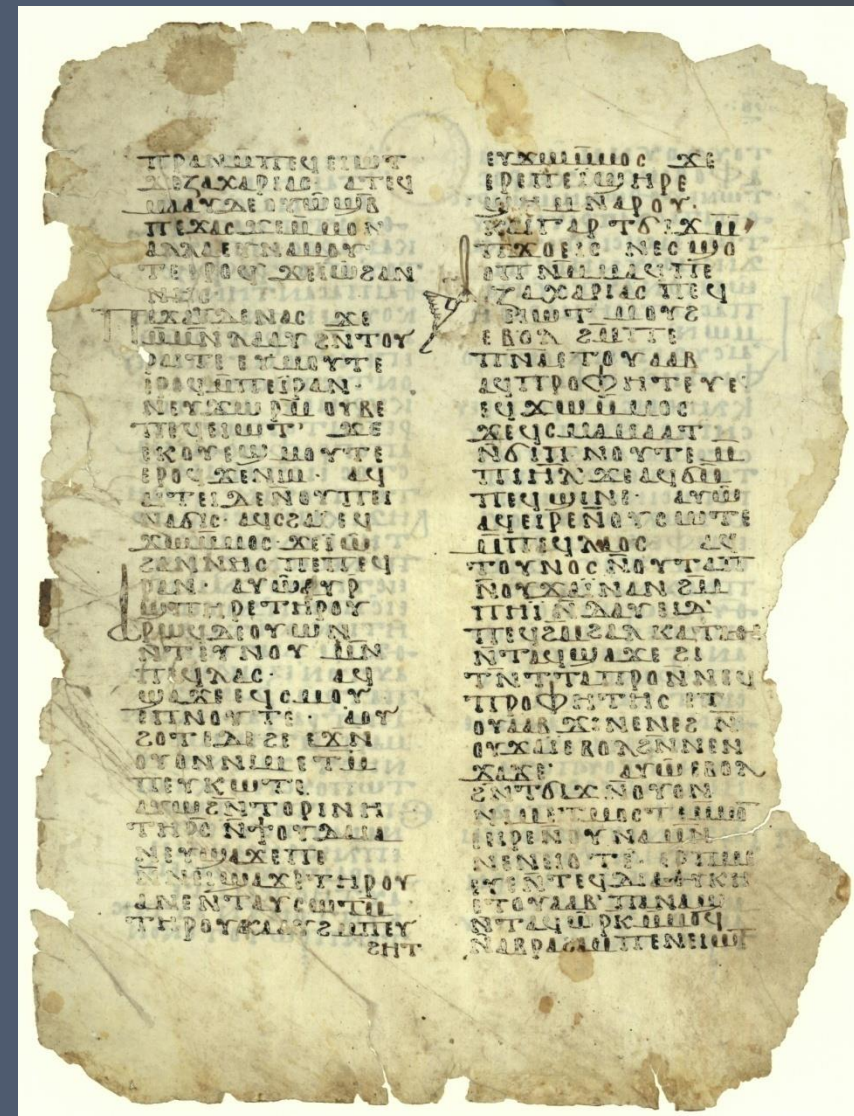




# Coptic Versions

## 1. Coptic versions

- A. Translated from Alexandrian Greek texts into all four major dialects
- B. Sahidic
  - i. First translation in 2<sup>nd</sup> century
  - ii. mss extant from 4<sup>th</sup>
- C. Bohairic
  - i. First translation early 3<sup>rd</sup> century
  - ii. Very literal translation
  - iii. Most helpful in reconstructing original Greek text
  - iv. Over 100 manuscripts extant



Uncial manuscript 0177 (10<sup>th</sup> century) of Luke 1:59-73  
A Greek-Coptic diglot

Image from Wikipedia

# Ethiopic Versions

## 1. The Ethiopic language

- A. Actually the correct name is Amharic which is the national language of Ethiopia. The manuscripts are in an old version of Amharic called Ge'ez.
- B. A Semitic language that already had developed writing by the time Christianity arrived

## 2. Ethiopic manuscripts and versions

- A. Christianity reached Ethiopia to stay ~4<sup>th</sup> century
- B. Version probably appeared in the 5<sup>th</sup> century
- C. Likely translated from the Greek or Coptic
- D. Most extant manuscripts are from the 11<sup>th</sup> century or younger, most from 14<sup>th</sup> century on



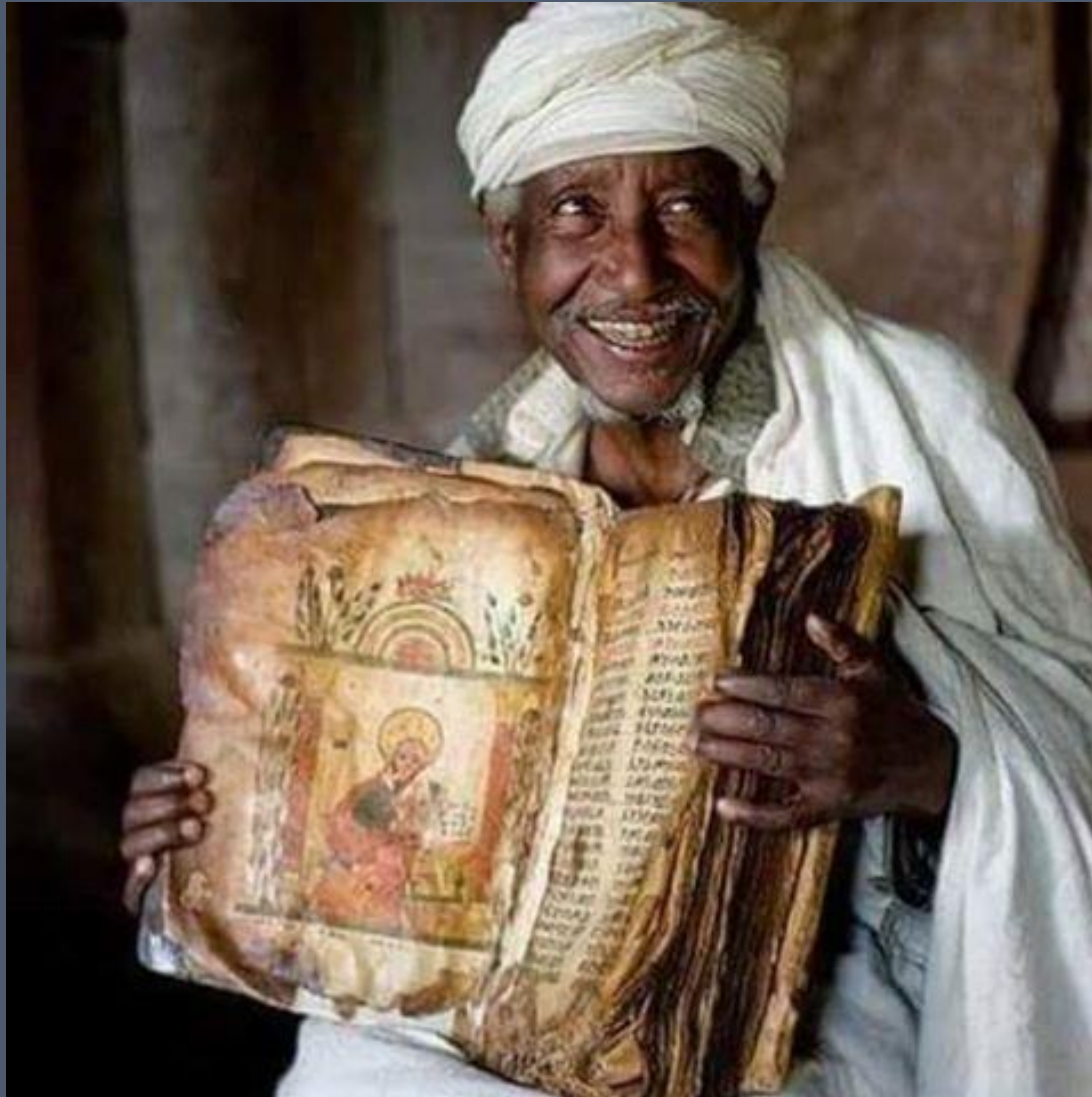
Gospel of Matthew from Ethiopian Manuscript 59874 at the British Library



