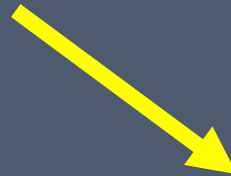


HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

LESSON 8 – TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE (GREEK AND SYRIAC)

FROM GOD TO US

INSPIRATION



CANONIZATION



TRANSMISSION



TRANSLATION

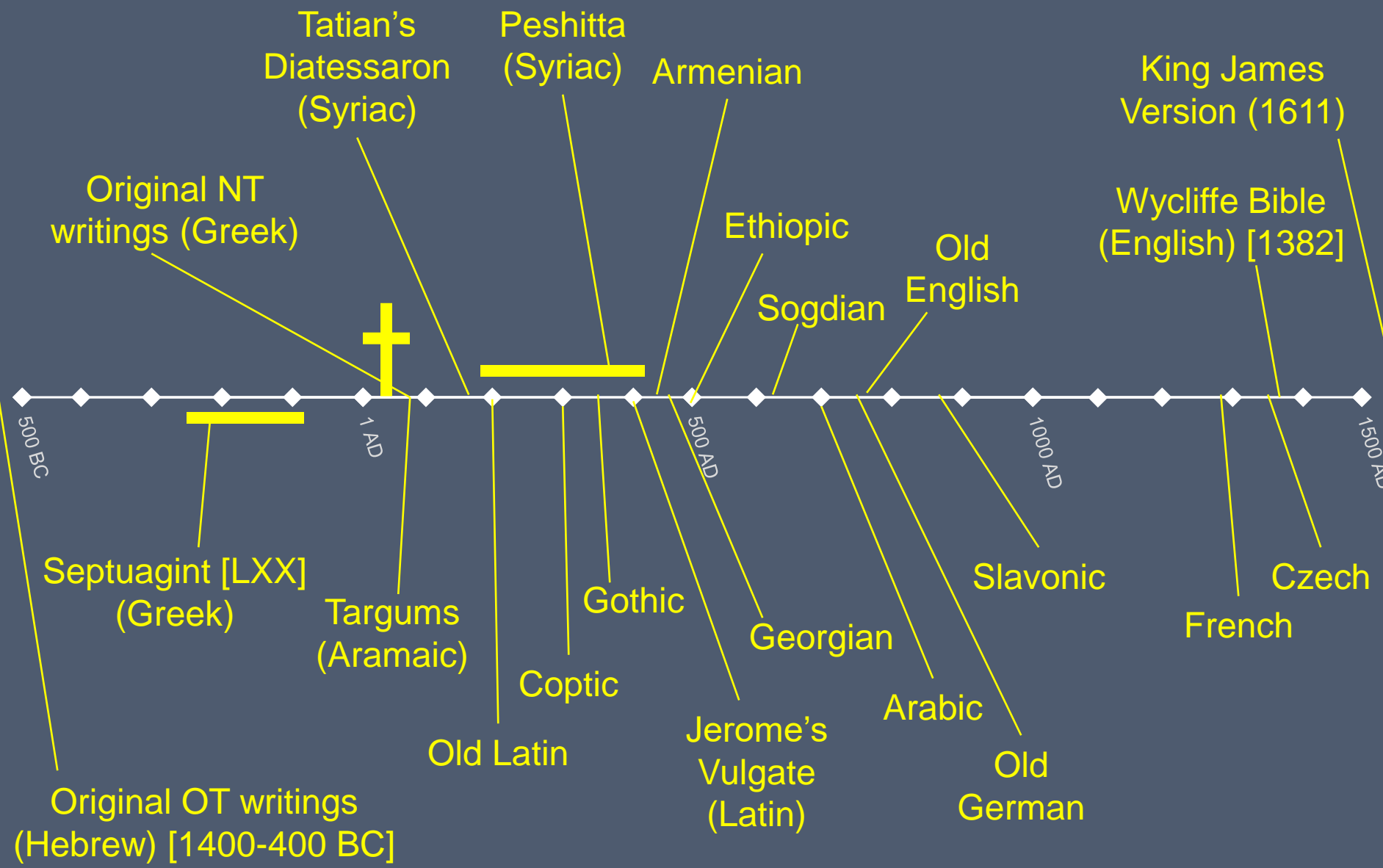
Translation of the Bible

Definitions

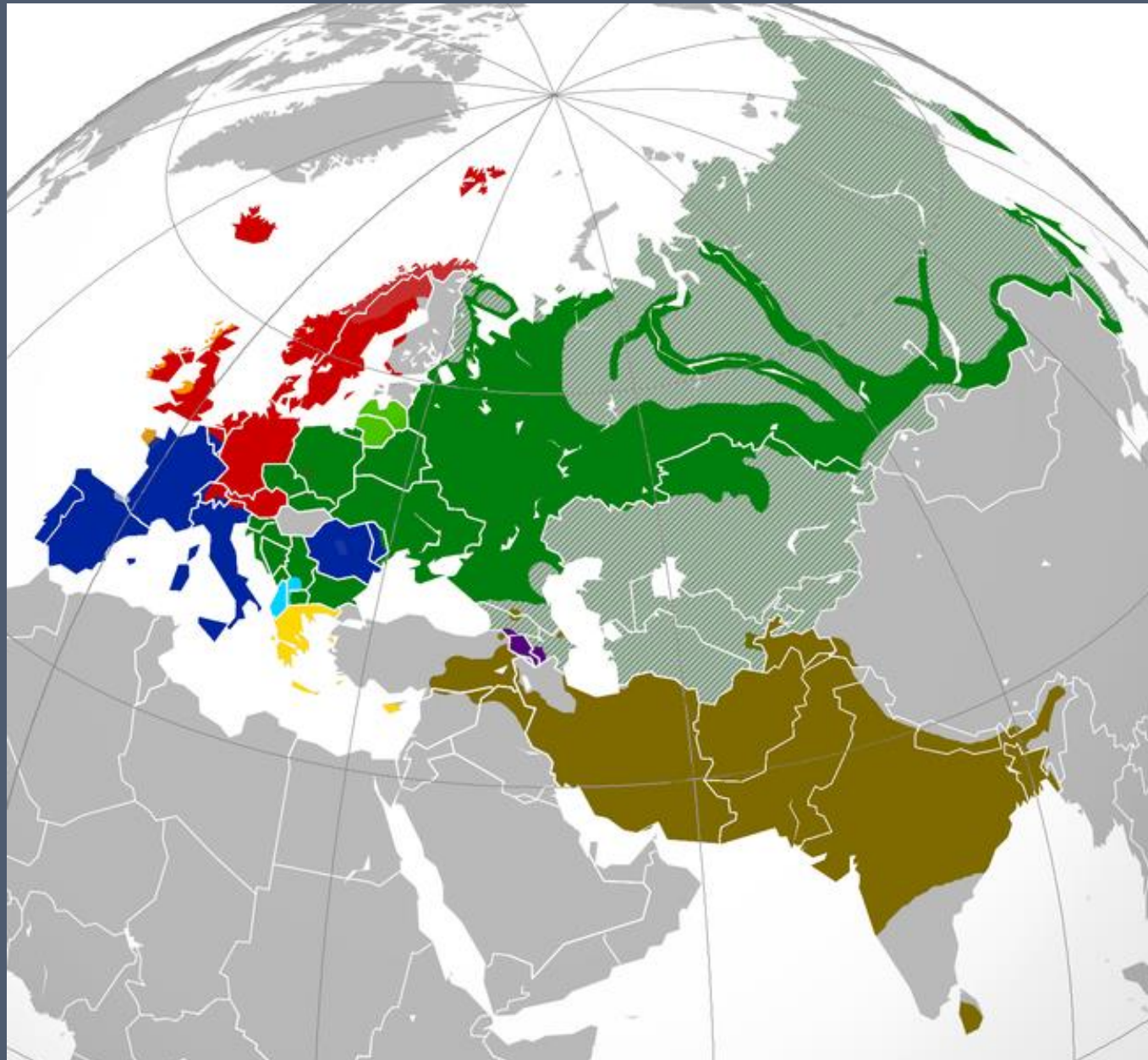
(from Geisler, 258)

- **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



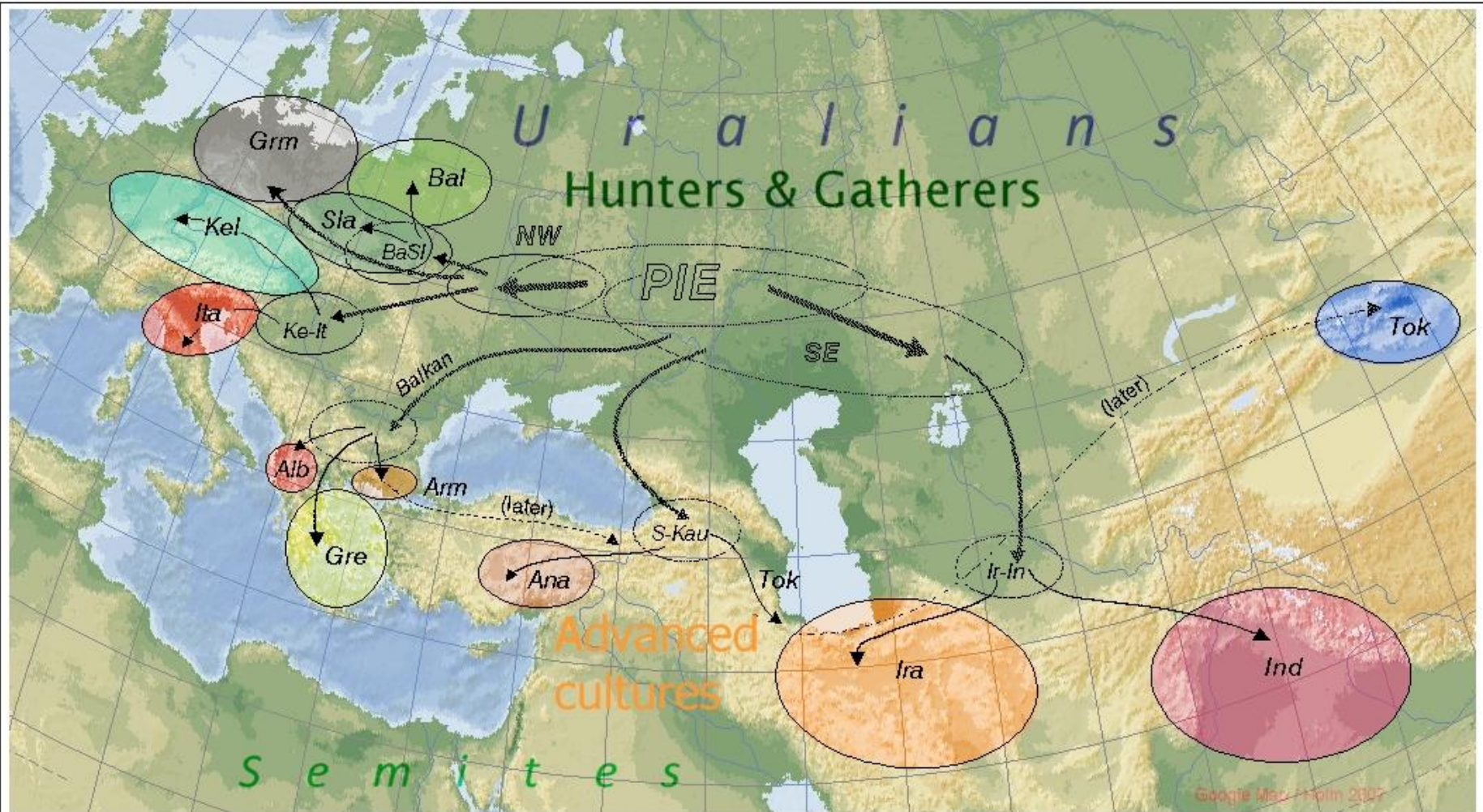
Indo-European Languages



The Indo-European languages have a large number of branches:

Anatolian, Indo-Iranian, Greek, Italic, Celtic, Germanic, Armenian, Tocharian, Balto-Slavic and Albanian.

