HISTORY OF THE BIBLE
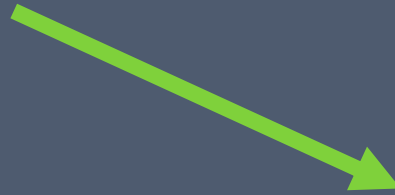
Dan Leiphart

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
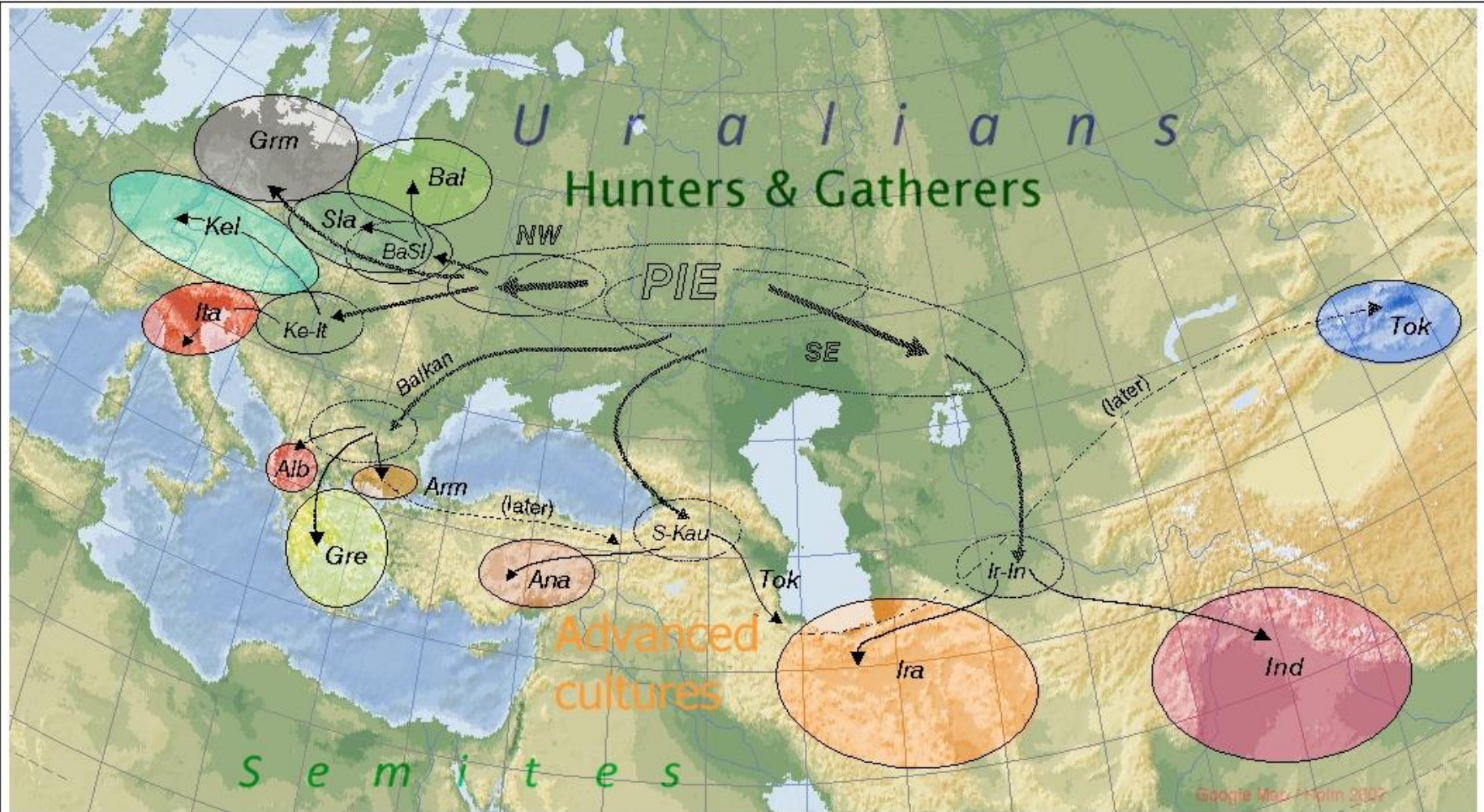