# ***Ethiopic Manuscript: Garima Gospels***

**Date: late 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Century**

**Text: Gospels**



- Two ancient manuscripts in Ge'ez (Ethiopic) of the gospels
- Likely the earliest surviving illuminated Christian manuscript
- Some of the earliest witnesses to the Byzantine text type
- Possibly copied by Abba Garima who traveled from Constantinople to Ethiopia in 494 AD
- The oldest known book with original binding in the world
- First became known outside Ethiopia in 1950



# Garima Gospels





# Gothic Versions

## 1. The Gothic language

- A. An extinct language
- B. The first Germanic language
- C. Known from *Codex Argenteus* (a 6<sup>th</sup> century copy of a 4<sup>th</sup> century translation of the Bible from Greek into Gothic by Wulfila)
- D. Alphabet created by Wulfila

## 2. Manuscripts & versions

- A. Only a half-dozen survive in fragments
- B. Wulfila faithfully translated from the Byzantine Greek texts about 350 AD into the Gothic written language he created

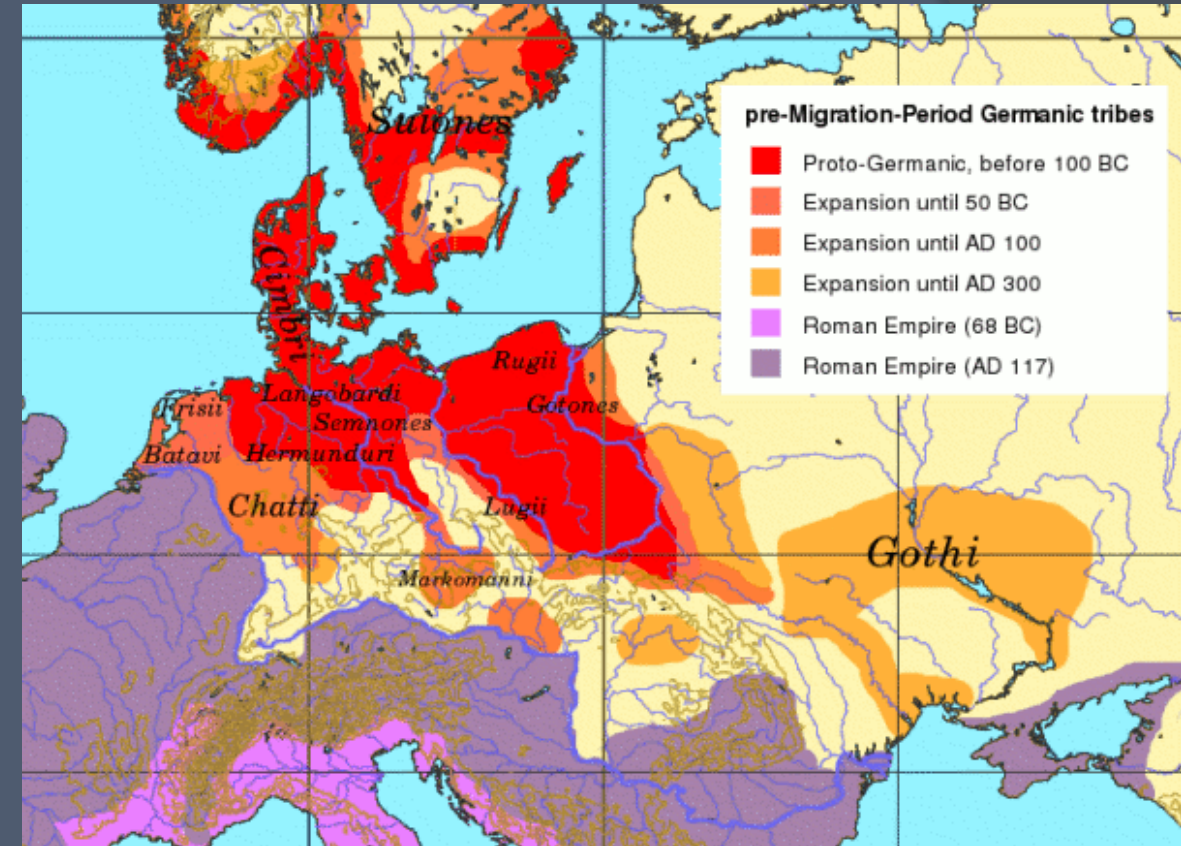
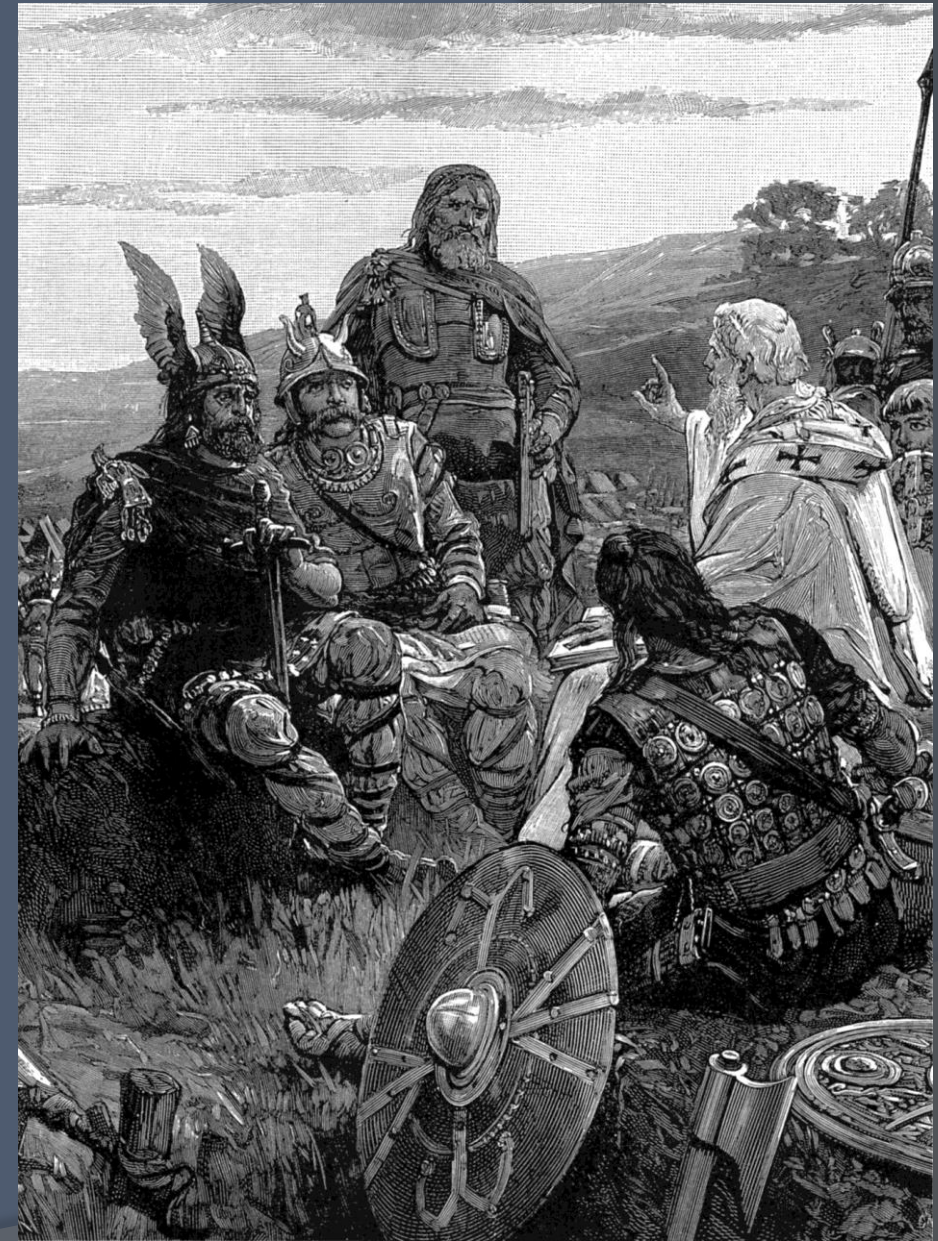