Indo-European Language Migration



Subgrouping of Main Indo-European Language Branches according to SLRD-Method (Holm 2007),
Projected to possible Migration Routes between the 35th and 25th Century B.C.

Indo-European Language Tree

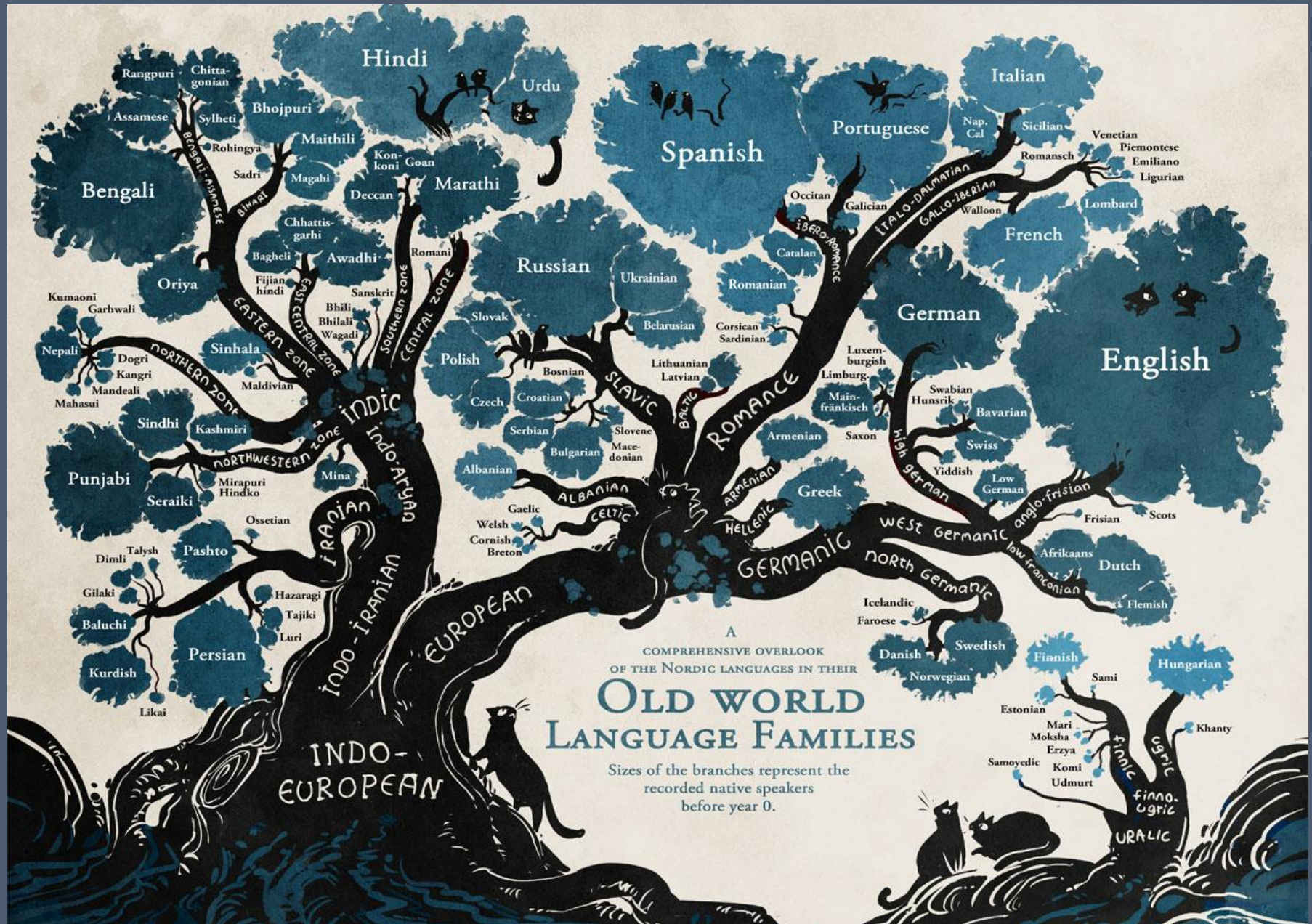


Image from <https://www.speechbuddy.com/blog/news/crazy-fascinating-history-english-language/>

Distribution of Semitic Languages in 1st Century AD

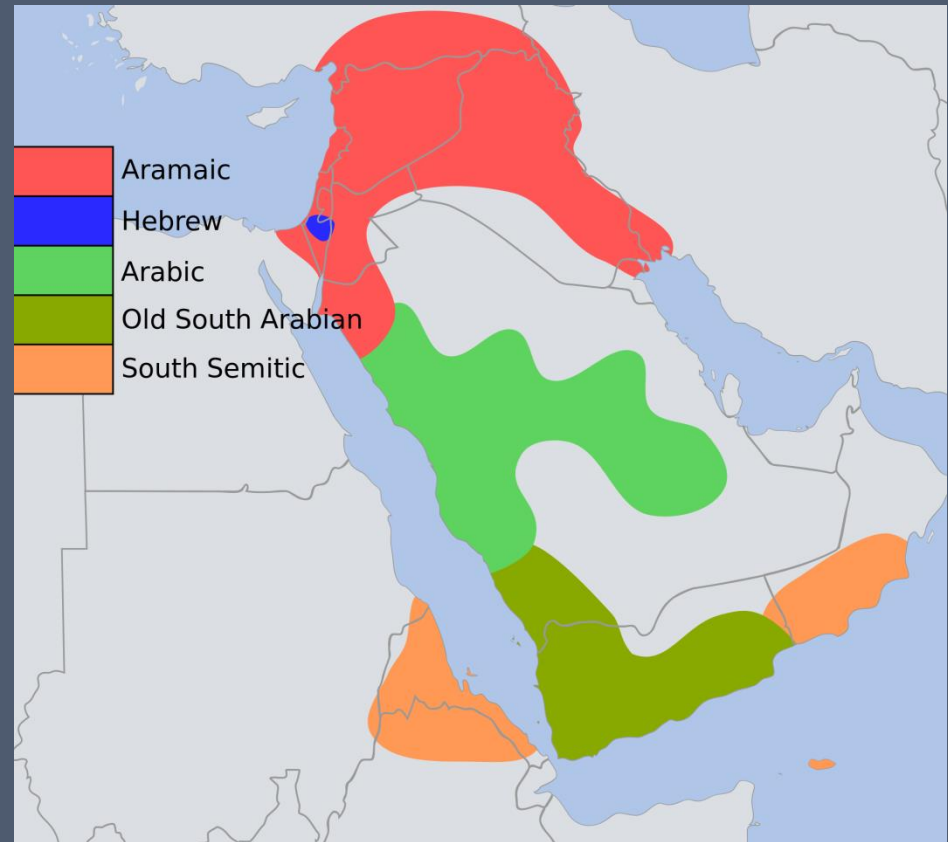
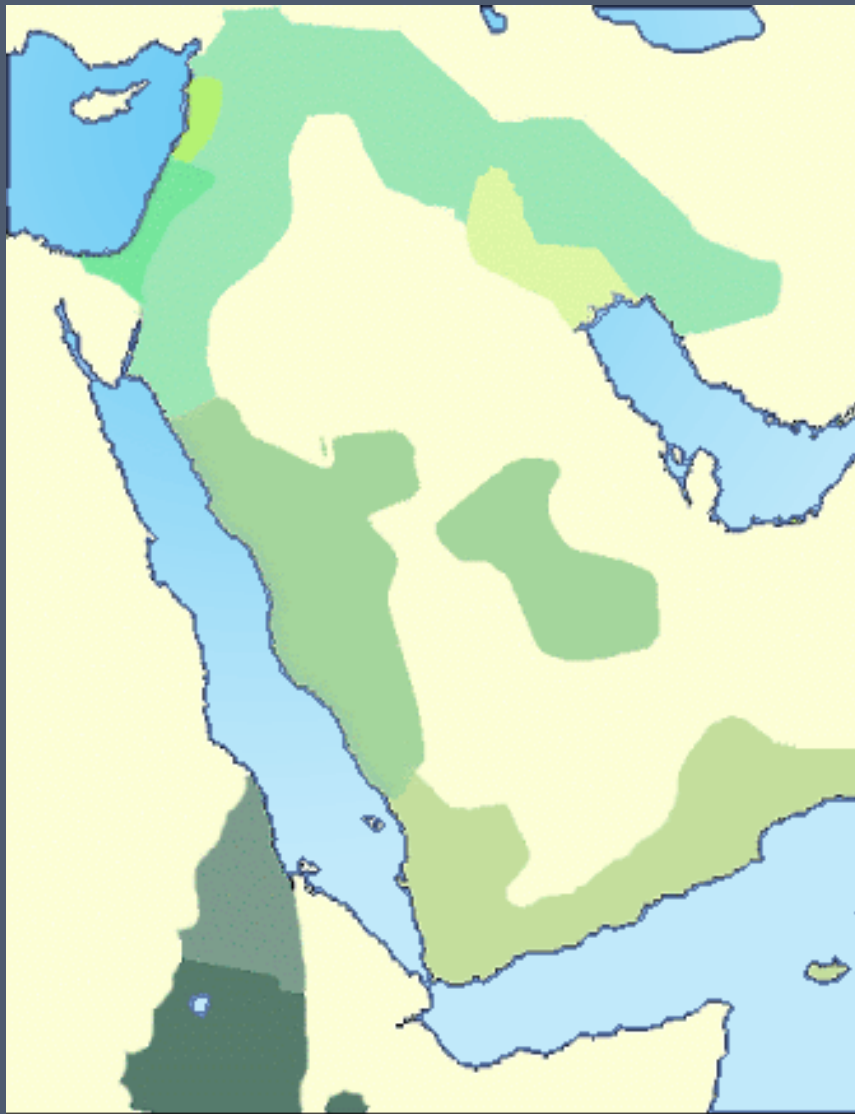
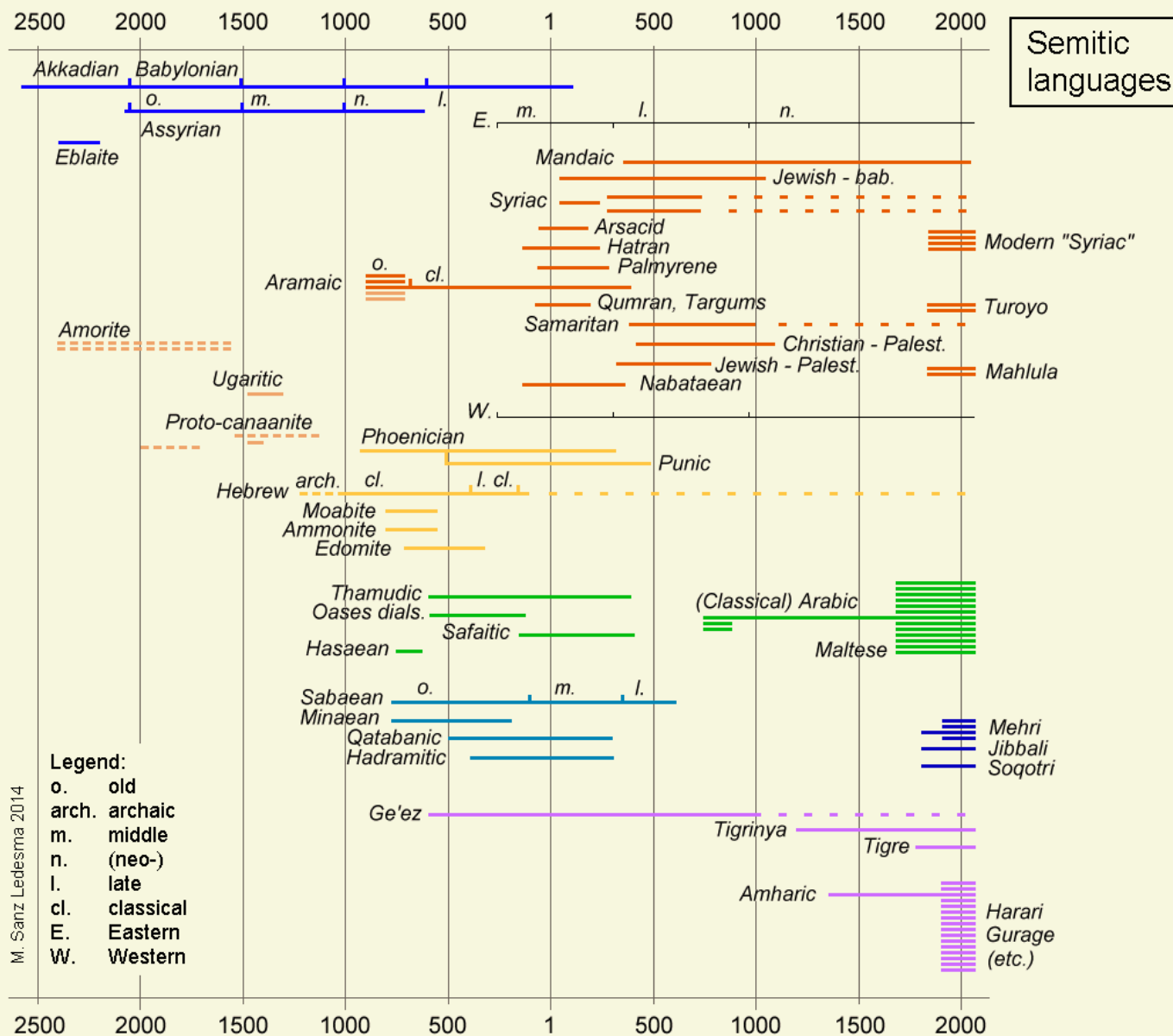