Timeline of Bible Translations
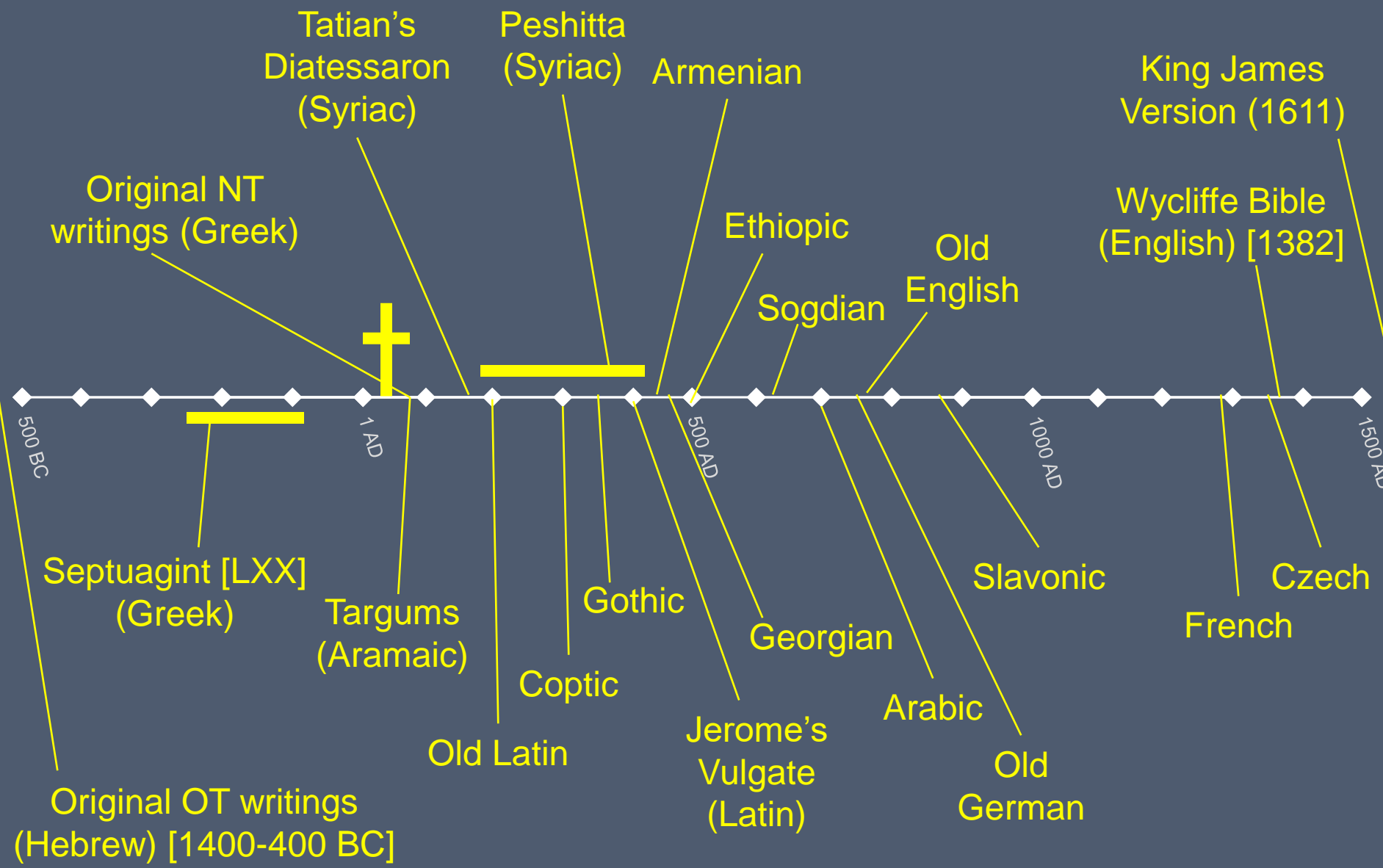
Indo-European Languages
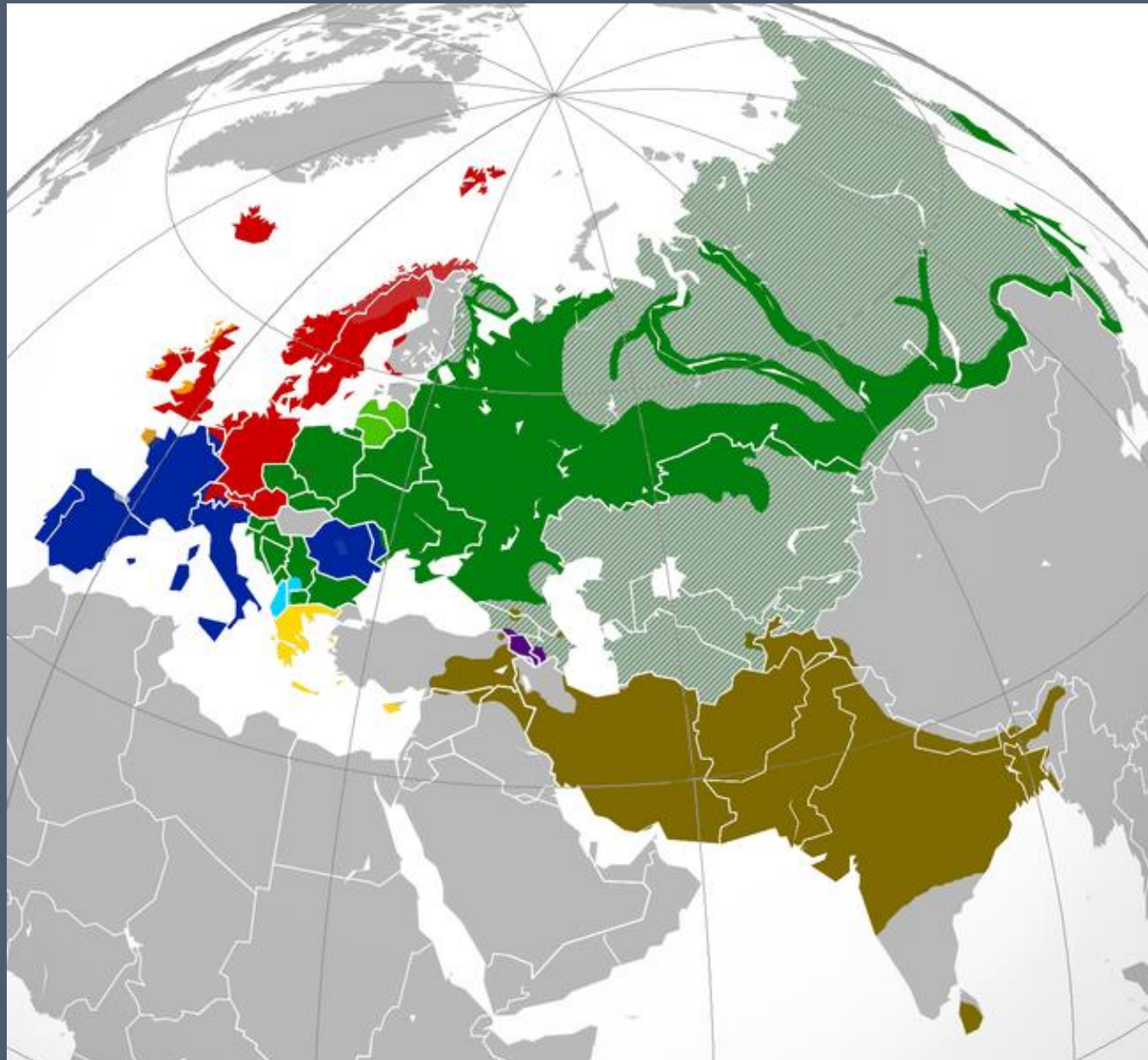
The Indo-European languages have a large number of branches:

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

Legend (left map):

- Punic
- Hebrew
- Aramaic dialects
- Late Babylonian
- Arabic
- South Arabian
- Ge'ez
- Proto-Amharic

Legend (right map):

- Aramaic
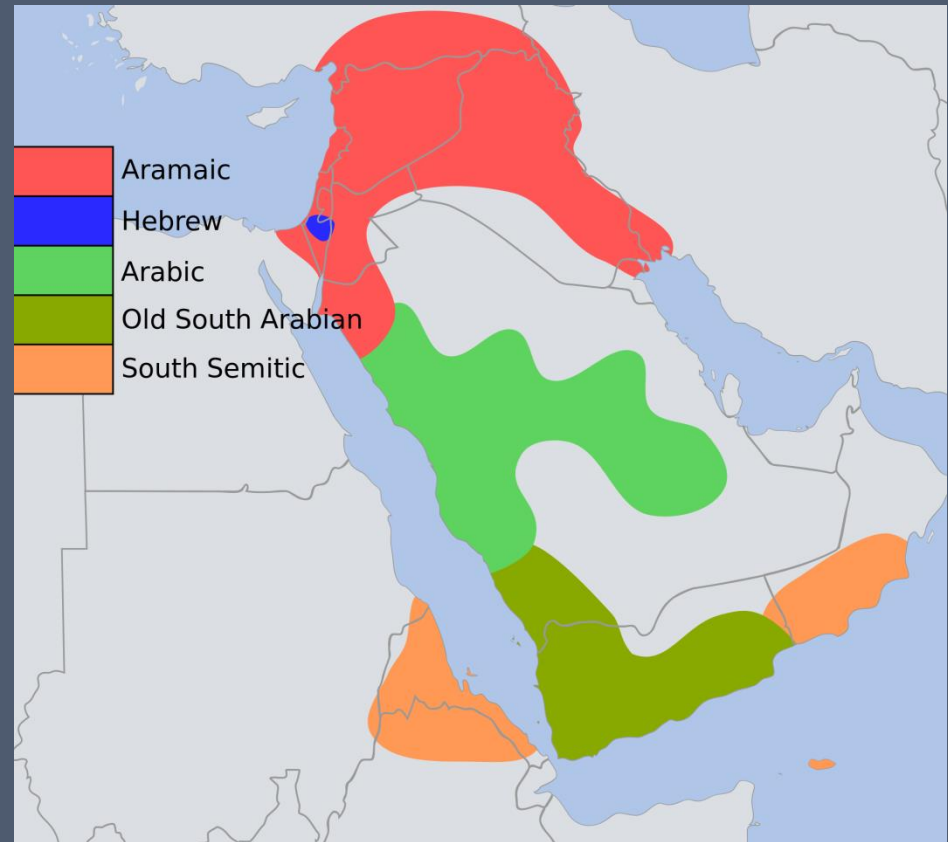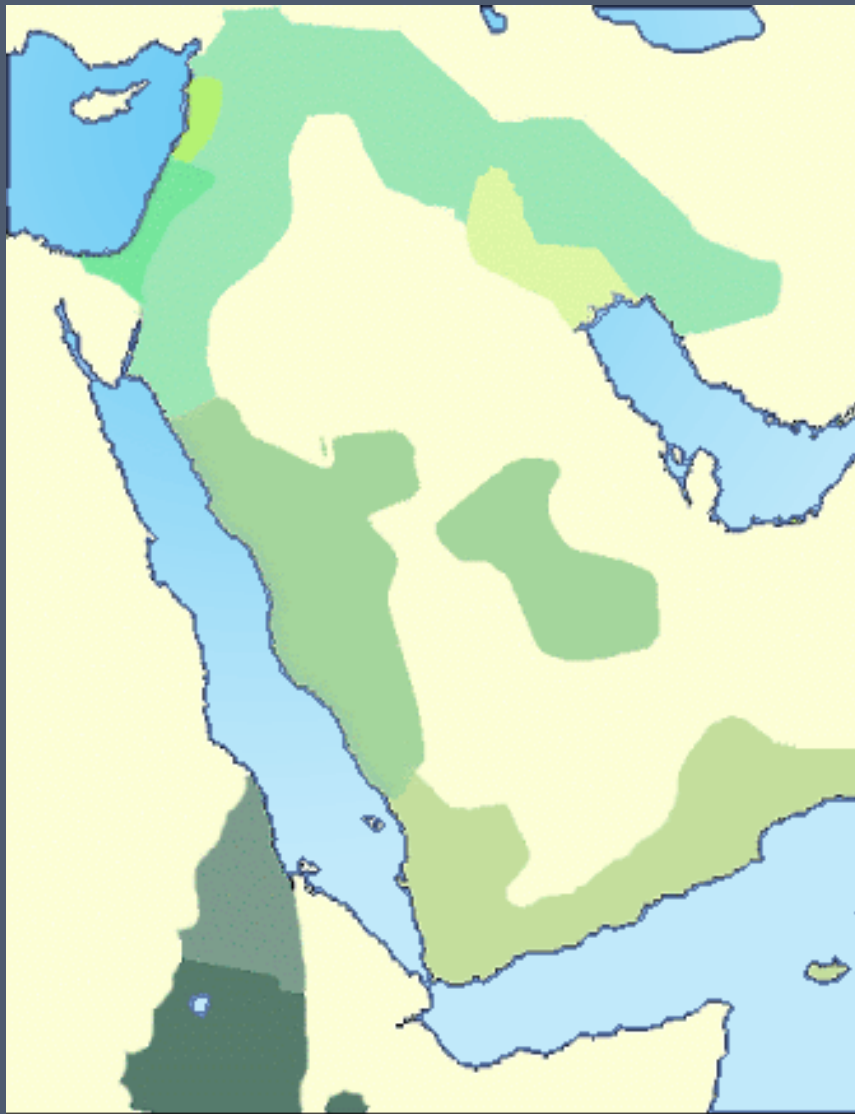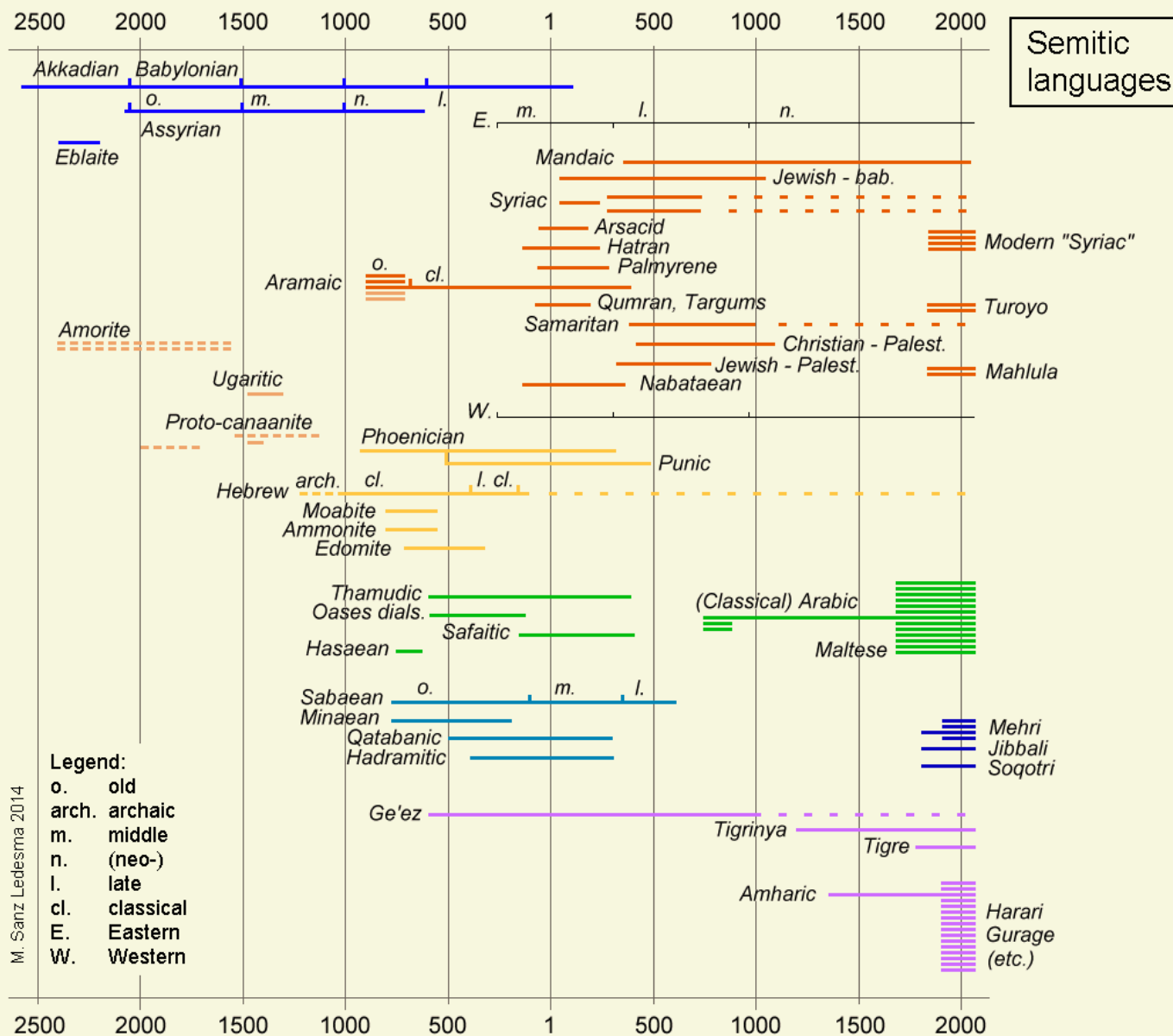- Hebrew
- Arabic
- Old South Arabian
- South Semitic

Image from Wikipedia (left)
Reddit (right)