Image from

<http://www.proto-germanic.com/search/label/ancient%20germanic>

# *Wulfila (or Ulfila)* (c. 311-383 AD)

- Known as “the apostle to the Goths”
- His Cappadocian Greek parents were enslaved by the Goths (~264 AD)
- Raised in captivity as a Goth and became proficient in Greek and Latin
- Ordained as a bishop and returned to his people as a missionary 341 AD
- Moved to Bulgaria in 348 AD where he devised the Gothic alphabet and translated the Bible from the Greek



Wulfila sharing the gospel with the Goths

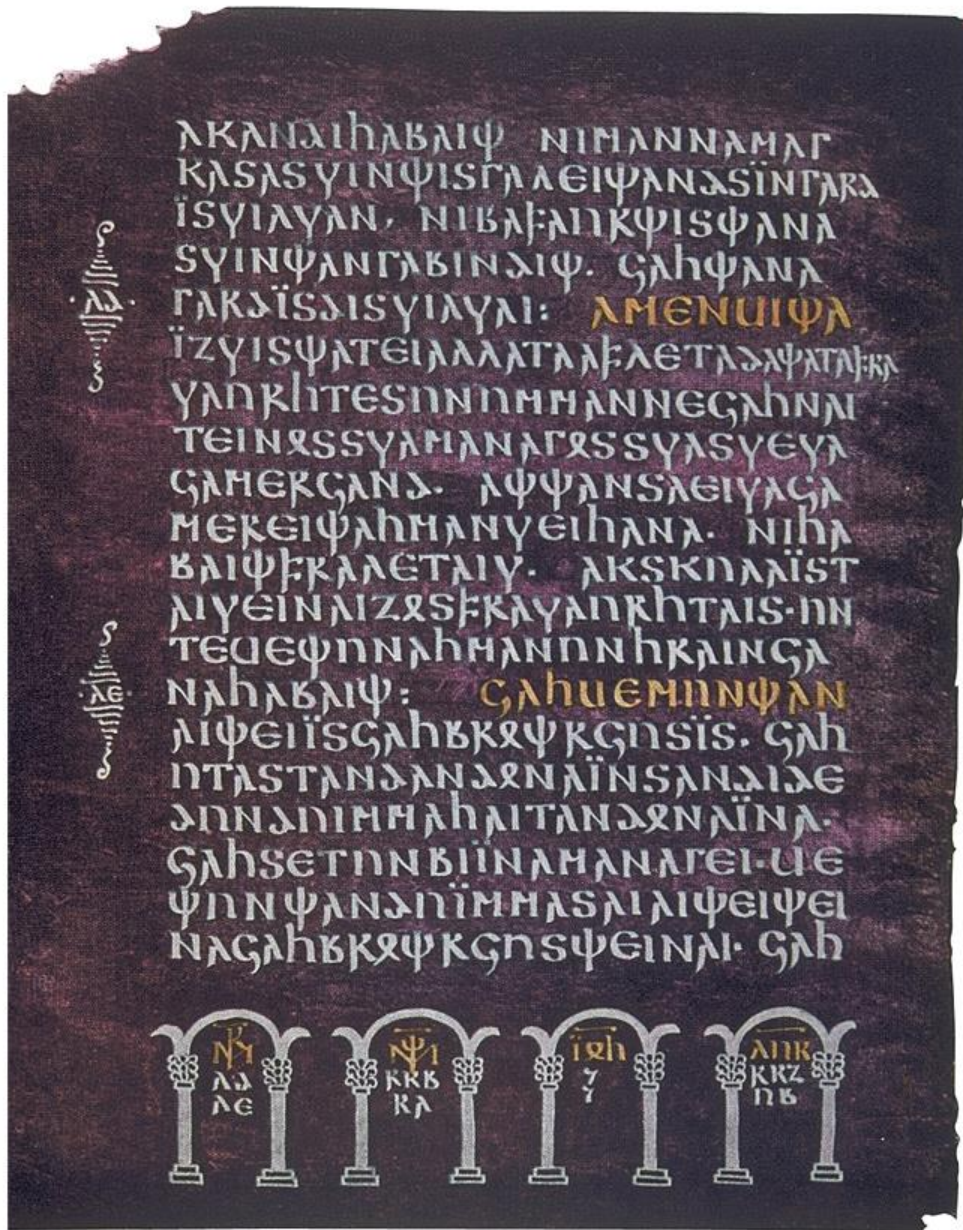
Image from Wikipedia



# Gothic Manuscript: Codex Argenteus

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> Century  
Text: Gospels

- A copy of Wulfila's original 4<sup>th</sup> century translation into the Gothic language, which he created
- Written on purple vellum in large silver (hence the name "silver codex") letters, the first line of each section are in gold
- Copied in Ravenna (northern Italy) possibly for the Gothic King Theoderic the Great
- Presented to Uppsala University in Sweden in 1669



# Slavonic Versions

## 1. The Slavonic language

- A. An Indo-European language
- B. Old Church Slavonic is the earliest Slavic language with any literary remains
- C. Around 860 the brothers Methodius and Constantine were sent to evangelize the Slavs
- D. Constantine (later named Cyril) developed the Slavic alphabet and worked on the translation of the Bible
- E. But there are 2 Slavic alphabets (Glagolitic & Cyrillic)



<http://www.total-croatia-news.com/lifestyle/18947-czech-linguist-and-croatian-anthropologist-create-an-inter-slavic-language> (top)

Image from <https://blog.thelinguist.com/similarities-and-differences-between-the-slavic-languages>



# Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius

- Cyril (826-869); Methodius (815-885)
- Brothers and Byzantine Christian theologians and missionaries
- Called the “Apostles to the Slavs”
- Devised the Glagolitic alphabet, the first alphabet for the Old Church Slavonic translation of the Bible in 863
- Cyrillic is a descendent script still used today, developed after Cyril’s death by their disciples in the First Bulgarian Empire



"Saints Cyril and Methodius holding the Cyrillic alphabet," a mural by [Bulgarian](#) iconographer [Z. Zograf](#), 1848, [Troyan Monastery](#)

Image from Wikipedia

# Slavonic Versions

- **The Slavonic Bible**
  - Still the Bible of Slavic Orthodox church
  - Translators were venerated but not scholars of Jerome's caliber
  - Has received little critical attention
  - Around 860 the brothers Methodius and Constantine (Cyril) were sent to evangelize the Slavs
  - Oldest manuscripts are 10<sup>th</sup> century in the Glagolitic alphabet, but Cyrillic followed soon after
  - Later recensions include Bulgarian, Bohemian, Russian, Croatian & Serbian