Image from Wikipedia (left)
Reddit (right)



Semitic Languages

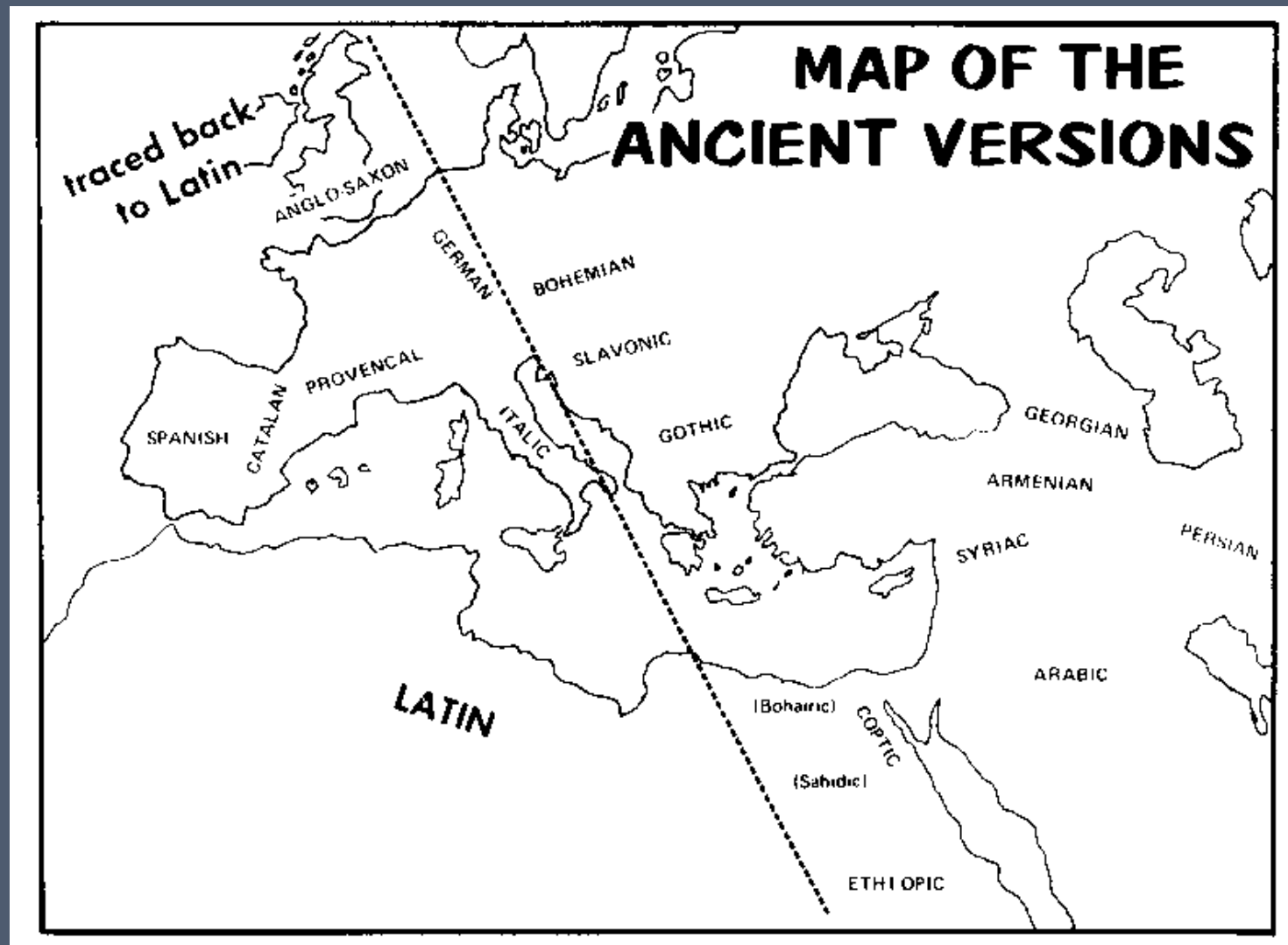
The seven groups of Semitic languages are shown in different colours.
 There is not clear distinction between Aramaic and Cananaean in the earliest known documents.
 Some of the languages listed are more likely to be dialects, notably in the Aramaic group.
 Broken lines reflect ancient languages still used.

Language Distribution in Roman Empire (2nd Century AD)