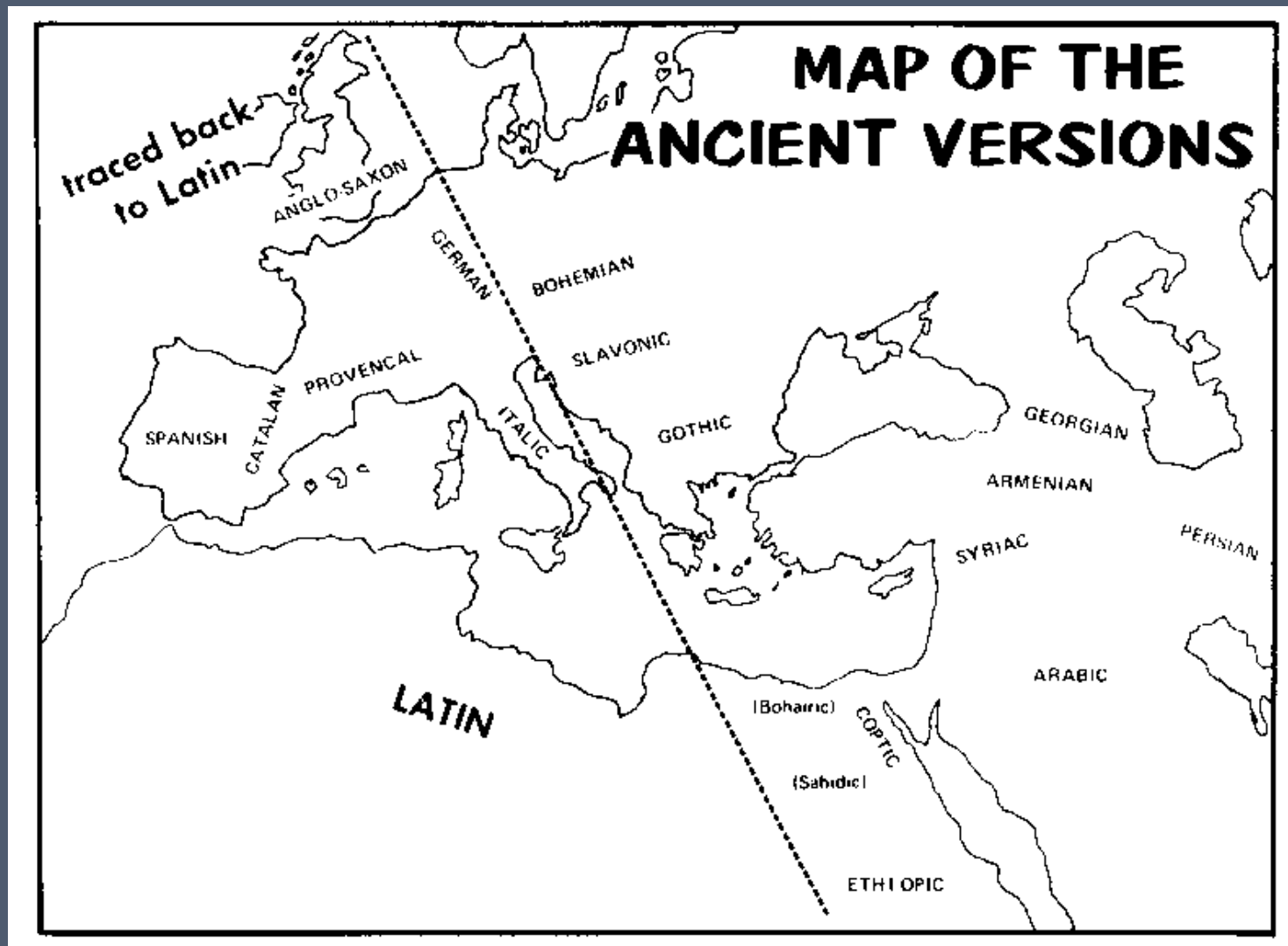# Semitic Languages

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.

Image from Wikipedia

Language Distribution in Roman Empire (2ⁿᵈ Century AD)

Ancient Bible Versions

MAP OF THE ANCIENT VERSIONS

traced back to Latin

ANGLO-SAXON

GERMAN

BOHEMIAN

SLAVONIC

CATALAN PROVENCAL

SPANISH

ITALIC

GOTHIC

GEORGIAN

ARMENIAN

PERSIAN

SYRIAC

LATIN

ARABIC

(Boharic)

COPTIC

(Sahidic)

ETHIOPIC

Areas of Early Versions
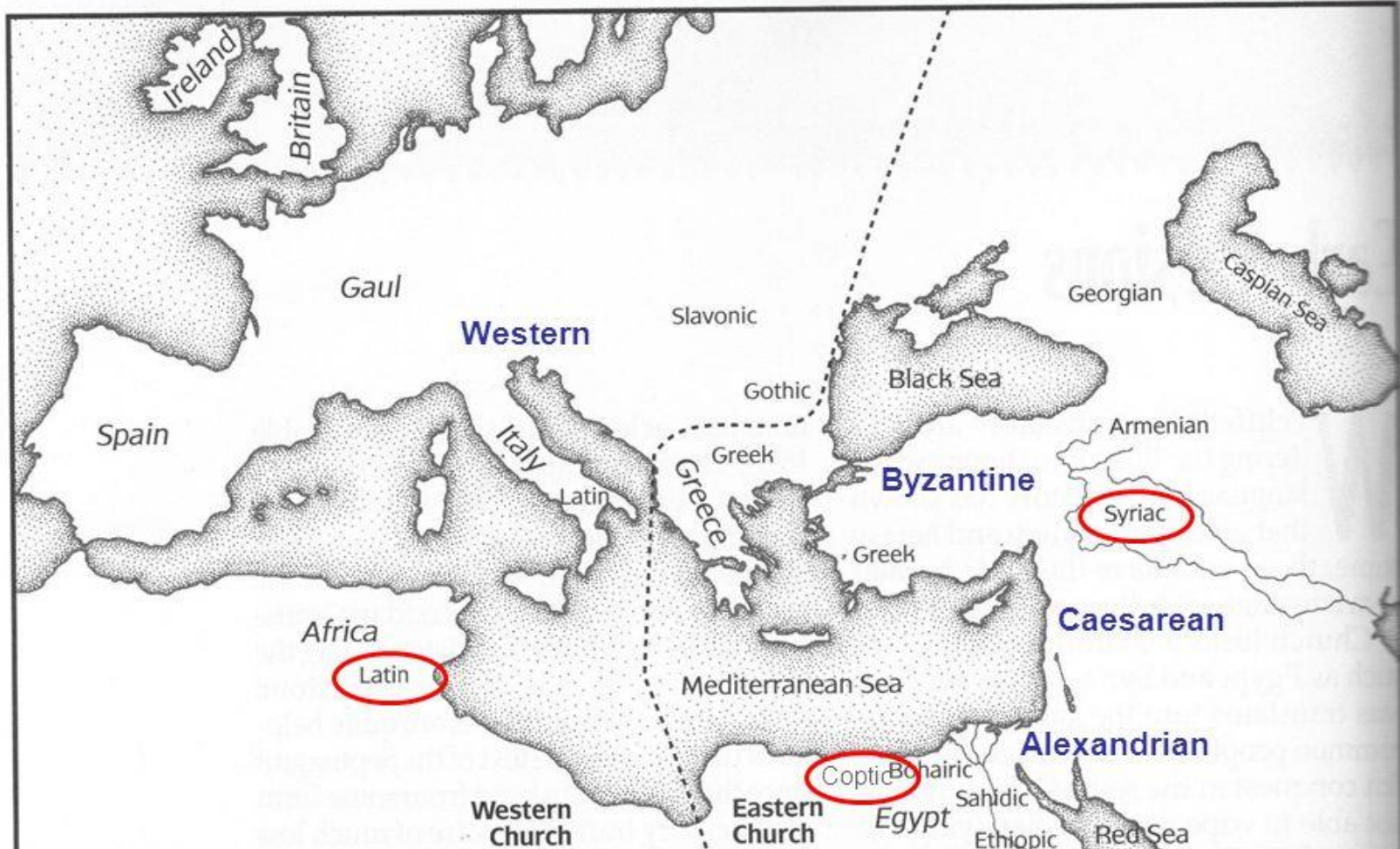
Old Testament Text Families

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. Aquilla 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