*A late text of the Slavonic version:*

*The Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander, Tsar of Bulgaria 1331-1371*

*British Library Add. 39627, commissioned 1355*

*A copy of the Bulgarian recension.*

*Shown is folio 88, the beginning of the Gospel of Mark*



Image from

<https://www.skypoint.com/members/waltzmn/Versions.html>



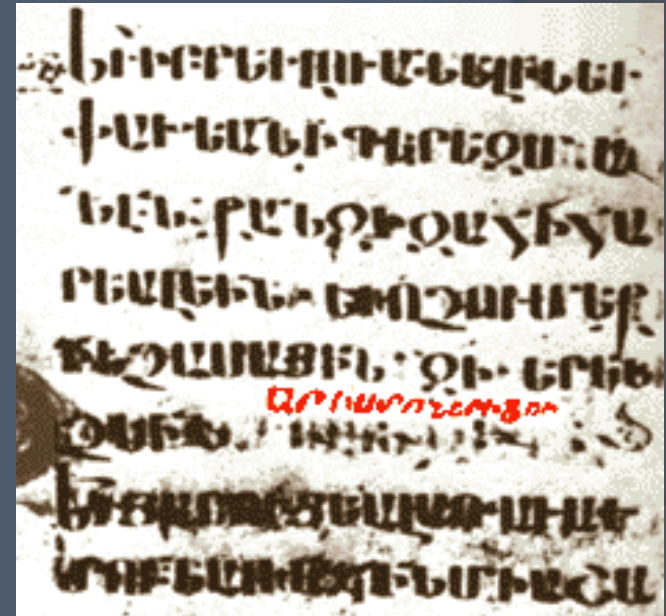
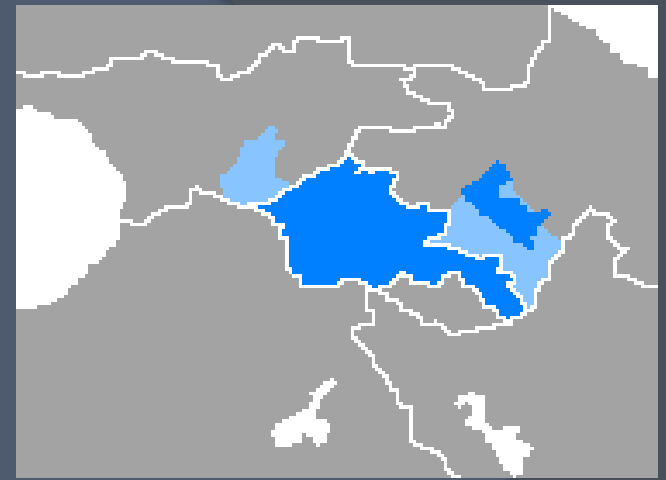
# Armenian Versions

## 1. The Armenian language

- A. Indo-European language
- B. Spoken in the area between the Black and Caspian Seas

## 2. Manuscripts and versions

- A. One of the most beautiful and accurate of all early versions
- B. More manuscripts extant (1,244) than all other versions but Latin
- C. Translated by St. Mesrop hastily from the Syriac (~411 AD) and then by Sahak from the Greek (~434 AD)
  - 1) Mesrop created the Armenian alphabet for his translation ~405 AD
  - 2) The translation now in use by the Armenian church dates from 434 AD, revised in the 8<sup>th</sup> century from Greek



*A portion of one column of the famous Armenian MS. Matenadaran 2374 (formerly Etchmiadzin 229), dated 989 C.E. Mark 16:8-9 are shown. The famous reference to the presbyter Arist(i)on is highlighted in red.*

# St. Mesrop (362-440 AD)

- Mesrop Mashtots was an early medieval Armenian linguist, statesman & theologian
- Invented the Armenian alphabet around 405 AD
- 1<sup>st</sup> Armenian Bible translated hastily from Syriac in 411 AD, then from Greek, which the Armenian Church still uses, by 434 AD
- Armenians celebrate him every February 19<sup>th</sup>, and virtually every town has a street named after him

## The first sentence written in Armenian...

“ Ճանաչել զիմաստութիւն եւ զխրատ, իմանալ զբանս հանճարոյ:  
Čanač'el zimastut'iwn ew zxrat, imanal zbans hančaroy.  
«To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding.»

— *Book of Proverbs*, 1:2.

Image from Wikipedia



Illustration of Mesrop Mashtots from a 1776 Armenian manuscript

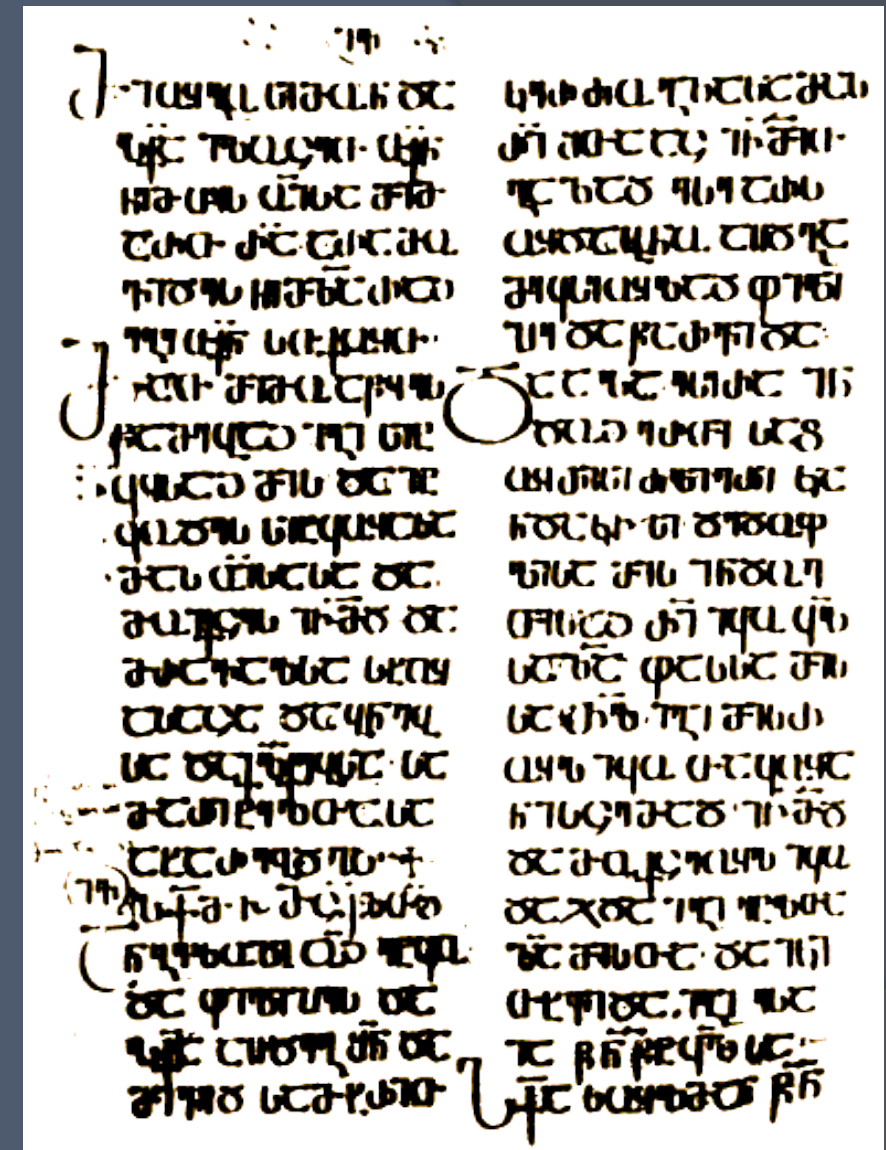
# Georgian Versions

## 1. The Georgian language

- A. Spoken in the mountainous region between the Black and Caspian Seas
- B. Written language was likely a consequence of Christianity and the need for a Bible translation in the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century