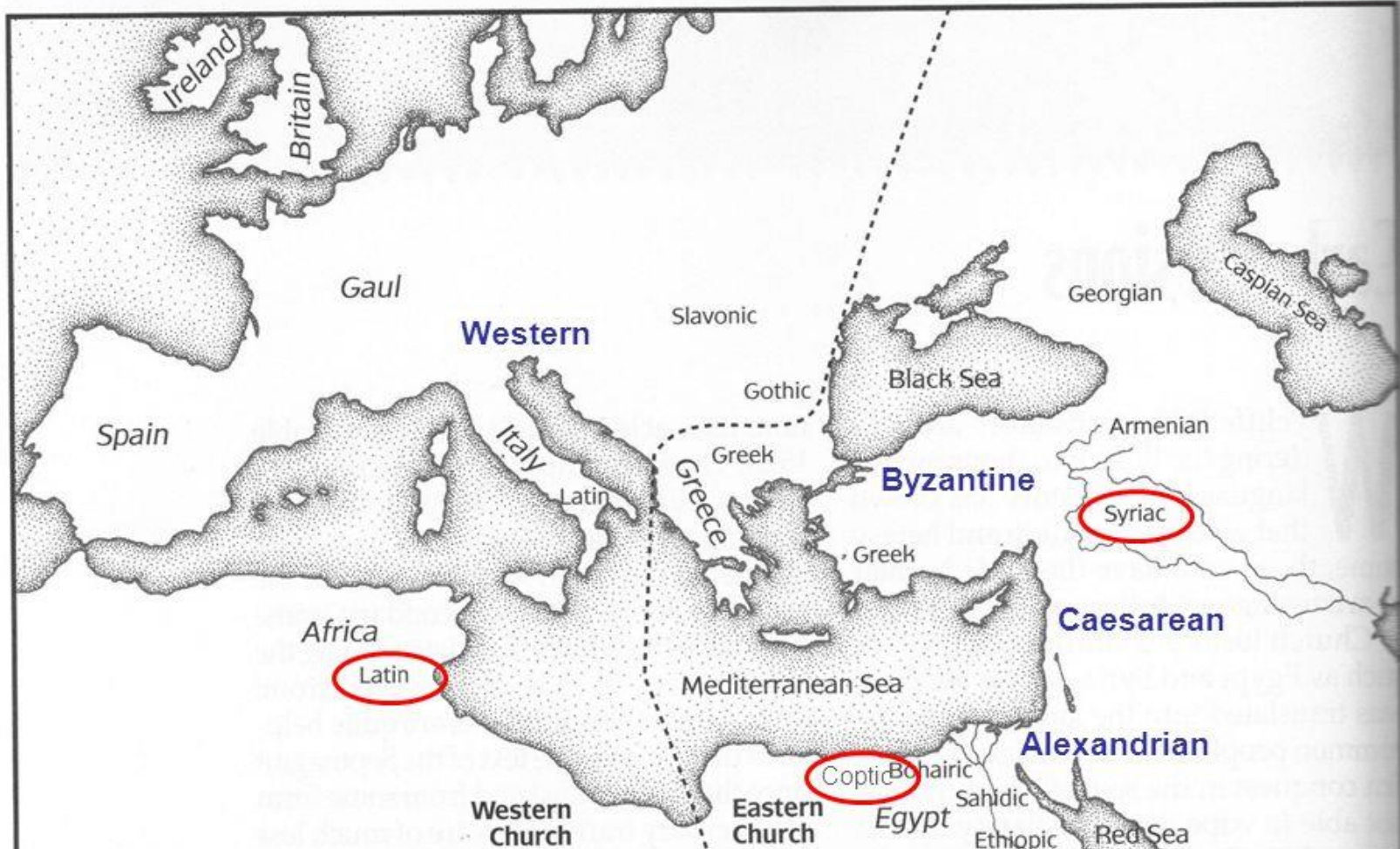


Image from Wikipedia

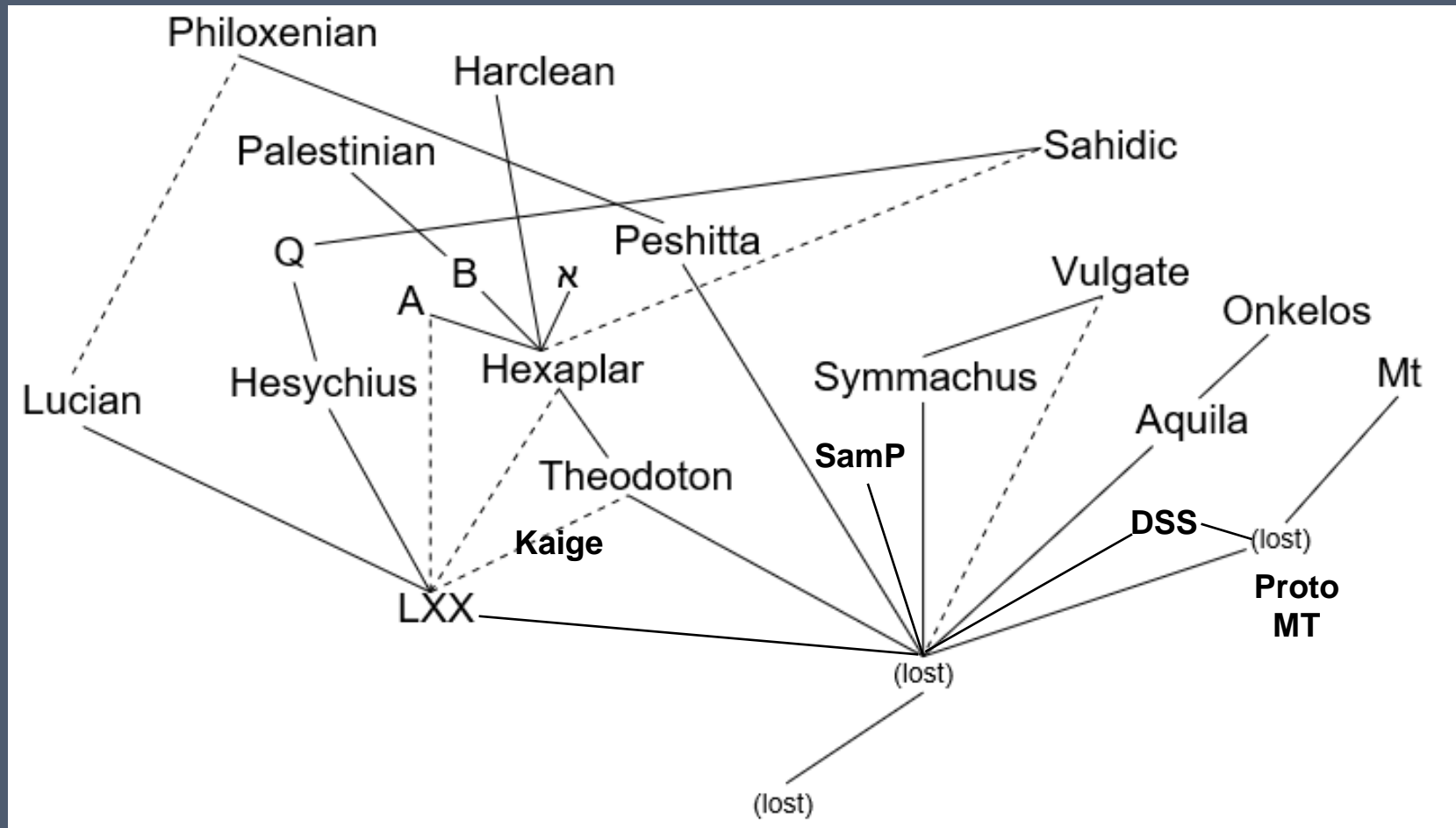
Ancient Bible Versions



Areas of Early Versions



Relationship between ancient Old Testament manuscript traditions



Autographs

Old Testament Text Families

Biblical period

15th - 4th c BC

Biblical texts composed and compiled. There is indication that the texts were received by the faith community as authoritative (e.g., Ex 19:7-8; Dt 31:9-12; Jos 1:8; 2 Kg 14:3-6; 2 Kg 22:8-11; Jer 30:1-2; Dan 9:2, 6-12, etc.). There is also indication of some "editorial" process during the period (e.g. Gen 14:14; Dt 34; Jer 36:32).

Second Temple period

300BC - AD 100

Biblical texts are transmitted in various forms as indicated by the several "text families." There is also indication of a recognized canon of Scripture alongside many other texts which are important to the community(ies).

Early Church - Middle Ages

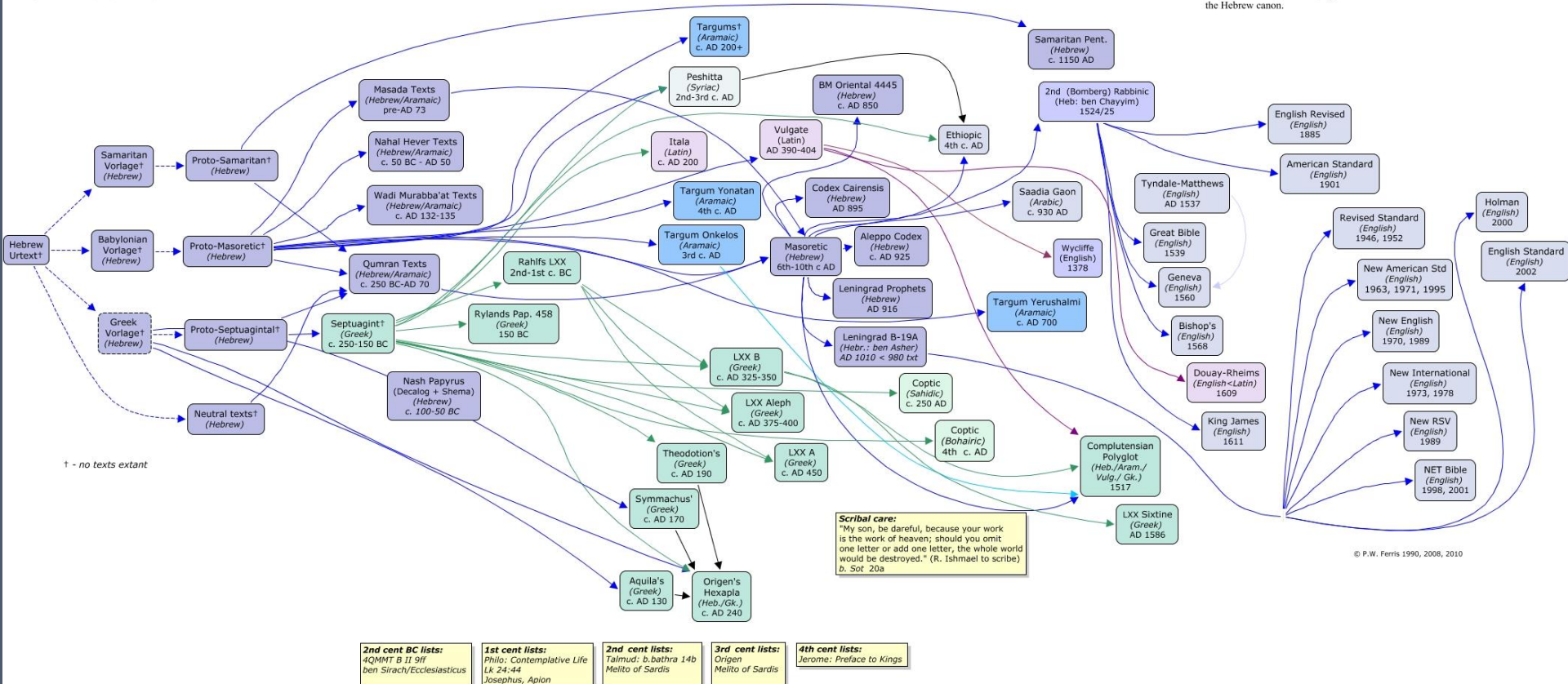
AD 100-1500

Biblical canons take several forms. The Christian community in the West adopts the Latin Vulgate version of Scripture text and canon. Christians in the East adopt the Greek version. Samaritans adopt the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Jewish community adopts the Masoretic version.

Reformation - Present

AD 1500 - date

Gutenberg's printing press revolutionizes the transmission of Scripture. This has an impact on the standardization of a textual tradition as well as the introduction of many new versions. On 8 April 1546 the Synod of Trent declared the Vulgate to be the authoritative Bible of the Church. The Reformation, however, rejected the Latin/Greek canon and turned to the Hebrew canon.



Greek Versions of the Old Testament

1. The Septuagint (3rd – 1st century BC)

- A. The Septuagint (LXX) was translated from the Hebrew & Aramaic into *Koine* (or common) Greek
- B. Recensions
 - i. **Origen's Hexapla** (~240 AD) - Meaning 'sixfold', the critical edition places side-by-side Hebrew OT, Greek transliteration, Aquila, Symmachus, critical recension of LXX, & Theodotion. Originally ~6,000 pages, destroyed by Muslim invasion in 638 AD, only copied fragments remain today.
 - ii. **Lucius** (d. 312 AD) – stylistic revisions of OT & NT

2. Aquila (~130 AD)

- A. Aquila of Sinope (Turkey) was a convert to Judaism whose Greek version was used in the place the LXX in synagogues
- B. Only fragments of 1&2 Kings and Psalms are extant

3. Symmachus (late 2nd century AD)

- A. Possibly a Samaritan convert to Judaism
- B. More literal of a translation than the LXX, a very elegant Greek

4. Theodotion (d. ~200 AD)

- A. Hellenistic Jewish scholar, translated (or revised the LXX) ~150 AD
- B. Widely adopted by Christians

The Septuagint (LXX)

1. The Greek language
 - A. The Septuagint (LXX) was translated from the Hebrew & Aramaic into *Koine* (or common) Greek
 - B. *Koine*, also called Alexandrian, Greek evolved from Alexander the Great's conquests in the 4th century BC
2. The Septuagint (LXX)
 - A. Abbreviated LXX (70), called Septuagint for the supposed 70 Jews who translated it into Greek (Lat. *Versio septuaginta interpretum*)
 - B. Tradition: commissioned by Egypt's King Ptolemy II and in use by Alexandrian Jews who knew Greek but not Hebrew
 - C. Gen-Duet translated in 3rd century BC
 - D. Rest of OT translated over the next two centuries to 132 BC
 - E. Displays numerous differences to Masoretic Text (Hebrew)
 - F. Quality and style vary from book to book (literal to paraphrase)
 - G. Some Apocryphal books included
 - H. Quoted extensively by Jesus, Apostles and NT writers
 - I. Currently over 2,000 manuscripts extant

Jewish Recensions of the LXX

Aquila (ca AD 130). Aquila used a very wooden style of translation. He preferred to go word-for-word from Hebrew into Greek. While this is helpful in determining the text he was working from, the resulting Greek is sometimes ambiguous. For example, Hebrew has separate verb forms for male and female subjects. Greek does not. Most translators would simply add a pronoun in places where the verb alone would not be enough to determine the subject. However, to remain at word-for-word, Aquila did not. Origen used his translation in one column of the Hexapla.

Symmachus (before AD 235). While the whole work is lost, pieces remain in the fragments of Origen's Hexapla where Symmachus' translation enjoyed a column. We can determine he used a more fluid style than Aquila. Some sources say Symmachus was an Ebionite Christian (sometimes called a Nazareen). Others that he was a Samaritan who converted to Judaism. His translation style allows him to express nuances available in Greek that are not in Hebrew. He also tried to be more literal than the Septuagint. Jerome used his work for comparison in places when working on the Vulgate. That is, Jerome worked from the Hebrew text but looked at how Symmachus had translated also.

Theodotion (ca. AD 150). He was a Hellenized Jew. Whether he worked from the Septuagint or the Hebrew texts (or even if he used a now lost tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures) is debated. His translation of Daniel was very popular among Christians. This work was one column of the Hexapla.

Christian Recensions of the LXX

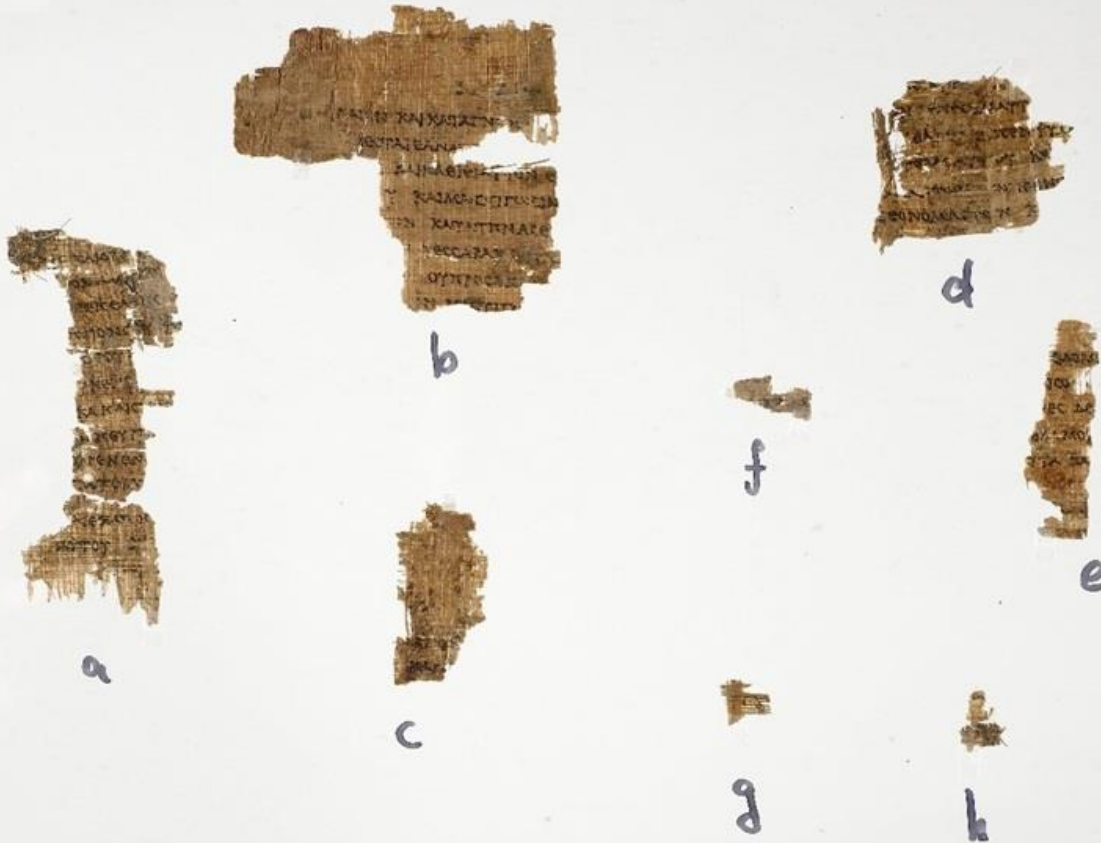
Origen (ca AD 235). In one column of the Hexapla, Origen placed his own Greek version. This was both translation from Hebrew and text-critical analysis of the Greek to determine the best way to express the Scripture. The Hexapla is where we have most of these earlier recensions but even the Hexapla exists only in fragments today.