Relationship between ancient Old Testament manuscript traditions
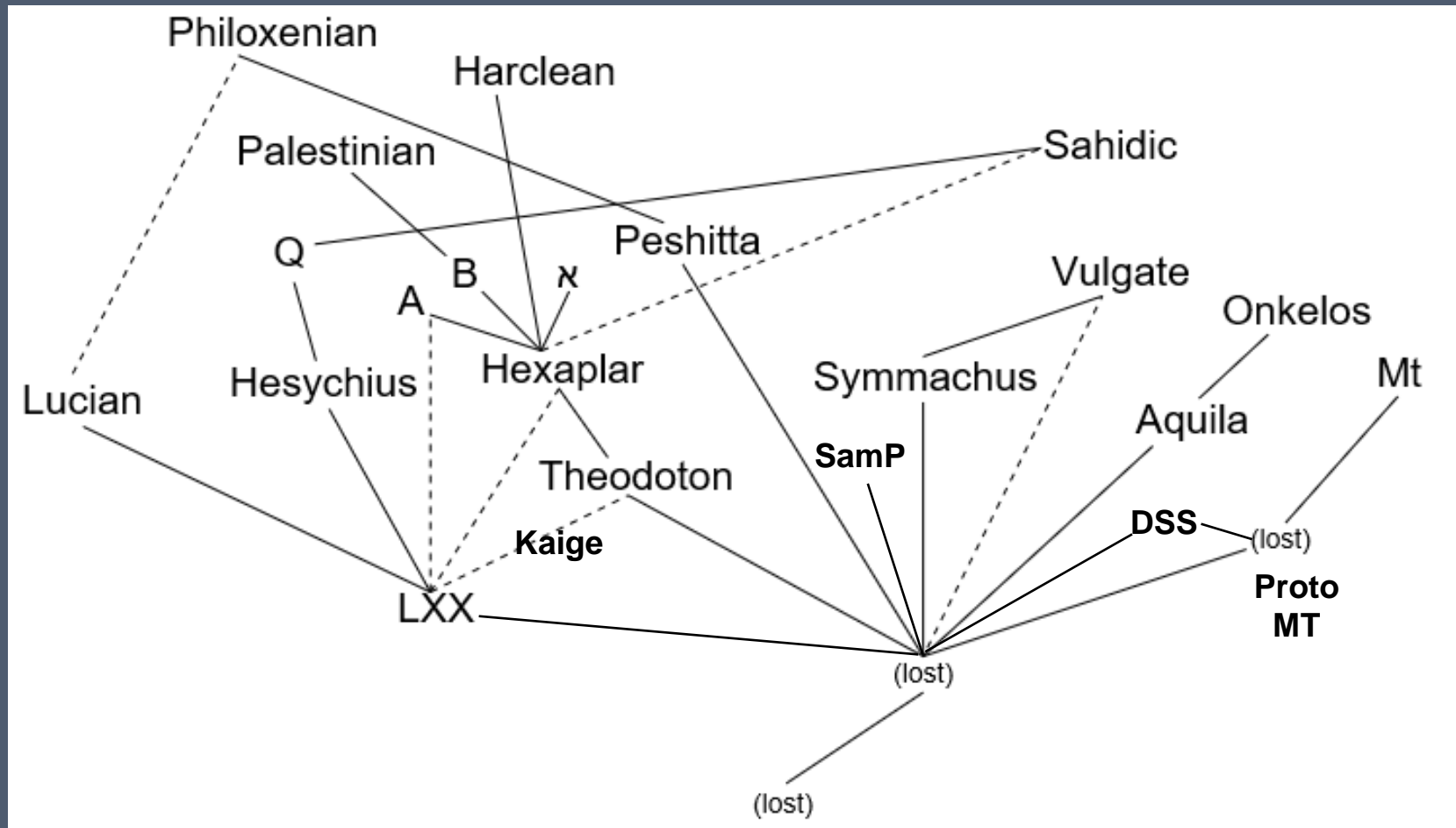
Autographs

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

P. Rylands 458

Date: 2nd century BC
Text: Deuteronomy (parts)
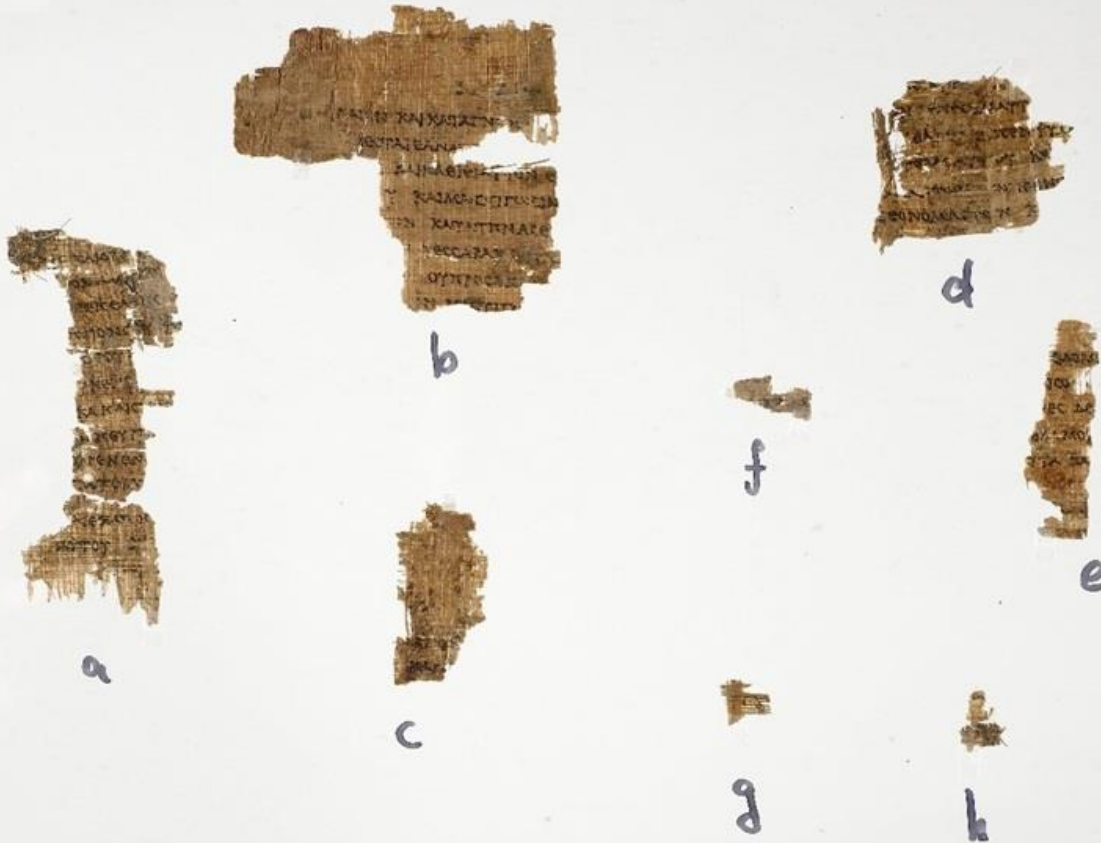
Oldest known manuscript of the Septuagint