## 2. Manuscripts and versions

- A. Oldest non-fragmentary manuscripts are the Adysh (897 AD), Opiza (913 AD) and the Tbet' (995 AD)
- B. Had first translation by the 5<sup>th</sup> century from the Armenian text, later revised towards Greek



*Sinai Georgian 31, dated 877,  
folio 54 verso, Acts 8:24-29.*



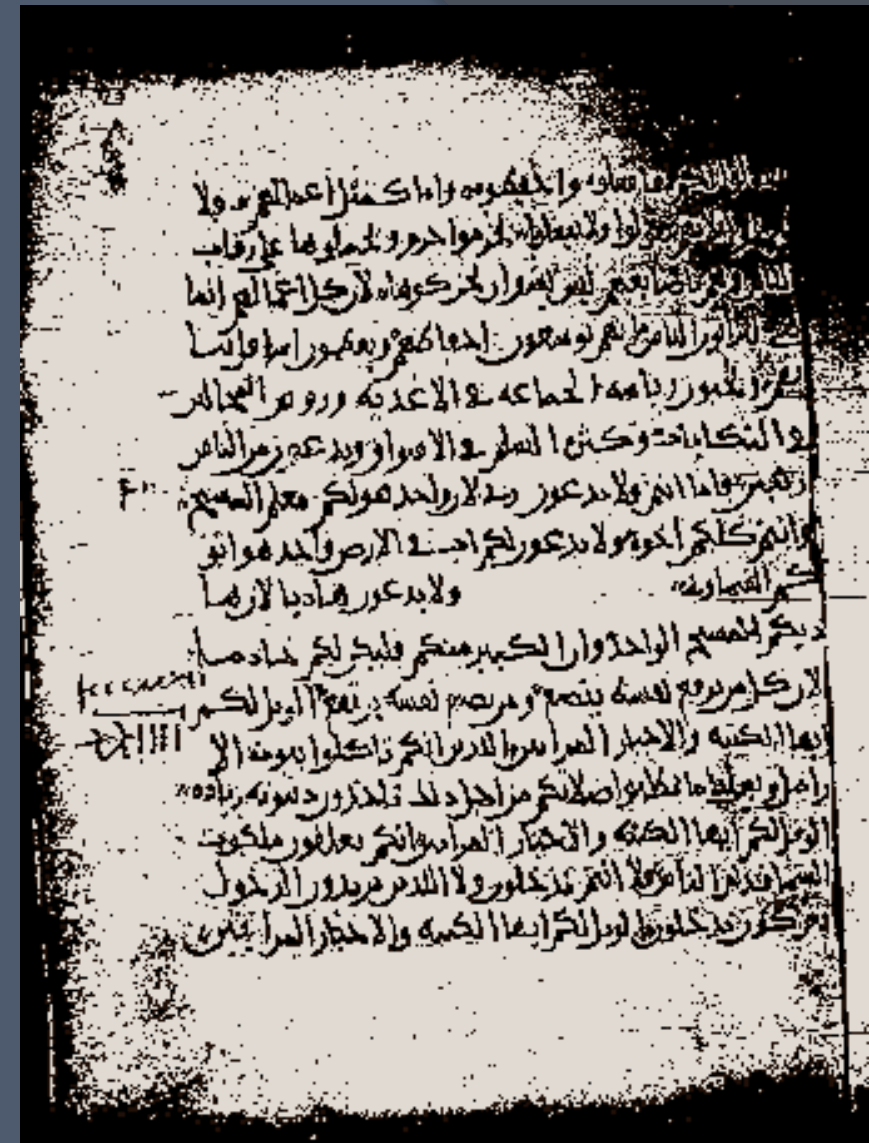
# Arabic Versions

## 1. The Arabic language

1. Semitic language that originated in the 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD
2. Named after the Arabs (who at that time lived on the Arabian Peninsula)

## 2. Arabic versions

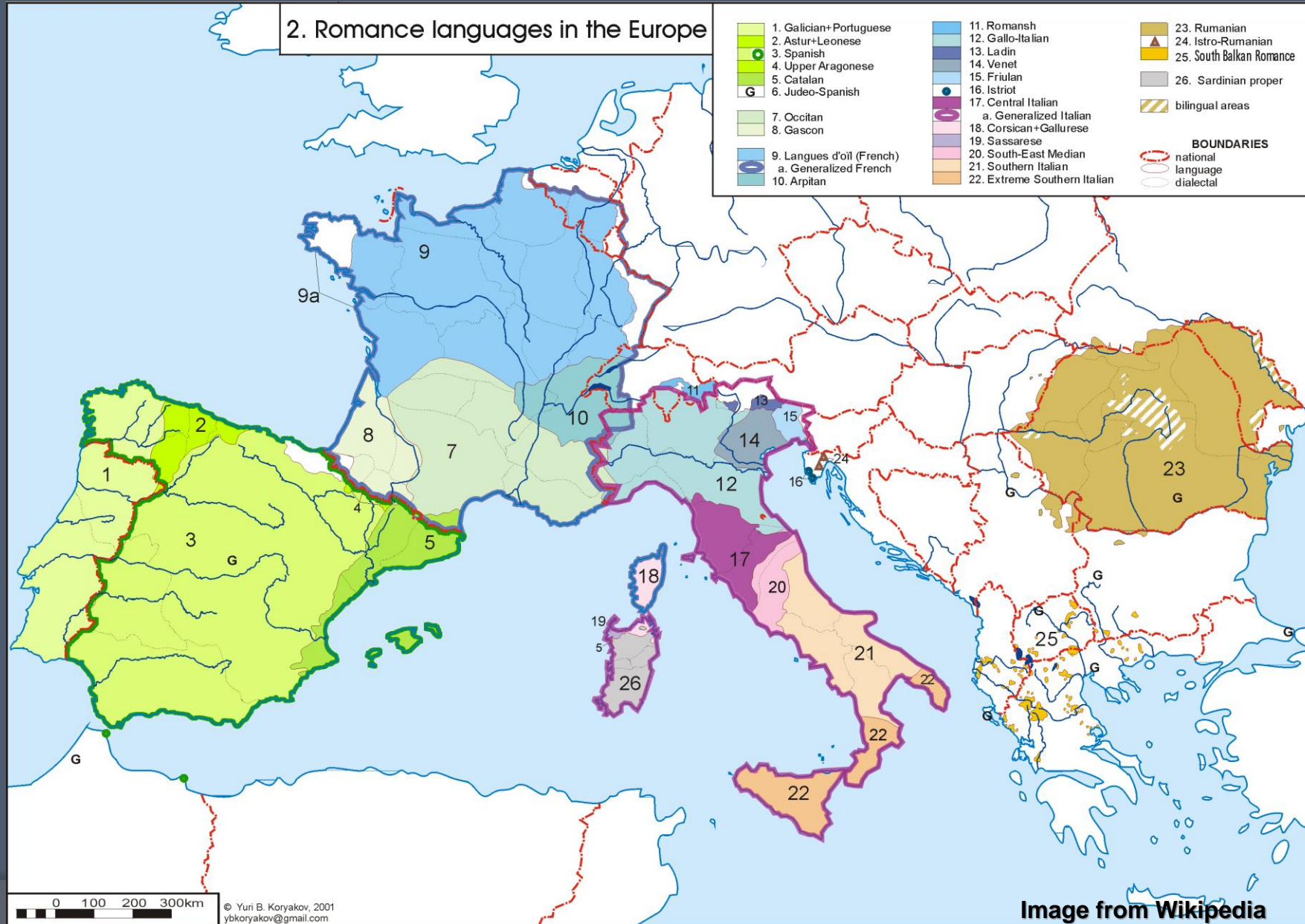
- A. Translated from Greek, Syriac & Coptic
- B. Oldest dated manuscript is Sinai Arabic Codex 151 dated 867 AD.
- C. First translation into Arabic likely a century or two before that



Folio 1 recto of Sinai Arabic 71 (10<sup>th</sup> century), Matthew 23:3-15.