Lucian (before AD 312). Jerome mentions that Lucian revised the Septuagint. However, some scholars debate its existence. Jerome sometimes speaks well of the translation and other times disparages it. Lucian believed in the need for textual accuracy, and his work was popular in Asia and Syria and amongst such Greek Fathers as John Chrysostom. It exists in quotes of those fathers.

Hesychius (before AD 433). Little can be determined as only fragments remain (even fewer than the other above). What we do have shows he had a very allegorical hermeneutic and found entire realms of Christian theology in single verses of the Old Testament. More of his work survives in ancient libraries, however, there were numerous writers with the same first name and many scrolls have been stacked together. It would be a work worthy of several doctorates to go through the stacks and separate out the works of Hesychius of Jerusalem and those who carried his name.

P. Rylands 458

Date: 2nd century BC
Text: Deuteronomy (parts)



Oldest known manuscript of the Septuagint

Blank spaces where Tetragrammaton would be (but may have been written there originally)

Discovered in 1917

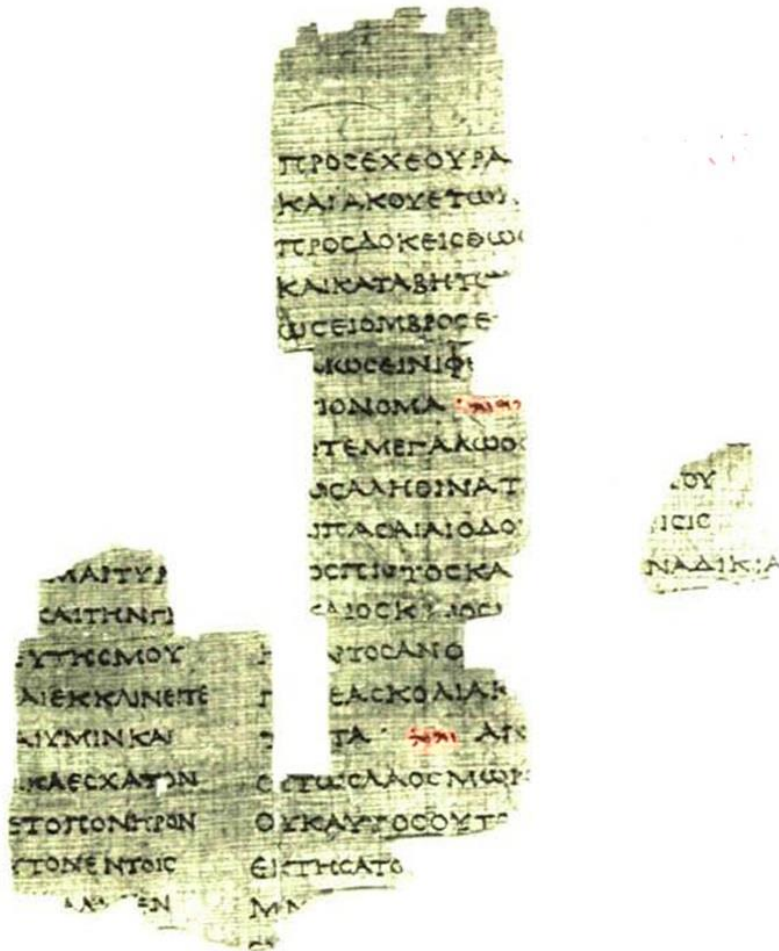
Papyrus Fouad (266)

Date: 1st or 2nd century BC
Text: Deuteronomy 31:28-32:7

2nd oldest extant manuscript of
the Septuagint

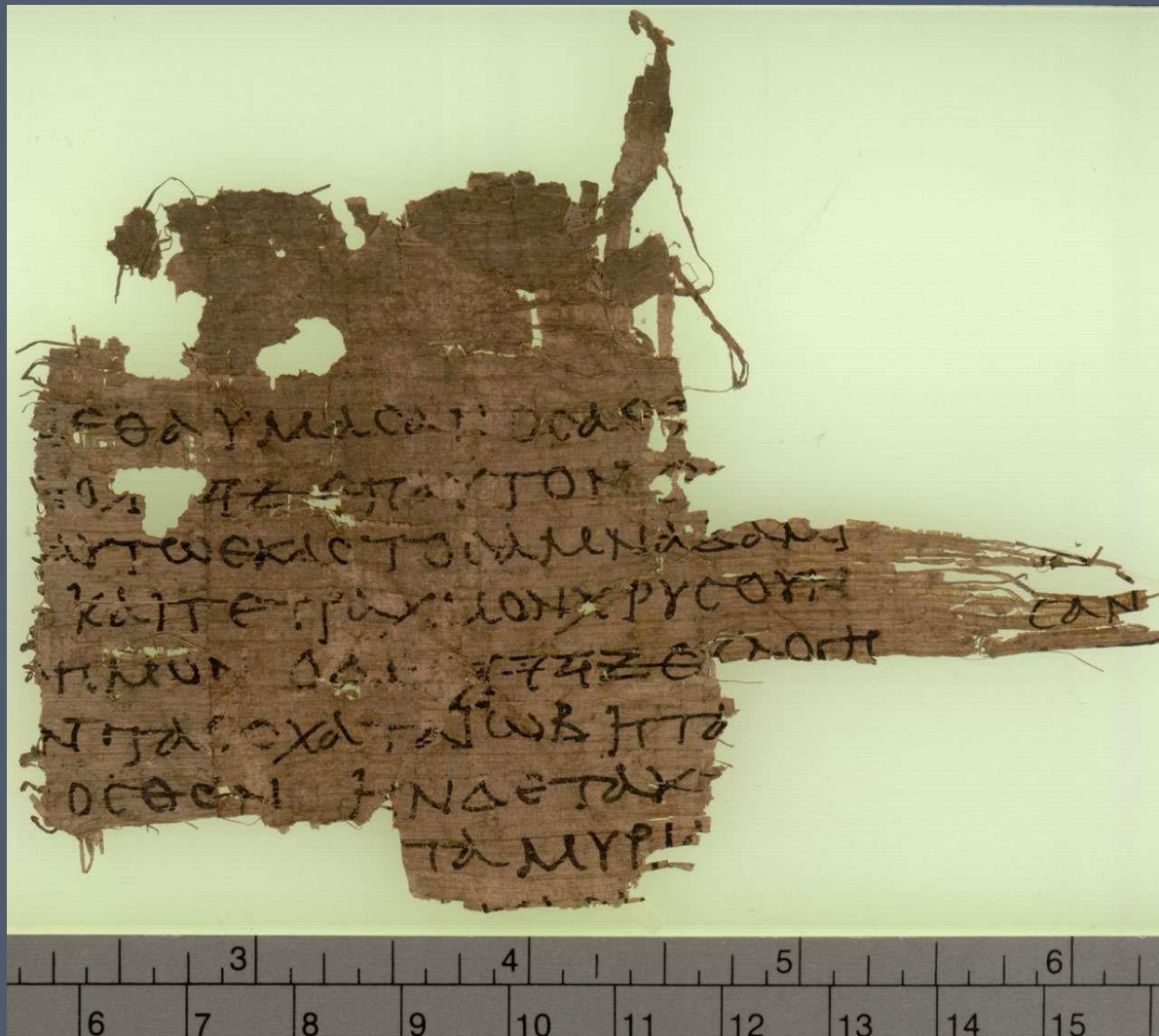
Contains the Tetragrammaton in
Assyrian (square) Hebrew script

Discovered in 1939 in Fayyum,
Egypt



Papyrus Fouad № 266

Второзаконие 31:28 – 32:7



P Oxy 3522

Date: 1st century BC

Text: Job 42:11-12

Found at Oxyrhynchus,
Egypt

Contains the
Tetragrammaton in Paleo-
Hebrew



**Septuagint Manuscript:
8HevXII gr
Greek Minor Prophets Scroll**

**Date: 1st century
Text: Greek Minor Prophets**

Found in Cave #8 in Nahal Hever (Judean Desert) in the 1960's by an expedition of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

A direct translation of the Hebrew Masoretic text

Attests to the proto-Theodotion text (*kaige*)

MS 2649

Date: ca 200

Text: Leviticus (parts)

Oldest manuscript of Leviticus

MS 2649
Bible: Leviticus. Egypt, late 2nd c.
The oldest MS of this part of the Bible

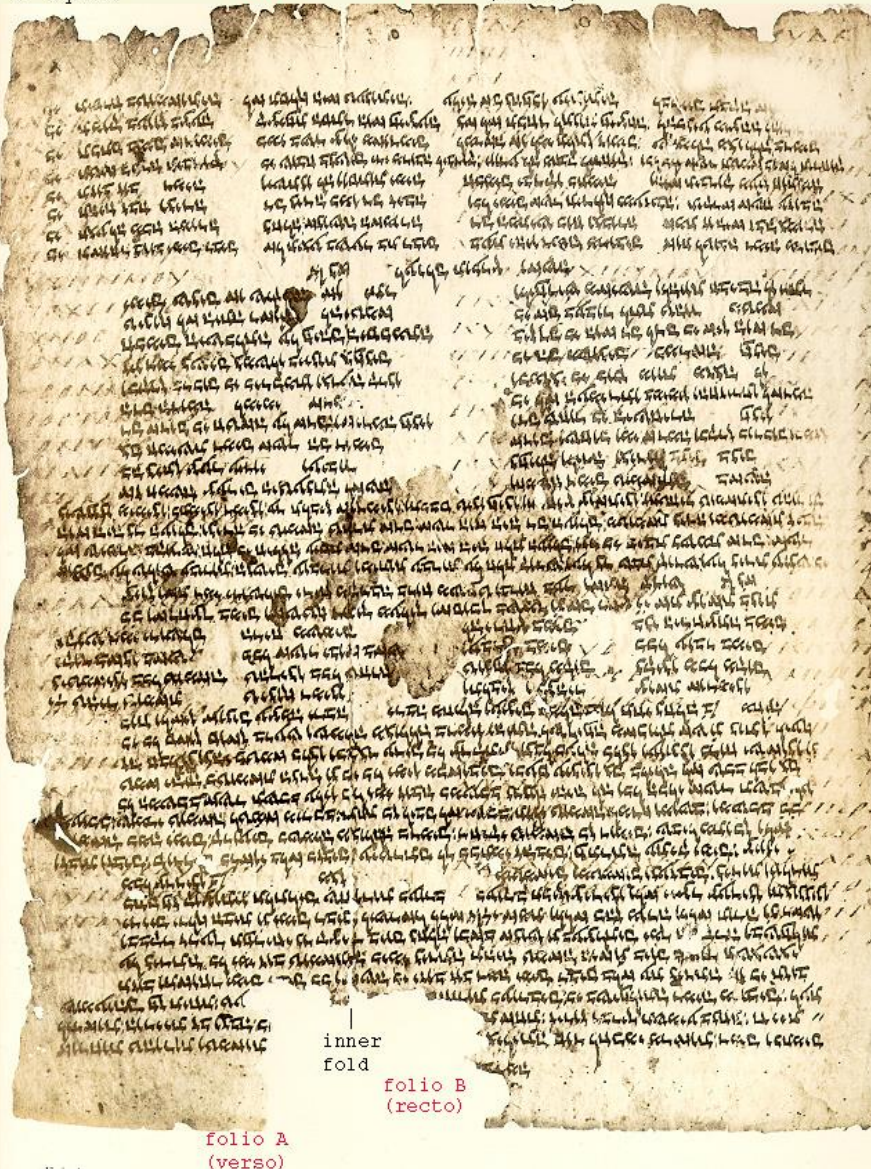
Image from
<http://www.schoyencollection.com/bible-collection-foreword/greek-new-testament-septuagint/greek-bible-leviticus-ms-2649>

Origen (c. 184-254 AD)



Image from Wikipedia

- Greek scholar and early Christian theologian from Alexandria, Egypt
- Prolific writer (~6,000 works), the greatest textual critic in the early church
- Produced the massive *hexapla*, a ~6,000 page, 15 volume compilation of the Hebrew, Greek transliteration, Aquilla, Symmachus, Theodotion & his own recension of the LXX
- One of the most scholarly theologians in early church, known for his allegorical biblical interpretation



Origen's Hexapla

Date: ca 240

Text: OT

This is the Genizah Manuscript, a 10th century palimpsest with columns 3 (Aquila) and 4 (Symmachus) of Psalm 22 as the undertext. Overtext is an upside down Hebrew text of the 10th century.