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

Discovered in 1917

Image from Wikipedia

Papyrus Fouad № 266
Второзаконие 31:28 – 32:7

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
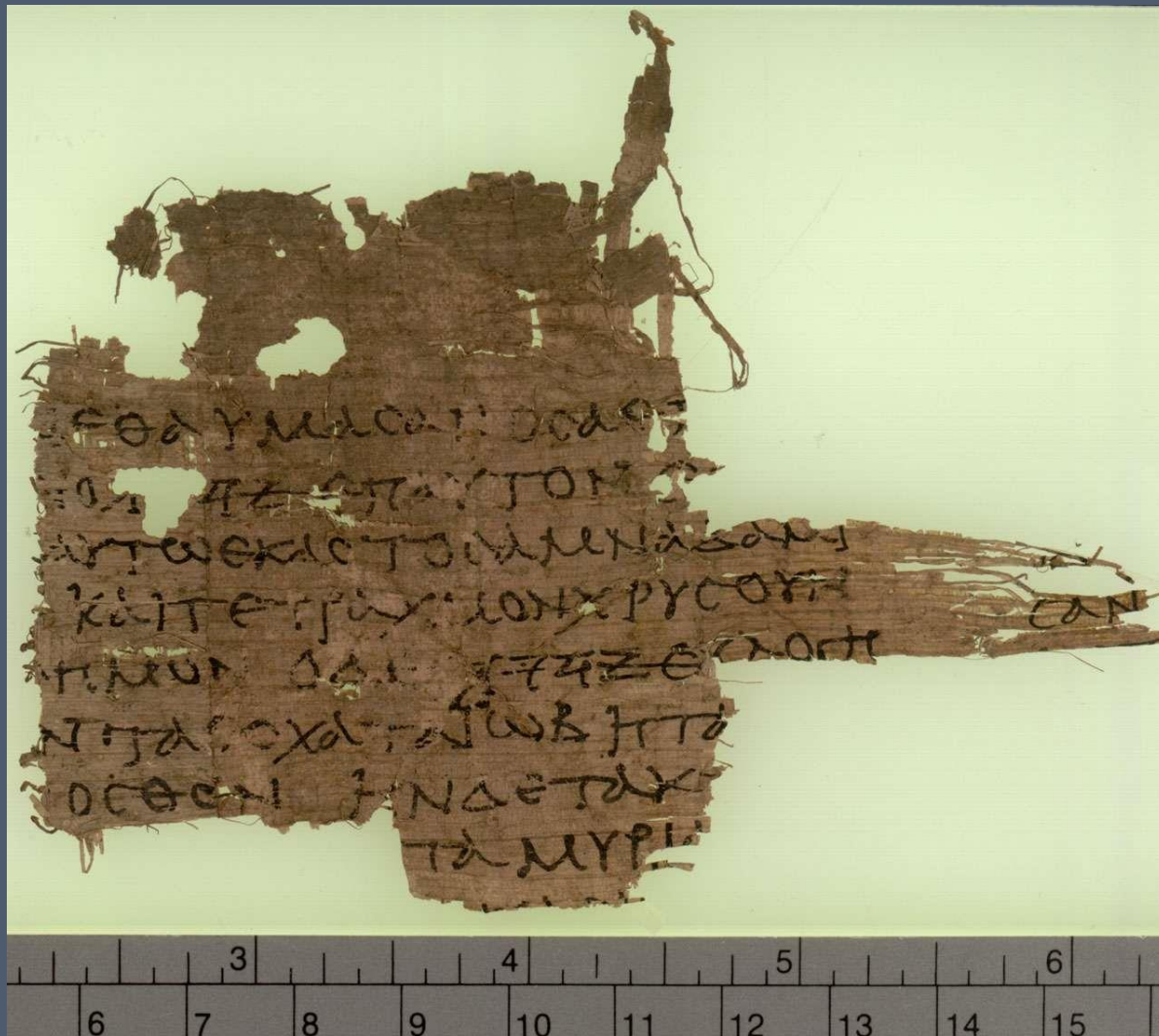
P Oxy 3522

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*)

Image from Wikipedia, arrow points to the tetragrammaton in Paleo-Hebrew

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

MS 2649

Date: ca 200
Text: Leviticus (parts)

Oldest manuscript of Leviticus

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 Chrysostum. 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 reams 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.

Origen (c. 184-254 AD)
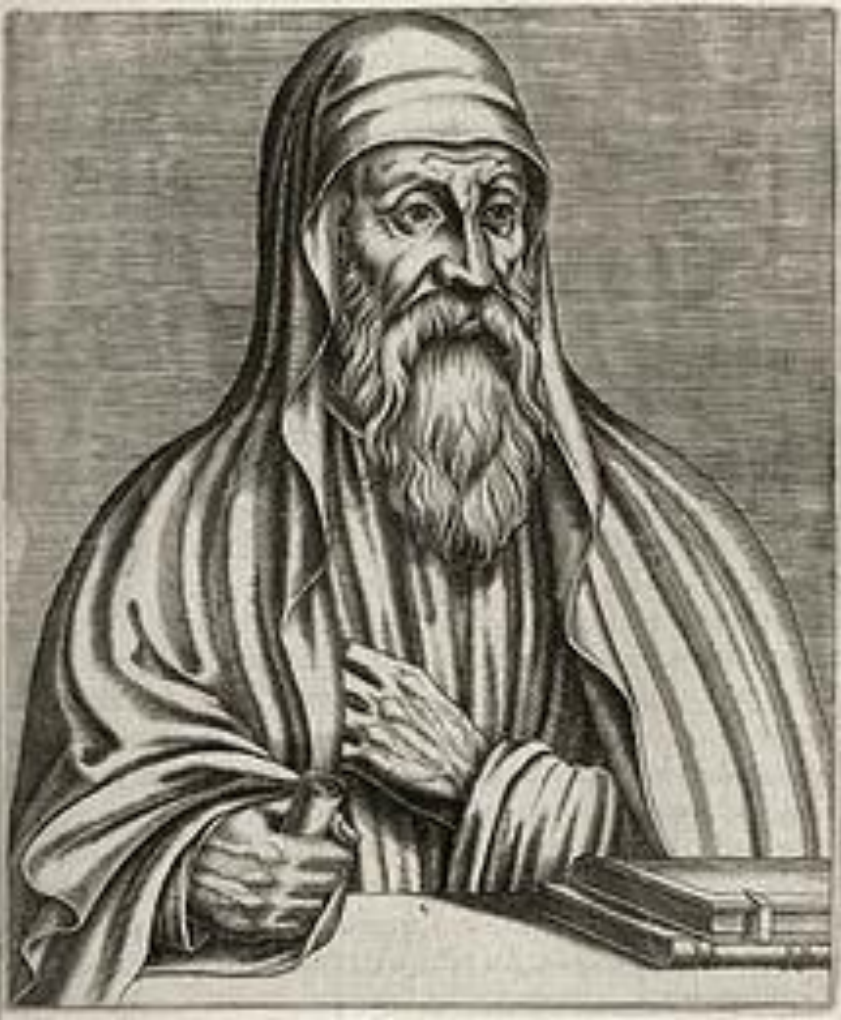
Image from Wikipedia

- 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, Theodition & his own recension of the LXX
- One of the most scholarly theologians in early church, known for his allegorical biblical interpretation
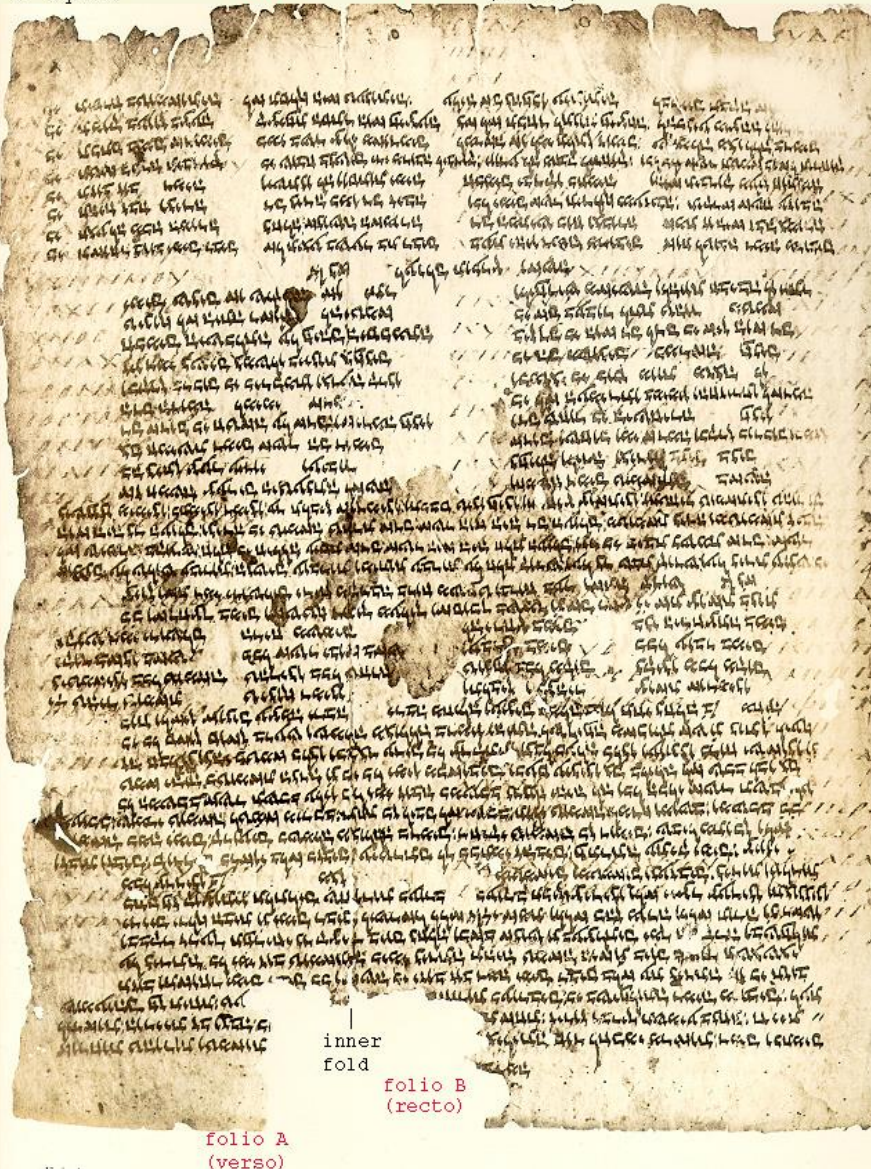
Origen's Hexapla

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.