# Descendents of Latin





# Peter Waldo

(c. 1140-1205)

- A wealthy clothier and merchant from Lyon, later a lay preacher
- Against Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, taught simplicity and poverty and that Catholic dogmas were the harlot of Revelation
- Between 1170-1180, he commissioned a cleric from Lyon to translate the NT into Franco-Provencal
  - Credited with providing the first Bible translation in a modern 'Romance' language outside of Latin



# French Bibles



- Bible *Historiale* (image to left) was the predominant medieval French Bible (translated from Latin Vulgate in ~1295 by Guyart des Moulins, a medieval monk)
- 1476 – first printed French NT by Barthelemy Buyer in Lyon, translated from Vulgate
- 1528 – first translation of Hebrew OT into French
- 1535 – first translation of Hebrew and Greek (*Textus Receptus*) into French (Jacques Lefevre d'Etamples)



# *Jacques Lefevre d'Etaples* (1455-1536 AD)

- French theologian and humanist
- Remained Catholic but his ideas anticipated those in the Reformation
- Tense relationship with Erasmus
- Published a French version of the New Testament in 1523 which has been the basis for all future translations into French
- Complete version of the Bible published in 1530 from Jerome's Vulgate. His revised version of 1535 was translated from original Greek and Hebrew. These were the first complete Bibles in the French language
- Taught John Calvin in Paris



Image from Wikipedia

LA BIBLIA,  
QUE ES, LOS SA-  
CROS LIBROS DEL  
VIEJO Y NUEVO TE-  
STAMENTO.

*Trasladada en Español.*



רבו אלחינו יקום לעולם

*La Palabra del Dios nuestro permanece para siempre. Ifa. 40.*

M. D. LXIX.

## *Spanish Bibles*

- 1430 – Alba Bible – OT translated from Hebrew into Mediaeval Castilian
- 1553 – Ferrara Bible – a translation of the Tanakh
- 1602 – Reina-Valera (the King James Version of the Spanish language) – image to left
  - A revision of the 1569 translation of Casiodoro de Reina by Cipriano de Valera
  - Most recently revised in 2011



# German Bibles (pre-Luther)

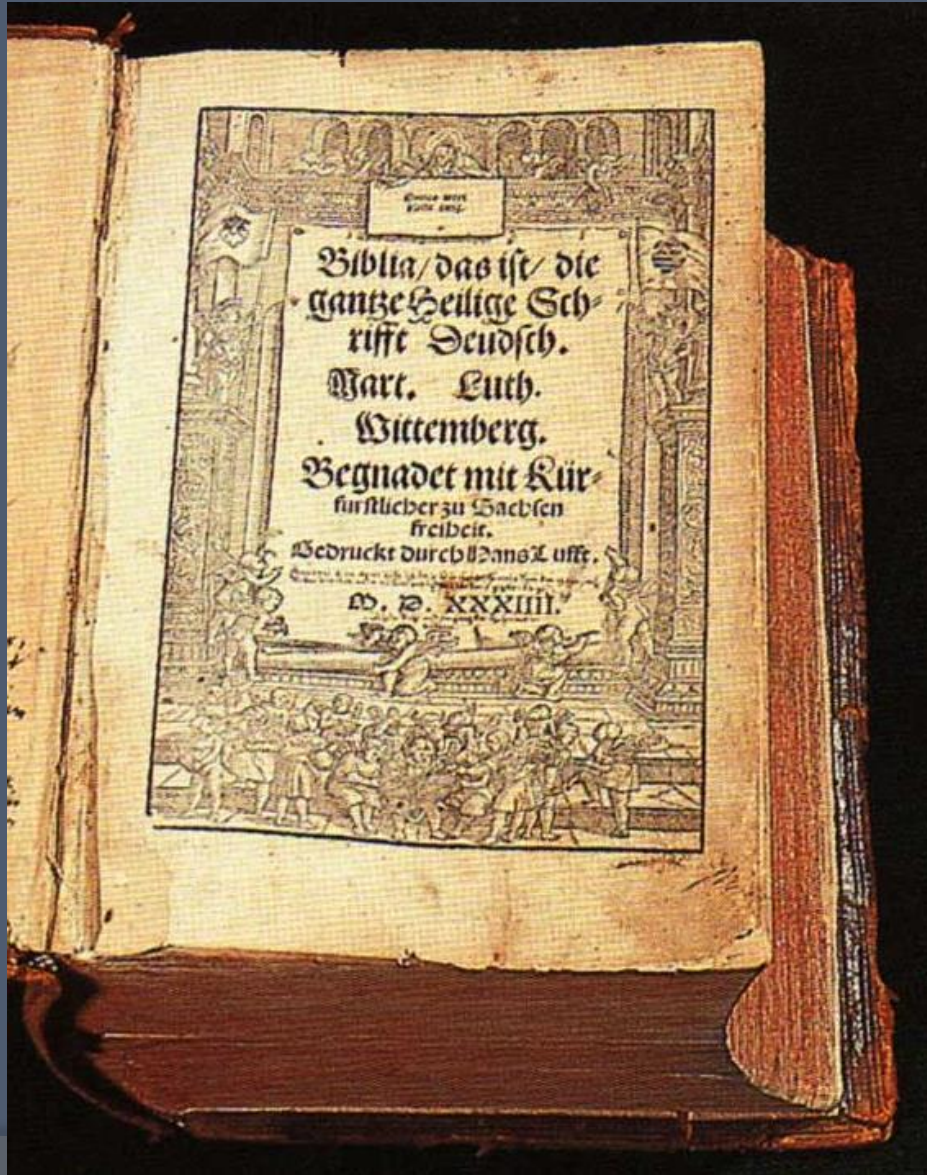
- About 1,000 medieval German mss. extant
- Earliest Germanic Bible translation was by Wulfila (d. 380) into Gothic
- Charlemagne promoted Frankish translations in the 9<sup>th</sup> century
- 1350 - Augsburg Bible (OT)
- 1389 – Wenceslas Bible (image to left) – commissioned by King Wenceslaus IV of Bohemia, translated from the Latin Vulgate
- 1466 – First printed German Bible by Johannes Mentelin (Mentel Bible) at Strasbourg