Aramaic Targums (OT)

1. The necessity of an Aramaic Translation
 - A. The common language had transitioned to Aramaic from the Assyrian & Babylonian captivities to the end of the first century BC
 - B. Hebrew was only used for schooling and worship at this time
2. The word *Targum* means “translations” or “explanation”
3. First Targum appeared middle of 1st century AD
4. Two major genres of official targumim
 - A. Targum Onkelos (Law)
 - B. Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel (Prophets)
 - C. Date from 1st century AD
 - D. These two only known from medieval mss.
5. May have been the basis for the Syriac Peshitta

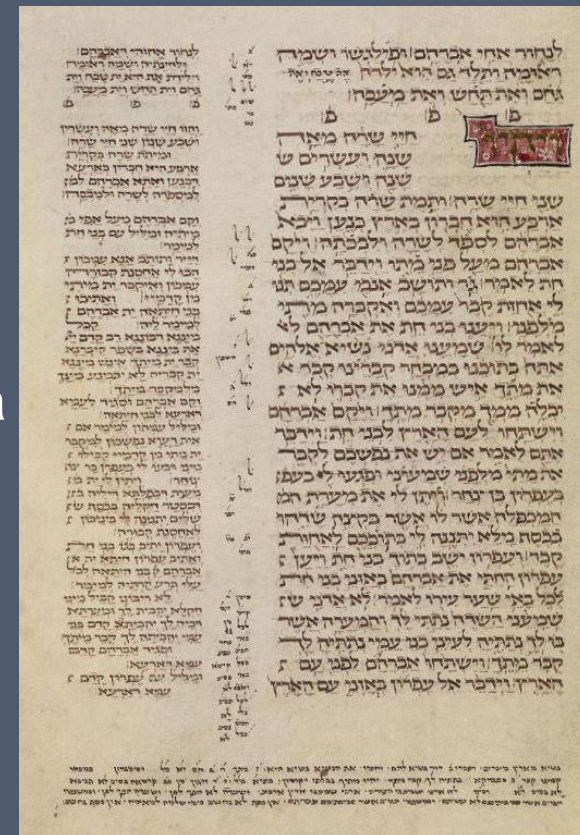
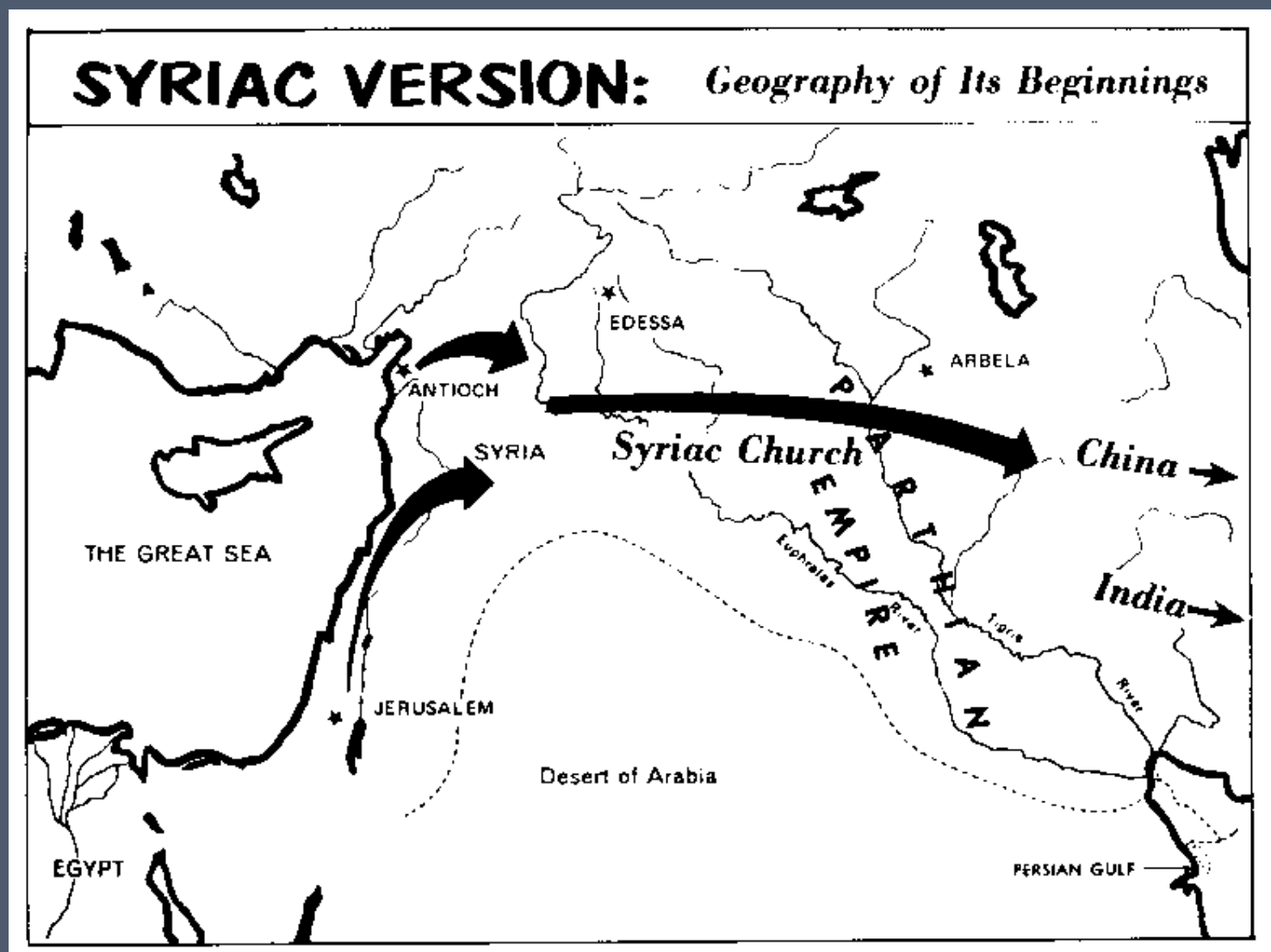


Image from Wikipedia (manuscript from 1299 AD showing Hebrews on right and Targum Onkelos on left)

Syriac Versions

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

Syriac Versions



Old Syriac Manuscripts

1. Curetonian manuscript (Syr^C)
 - A. Fragments of the gospels
 - B. 5th century copy, but text is from the 2nd century
2. Syriac Sinaiticus (Syr^S)
 1. 4th century palimpsest of nearly entire gospels
 2. Text is from the 2nd century
 3. Believed to be from the earliest translations into Syriac
3. Tatian's *Diatessaron*
 - A. *Diatessaron* meaning "through the four" - the earliest known harmony of the gospels (172 AD)
 - B. No manuscripts extant today, known through church historian Eusebius and churches in Mesopotamia and Syria
 - C. Ephrem the Syrian (306-373 AD) wrote a commentary on the *Diatessaron*, the Syriac original of which was discovered in 1957
 - D. Served as the standard gospel lectionary in Syriac speaking churches from the 2nd to 5th centuries until being replaced by the four separate gospels of the Peshitta
 - E. Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus, in 423 sought out copies of the *Diatessaron* to 'put them away' because he thought Tatian a heretic
 - F. An Arabic translation has been discovered and translated into English

Matthew 15:20-25

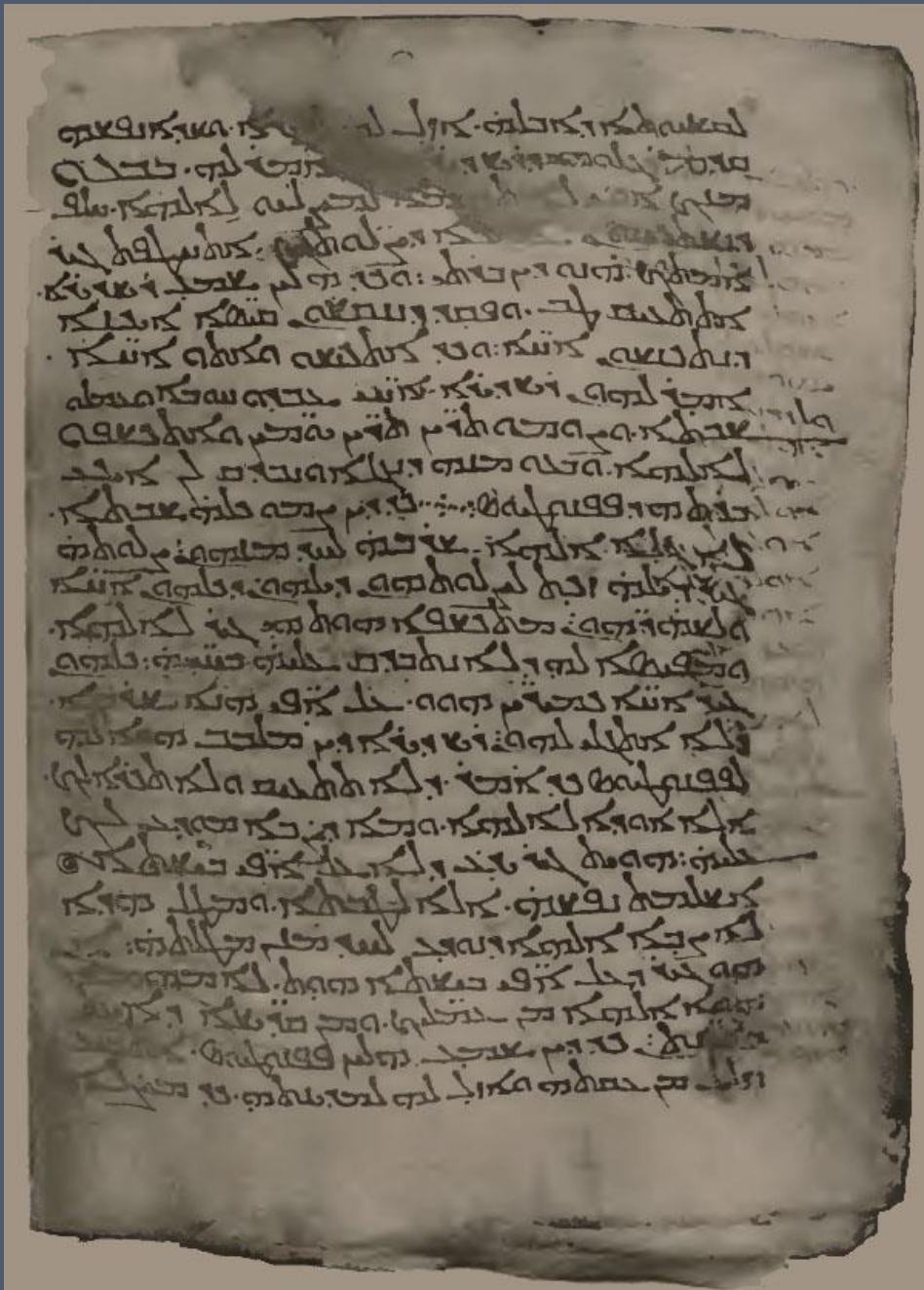
Date: late 5th Century
Text: gospels (fragments)