Genizah Manuscript showing Ps 22 of *hexapla*

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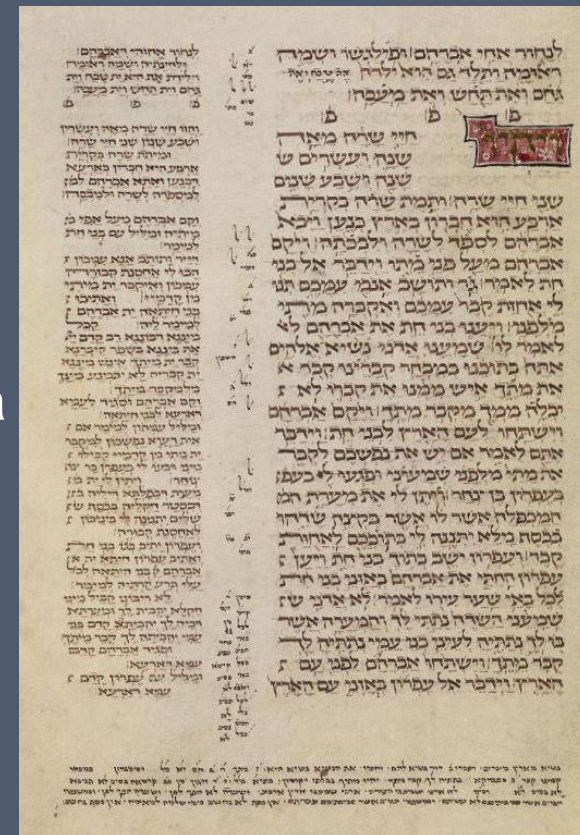
Image from Wikipedia (manuscript from 1299 AD showing Hebrews on right and Targum Onkelos on left)

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

SYRIAC VERSION: *Geography of Its Beginnings*
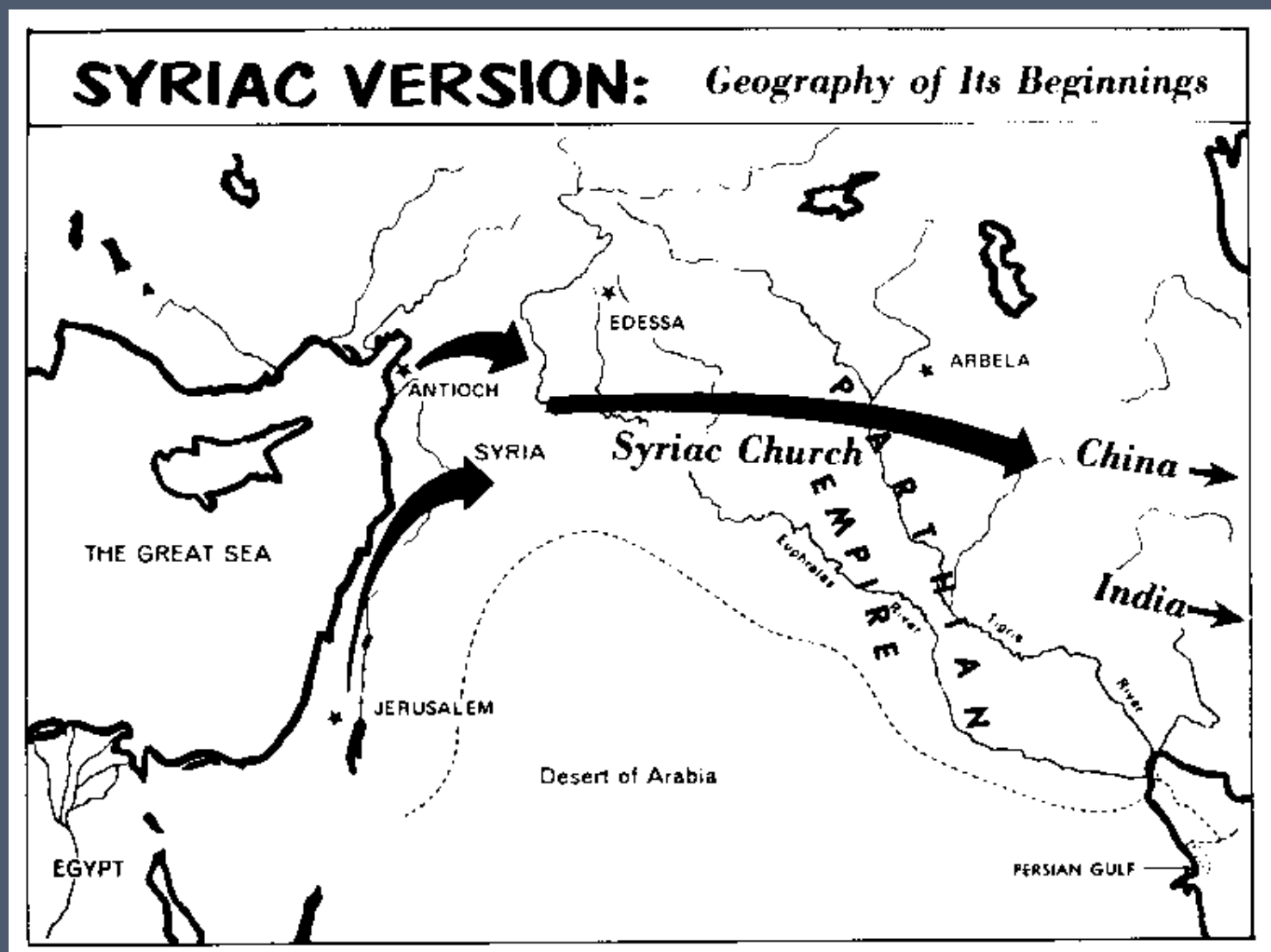
Old Syriac Manuscripts

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

Old Syriac Manuscripts: Curetonian Syriac - Syr^C

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

Together with Sinaitic Syriac manuscript, this is one of the oldest Syriac translations of the Bible.

Matthew 1:1-17

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).