Image from Wikipedia



# German - Luther Bible [1522, 1534]

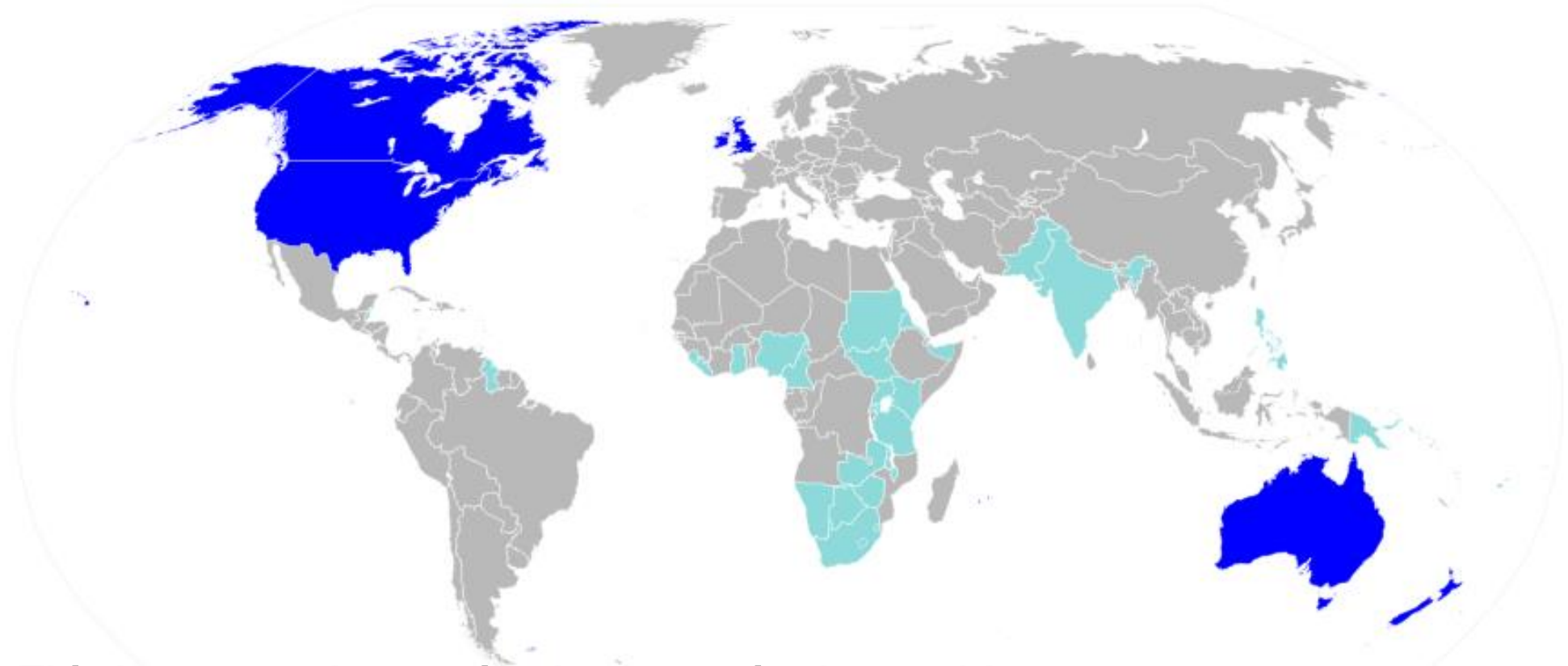


- 18 German Bibles preceded Luther's, but his was the most influential
- **First translation from the original languages**
- The NT was published in 1522, the OT & Apocrypha in 1534
- Used Erasmus' 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (1519) of Greek NT
- Hebrews & James found at the end after Jude and Revelation because of Luther's low opinion of these books
- In the home of nearly every German-speaking Protestant
- Still in use by the Amish in the U.S.

## ***Other pre-Printing Press Translations*** **(< 1450 AD)**

- **Catalan** – complete Bible translated by the Catholic Church between 1287 and 1290
- **Croatian** – fragmentary translations beginning in the 14<sup>th</sup> century
- **Czech** – 14<sup>th</sup> century, including translations of the Latin Vulgate by Jan Hus
- **Polish** – Partial translations beginning in the 13<sup>th</sup> century
- **Serbian** – Miroslav Gospel book in 1186
- **Slovene** – Freising manuscripts of four parchment leaves between 972 and 1039
- **Uyghur** – early translation of NT and Psalms in 14<sup>th</sup> century

# ***Modern English Language Distribution***



- **Third most spoken native language in the world**
- **360-400 million native speakers**
- **600-700 million total speakers**



# Christianity in Roman Britain

“all the limits of the Spains, and the diverse nations of the Gauls, and the haunts of the Britons—inaccessible to the Romans, but subjugated to Christ”

- Tertullian, *De Adversus Judaeos*, VII [~200 AD]



- Julius Caesar first invaded Britain in 54 BC
- Claudius invaded and began occupying Britain in 43 AD
- First introduction of Christianity is uncertain

Province of Britannia within the Roman Empire

Image from Wikipedia

# Anglo-Saxon Migration



English language begins with the West Germanic tribes of the Jutes, Angles and Saxons migrating into the present-day UK

This begins the Old English period (~450-1066 AD)



# Old English Dialects

Image from  
<https://giselamusgrove.com/category/old-english/>





## **Caedmon's Call** (657-684)

- Early English poet
- Watched over the animals at Whitby Abbey
- Self conscious of his singing voice, would avoid when his turn
- One night in a dream, he was told to compose “the beginning of created things.”
- His poems and songs are the first paraphrases of Scripture in the English language (Northumbrian dialect)
- Later became a zealous monk and Christian poet

*“By his verse the minds of many were often excited to despise the world, and to aspire to heaven.” - Bede*

# Venerable Bede (672-735)



Cropped portrait from *The Venerable [St.] Bede Translates [St.] John* by [J. Doyle Penrose](#) (c. 1902)

- English monk in Northumbria of the Angles
- Known as “the Father of English History”, one of the greatest scholars of his time
- Wrote the famous “*Ecclesiastical History of the English People*.”
- Skilled translator of early church fathers works from Greek and Latin
- Translated the Gospel of John from Latin into Anglo-Saxon (Old English) during the last 40 days of his life

# Old English Dialects (~450-1066)

## The Lord's Prayer Comparison

- **Aldred's gloss of the gospels in Northumbrian dialect (~970)**
  - *Suae ðonne iuih gie bidde fader urer ðu arð ðu bist in heofnum & in heofnas; sie gehalgad noma ðin; to-cymeð ric ðin. sie willo ðin suae is in heofne & in eorðo. hlaf userne oferwistlic sel us to dæg. & forgef us scylda usra suae uoe forgefon scyldgum usum. & ne inlæd usih in costunge ah gefrig usich from yfle*
- **Wessex Gospels in West Saxon dialect (~990)**
  - *Fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum, si þin nama gehalgod. To becume þin rice, gewurpe ðin willa, on eorðan swa swa on heofonum. Urne gedæghwamlican hlaf syle us todæg, and forgyf us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgyfað urum gyltendum. And ne gelæd þu us on costnunge, ac alys us of yfele. Soplice.*



# ***Old English Bible Translations (~450-1066)***

- Caedmon (~657-684) – created poems and songs about Creation and the Exodus that were memorized and disseminated throughout the land
- Aldhelm (640-749) – translated the Psalter into Old English around 700
- Egbert – Translated the gospels into English for the first time ~705 ???
- Venerable Bede (672-735) – Translated the Gospel of John into Old English ~ 735
- Alfred the Great (849-901) – Translated the Ten Commandments, extracts from Exodus 21-23 & Acts 15:23-29, and the negative Golden Rule into Old English. Great scholar and King of England from 870 to 901
- Wessex Gospels (~990) – full and freestanding Old English translation of the four gospels
- Aelfric – translated portions of the first seven books of the OT into English ~1000
- **ALL OLD ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS WERE MADE FROM THE LATIN VULGATE (not the original biblical languages)**