Image from Wikipedia

Old Syriac Manuscripts: *Sinaitic Syriac - Syr^s*

Date: late 4th Century
Text: gospels

This 4th century palimpsest contains a text believed to be from the 2nd 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 5th century. It also showed up in some recensions in Latin, High German, and Middle English.
- 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

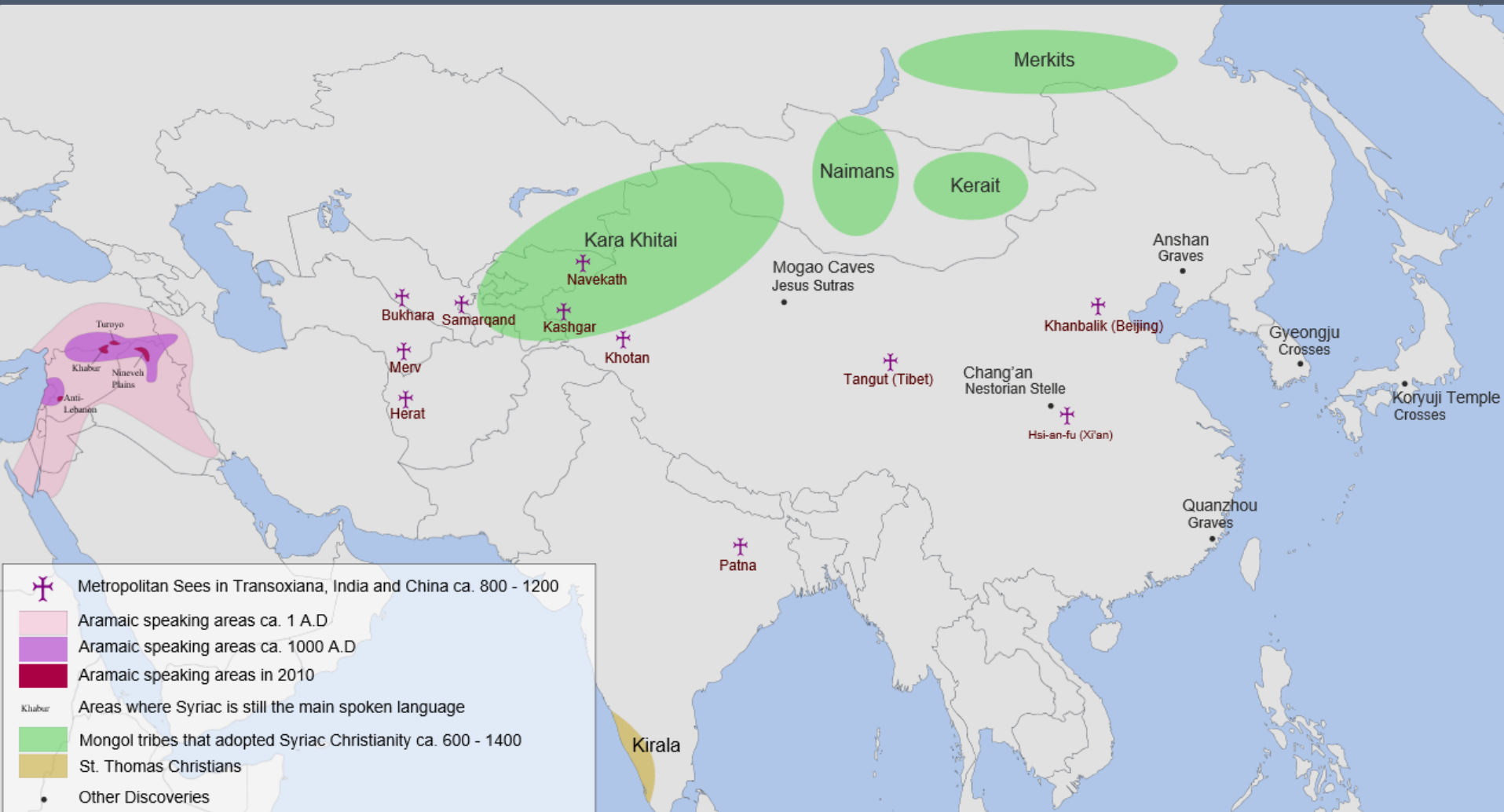
Nestorius (c. 386-450 AD)



Image from Wikipedia

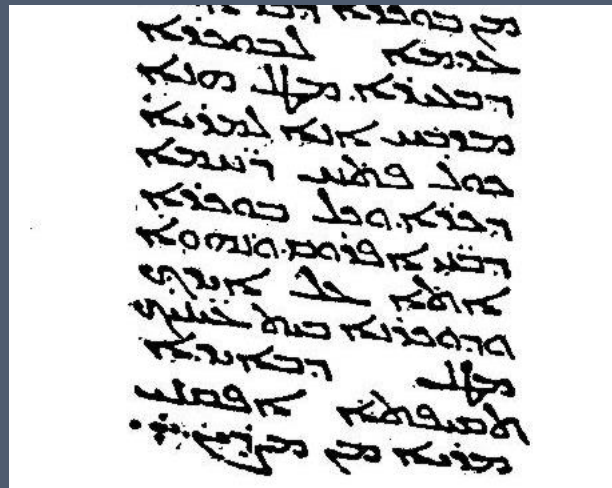
- Archbishop of Constantinople from 428-431 when he was condemned as a heretic
- He rejected the title *theotokos* (Mother of God) for Mary, which was interpreted to mean he did not believe in the deity of Christ
 - Nestorianism refers to a teaching that Christ has two natures: divine & human
 - Unclear 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

Syriac Geographic Distribution



Syriac Peshitta - Syr^P

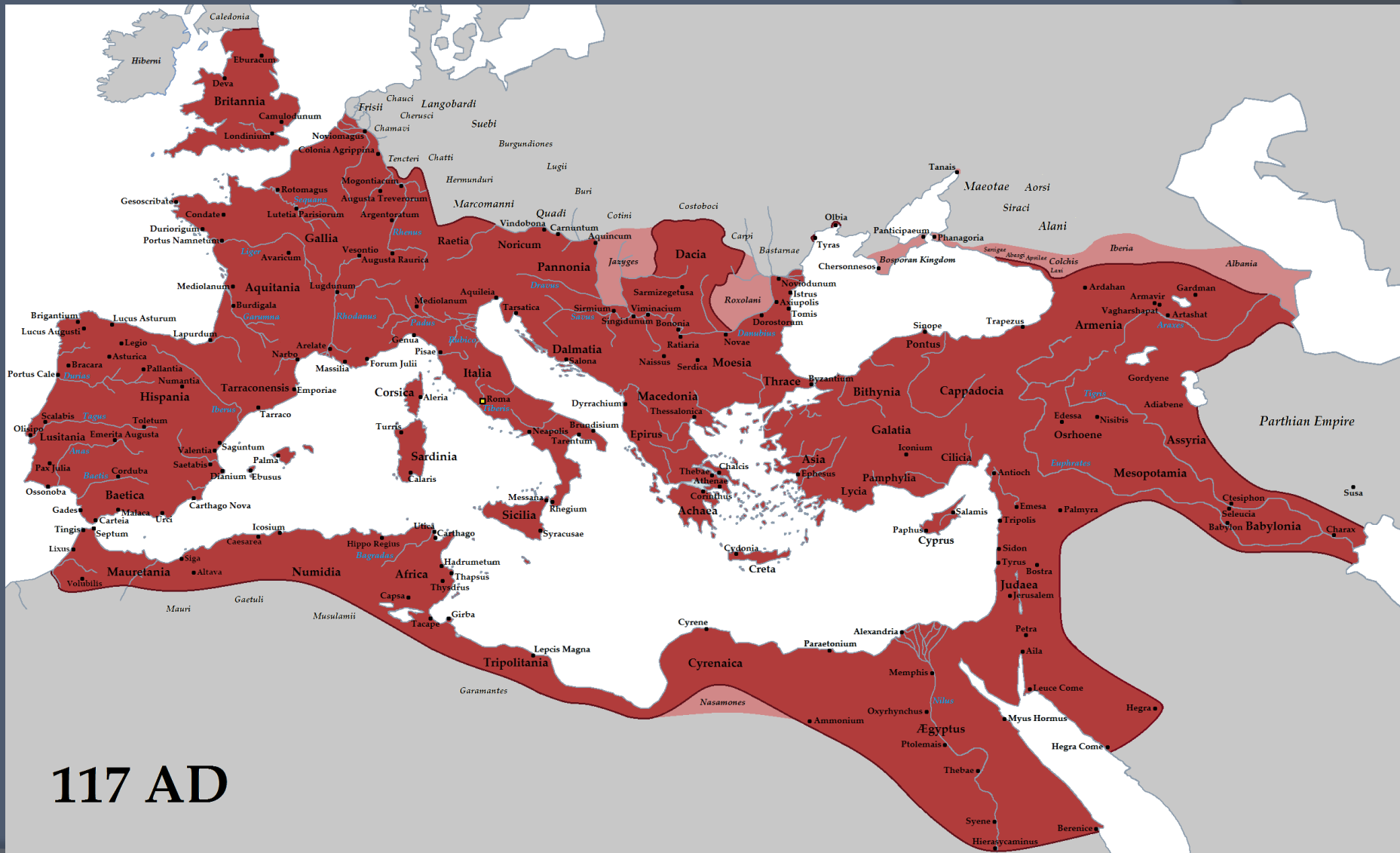
1. The name Peshitta means simple, or common
2. The Old Testament text of the Peshitta stems from a mid 2nd – early 3rd century text, but was not called the Peshitta until the 9th century
 - A. OT text translated from Hebrew but made to conform to the LXX
3. The standard Peshitta New Testament text stems from a 5th century revision of Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa (411-435), translated from the Greek
 - A. The original Peshitta NT did not contain 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude and Revelation. These were added in the Harclean text of 616AD.
4. Wide circulation during the mid-late 5th century (even to China!)
5. Became the authorized version of the two main branches of Syriac Christianity (the Jacobites and the Nestorians)
6. Had great missionary influence on the Armenian, Georgian, Arabic & Persian translations



Latin Versions

1. Old Latin (*vetus latina*)
 - A. First translations into Latin were in the last quarter of the 2nd century in North Africa
 - B. Early versions were wooden and literal translations
 - C. Extant witnesses date from the 4th to the 13th century (well after it had gone out of general use)
 - D. No complete NT codex survives
 - E. Typically Western text type
 - F. Many variants within the surviving manuscripts: Jerome commented that there were almost as many versions as manuscripts as he was preparing the Vulgate
2. Latin Vulgate
 - A. Name means 'common'
 - B. Pope Damasus commissioned Sophronius Eusebius Heironymous (aka 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 based on some 4,900 variants in 1592. The Clementine Vulgate still the official Latin Bible of Catholic church
 - E. Over 8,000 manuscripts extant

Latin Geographic Distribution



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 1Timothy 6:16 & Romans 13:7 in court records are the oldest known written Latin translations of Scripture

Image from <http://daybydaywithjesus.com/martyrs-scillitan-martyrs/>

Tertullian (c. 155-240 AD)

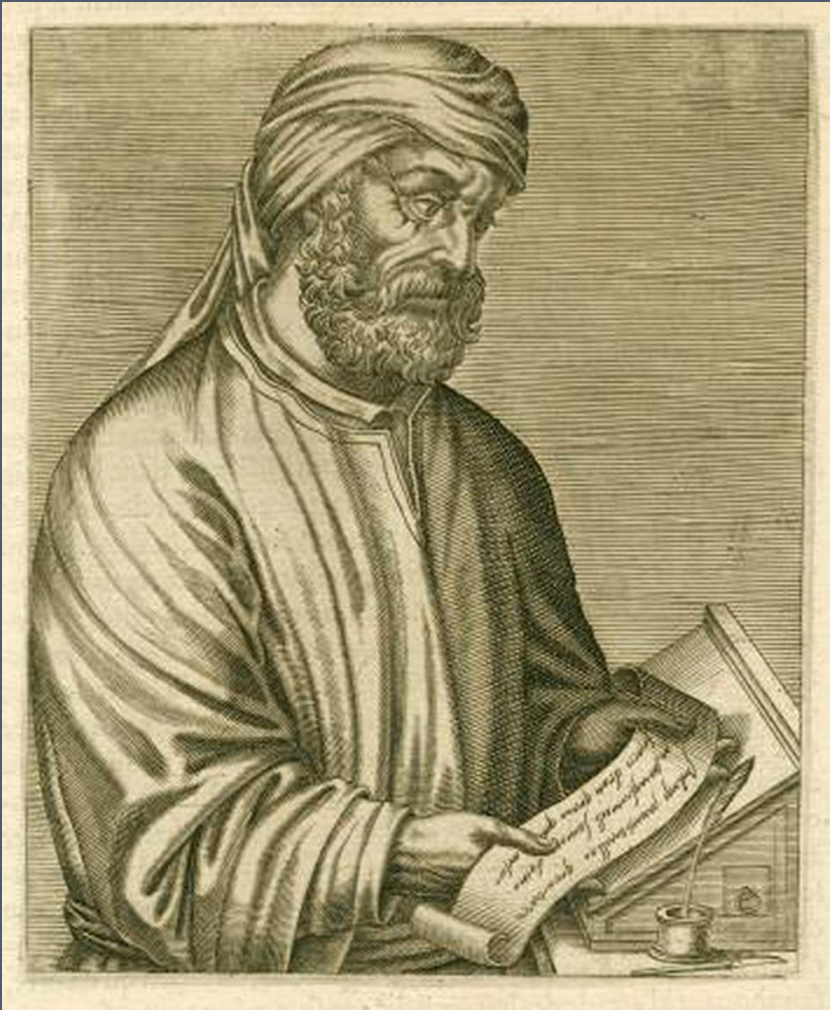


Image from Wikipedia

- 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
- Earliest writings date from 196-197 AD
- Quoted from the entire NT except 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John.
- But he rarely cites the same verse twice in exactly the same form, but 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
- Consistency in quotations indicate a relatively fixed version existed
- 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

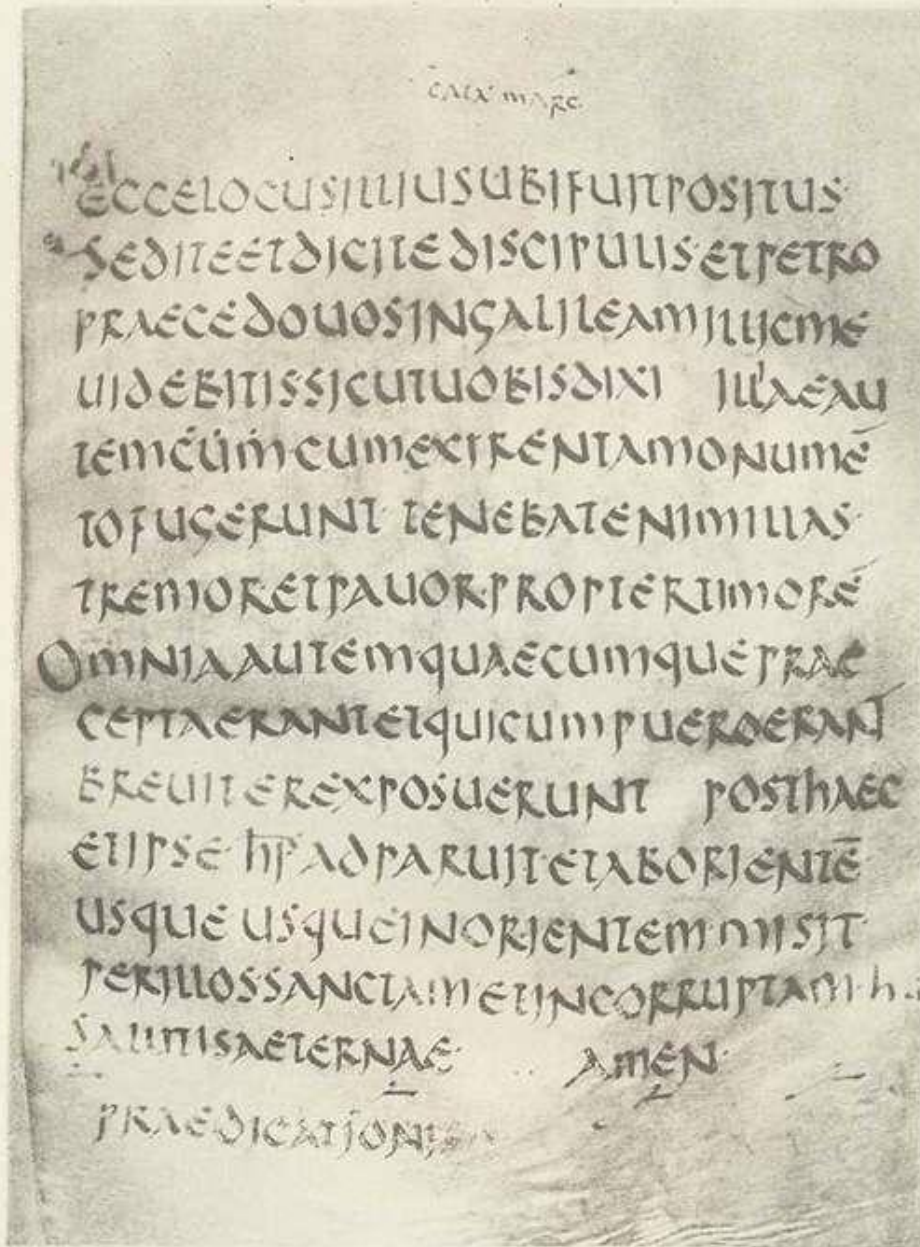
Old Latin Manuscript: k - Codex Bobbiensis

Date: ~400 AD

Text: Matt & Mark fragments

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

Contains similar readings to Cyprian of Carthage



Ending of Mark

Old Latin Manuscript: gig - Codex Gigas

Date: 13th 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).

Augustine (354-430 AD)



Painting by Justus van Gent, circa 1474

- 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
- Some of his most important works are *The City of God*, *Confessions*, *On Christian Doctrine*, & *On the Trinity*
- Stressed an importance of learning Greek, but never mastered it himself

Variability in Old Latin

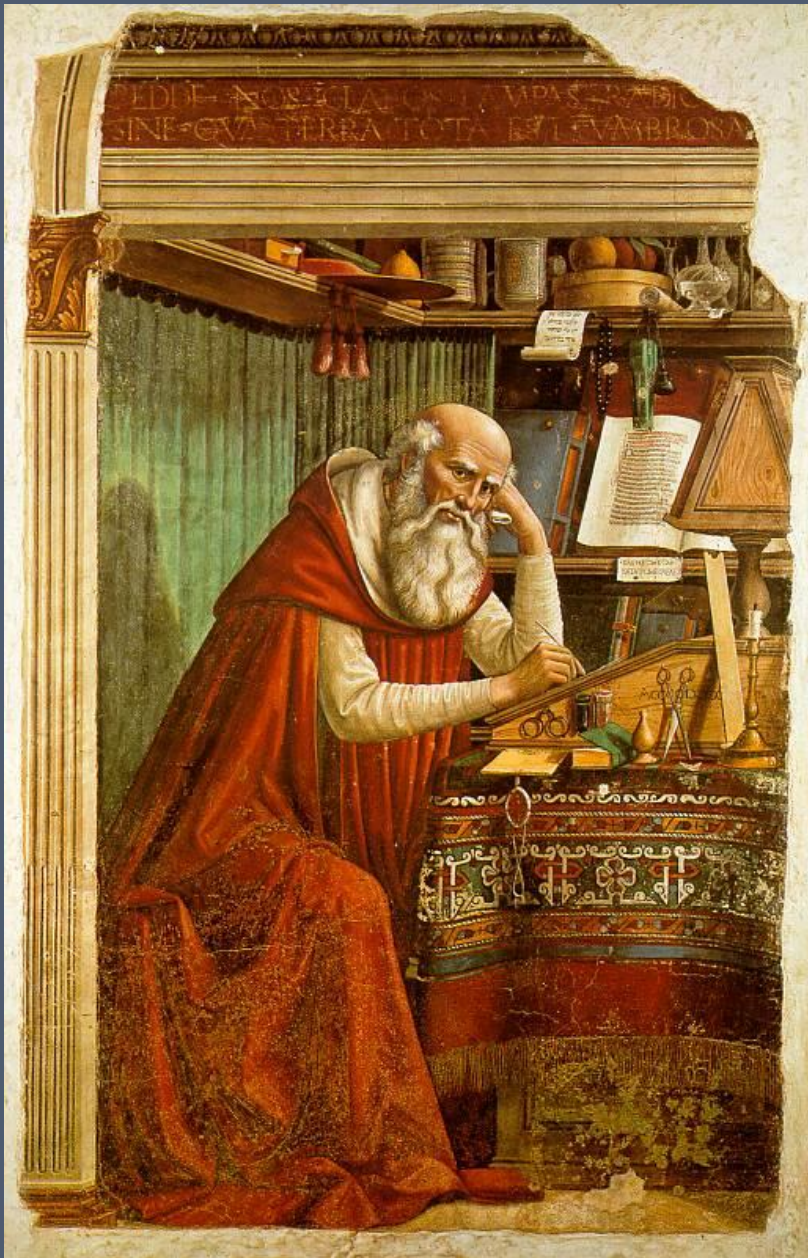
“For the translations of the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek can be counted, but the Latin translators are out of all number.”

- 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



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

Jerome (347-420 AD)

- Born Eusebius Sophronius Heironymus in northern Italy
- Baptized and studied in Rome, learned Latin and some Greek
- 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

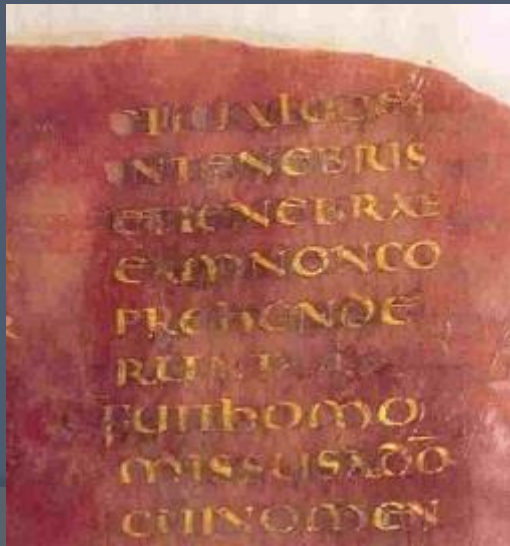
“In order that these [gospels] would not differ greatly from the customary Latin reading, I directed my pen only to correct errors which seemed to change the sense, and allowed the rest to remain as it had been.”

- 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



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

CODICIBVS SACRIS HOSTILI CLADE PERVSTIS
ESDRA DŌ FERVENS HOC REPARAVIT OPVS



Illustration of Ezra at start of OT

Vulgate Manuscript: A - Codex Amiatinus

Date: 716 AD

Text: entire Bible

- Considered the most important (most accurate of Jerome's text) 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 16th 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.

Image from Wikipedia

Date: 546 AD
Text: entire Bible

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