# ***Middle English Dialects***

Image from <http://englishchangesovertime.weebly.com/middle-english.html>

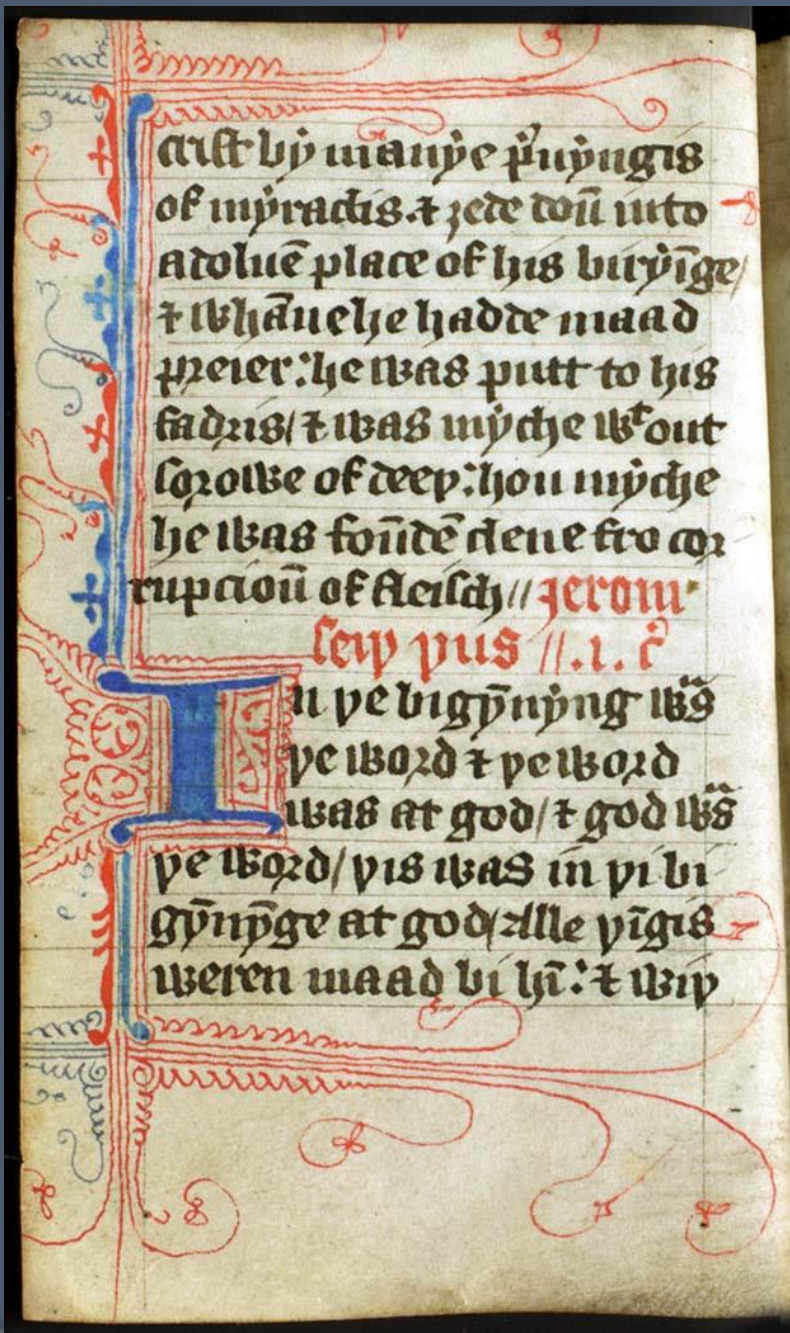


Image from Wikipedia

## ***John Wycliffe*** (~1320-1384)

- English philosopher, theologian, Bible translator, reformer and professor at Oxford.
- Called “The Morning Star of the Reformation”
- Outspokenly against leaders in the Church whom he considered incompetent and out for gain
- Considered the Pope basically the same as the Antichrist, saw no scriptural support for papacy, held the Bible as the sole authority
- Translated the entire NT into English from the Latin Vulgate for the first time in 1380
- He and his successors translated the entire OT into English for the first time in 1384





# Wycliffe Bible (1380-1384, rev 1388)

- First complete English Bible in history
- Written and copied before the printing press
- Wycliffe believed the people should have the Scriptures in their own common language to read and study. It was not just for the clergy.
- Translated the NT in 1380. He and his successors (John Purvey, et al) translated the OT by 1384. Purvey made a second edition of the NT in 1388.
- Translated from the Latin Vulgate
- Condemned by Council of Constance in 1415 and many copies were burned... but
- Over 250 manuscripts survive today (~20 complete), one sold in 2016 for ~\$1.7MM





Burning Wycliffe's bones from Foxe's Book of Martyrs (1563)

Image from Wikipedia

## Wycliffe's Bones (~1320-1384)

- Wycliffe died in 1384
- Council of Constance declared Wycliffe a heretic in 1415
- In 1428 Pope Martin V ordered his bones to be dug up and burned. His ashes were spread into the River Swift, which flows through Lutterworth, England
- Thomas Fuller, a 17<sup>th</sup> century English church historian stated...

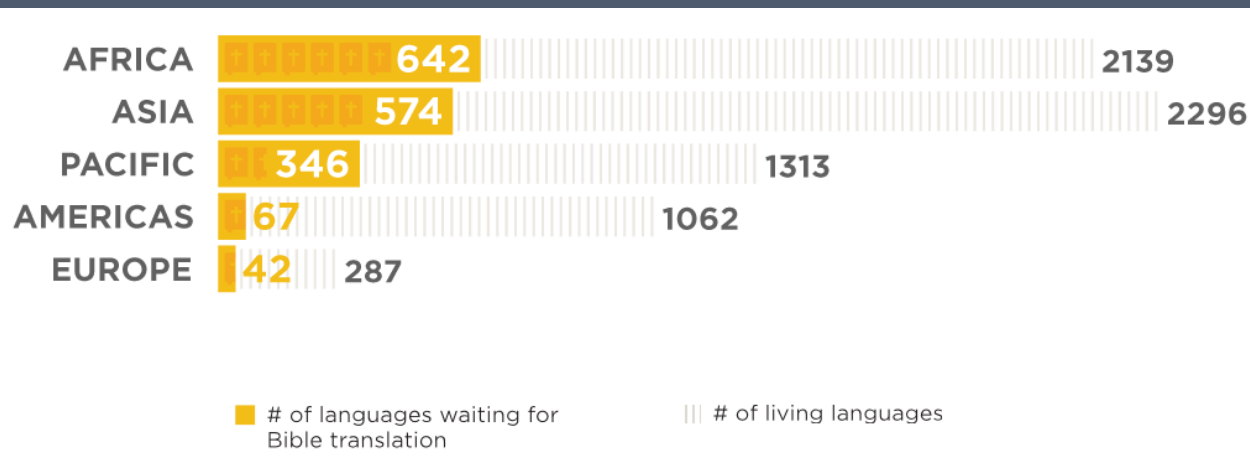
“They burnt his bones to ashes and cast them into the Swift, a neighboring brook running hard by. Thus the brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas; and they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine which now is dispersed the world over.”

Images from  
<https://www.wycliffe.org/whybible>  
Accessed 7/11/2017



# Wycliffe Bible Translators (est. 1942)

- Just as Wycliffe's ashes have travelled worldwide, so has his commitment to translating God's Word into the vernacular of common ordinary people been taken up by the organization which bears his name





# ***Middle English Bible Translations*** (~1066-1500)

- English literature was uncommon during this time because after the Norman invasion of 1066, French was the language of the elite and Latin was still the language of the Church
- Orm (~1150) – created a poetic paraphrase of the gospels and Acts in the East Midland dialect, shows some Norman influence
- William of Shoreham (1320) – produced a prose version of the Psalter in the Mercian dialect
- Richard Rolle (~1320-1340) – made a literal translation of the Psalter in the North English dialect
- John Wycliffe (1380-1382) – translated the entire Bible from Latin Vulgate into English for the first time
- **ALL MIDDLE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS WERE MADE FROM THE LATIN VULGATE (not the original biblical languages)**