Image from Wikipedia
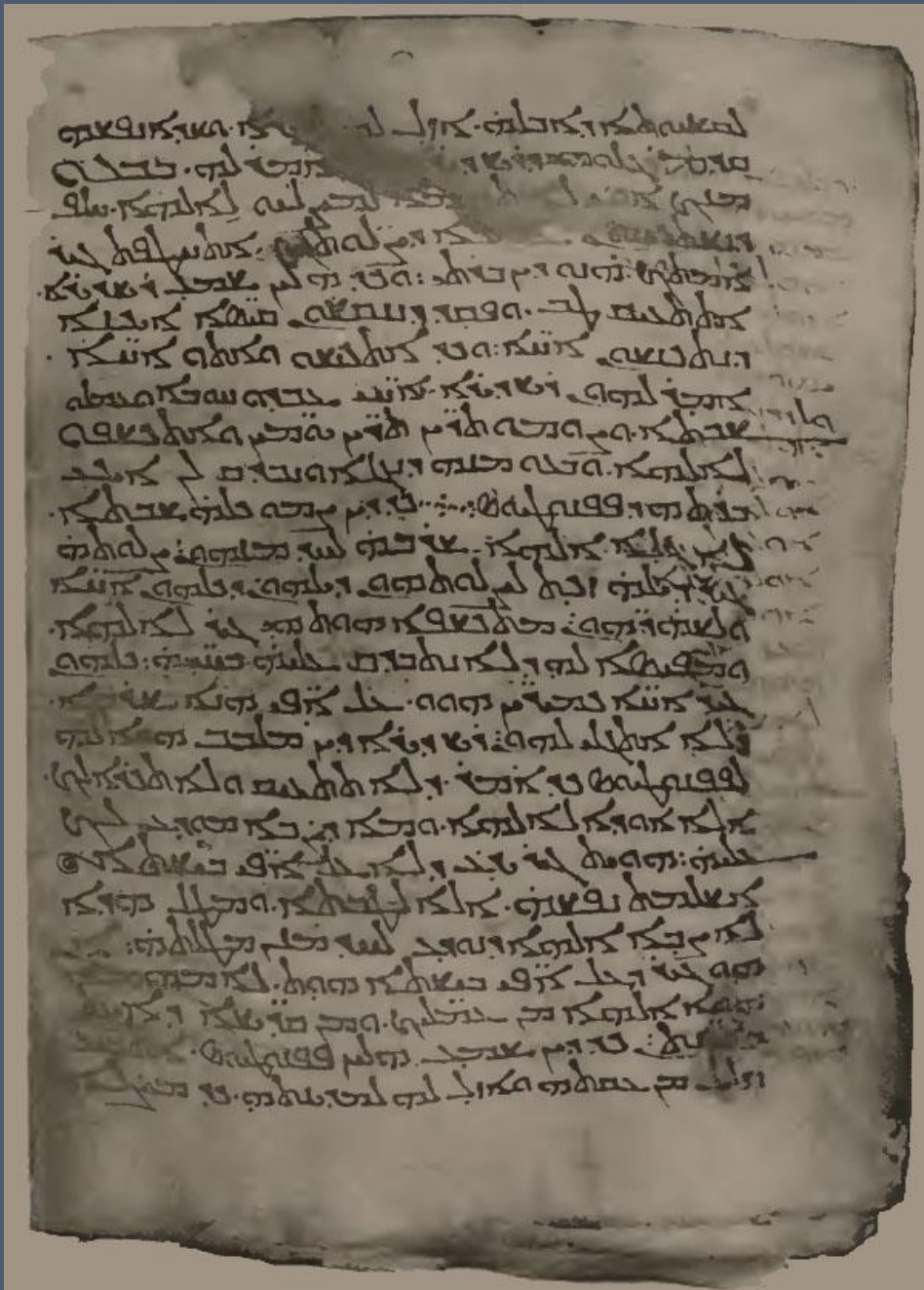
Tatian (c. 120-180 AD)

- 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

Image from Wikipedia
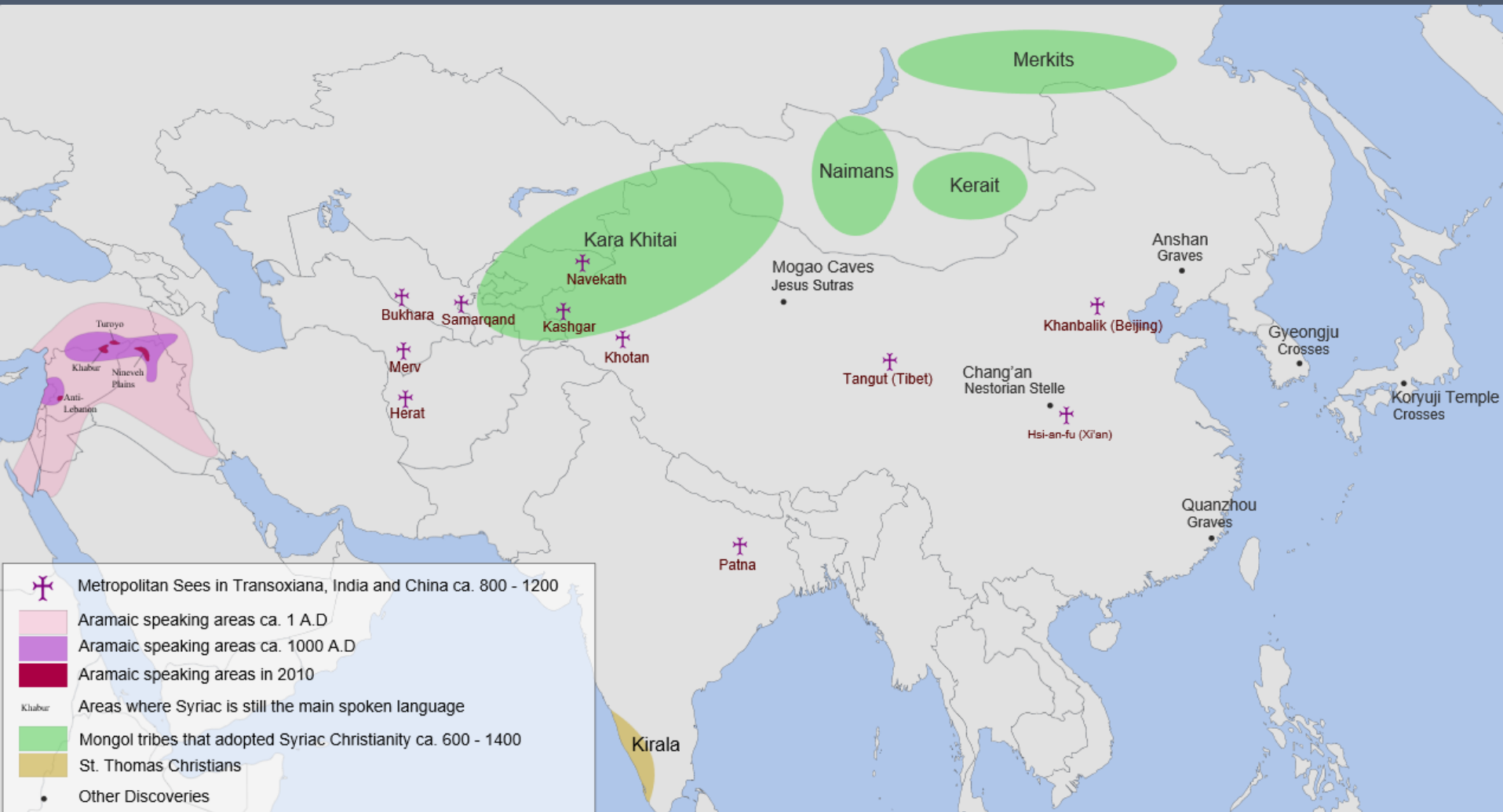
Syriac Peshitta - Syr^P

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
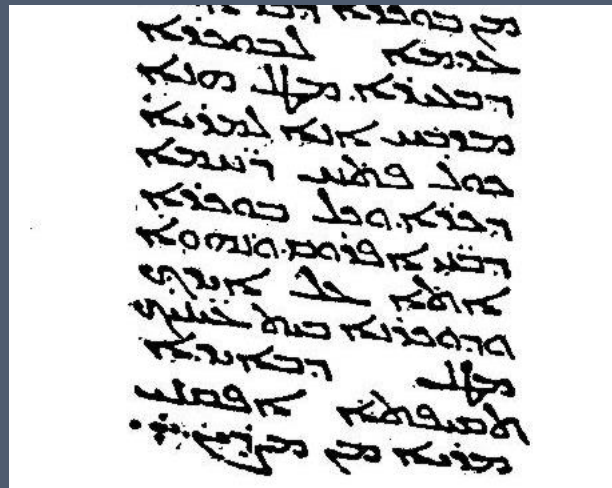
Latin Versions

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

117 AD

Image from Wikipedia
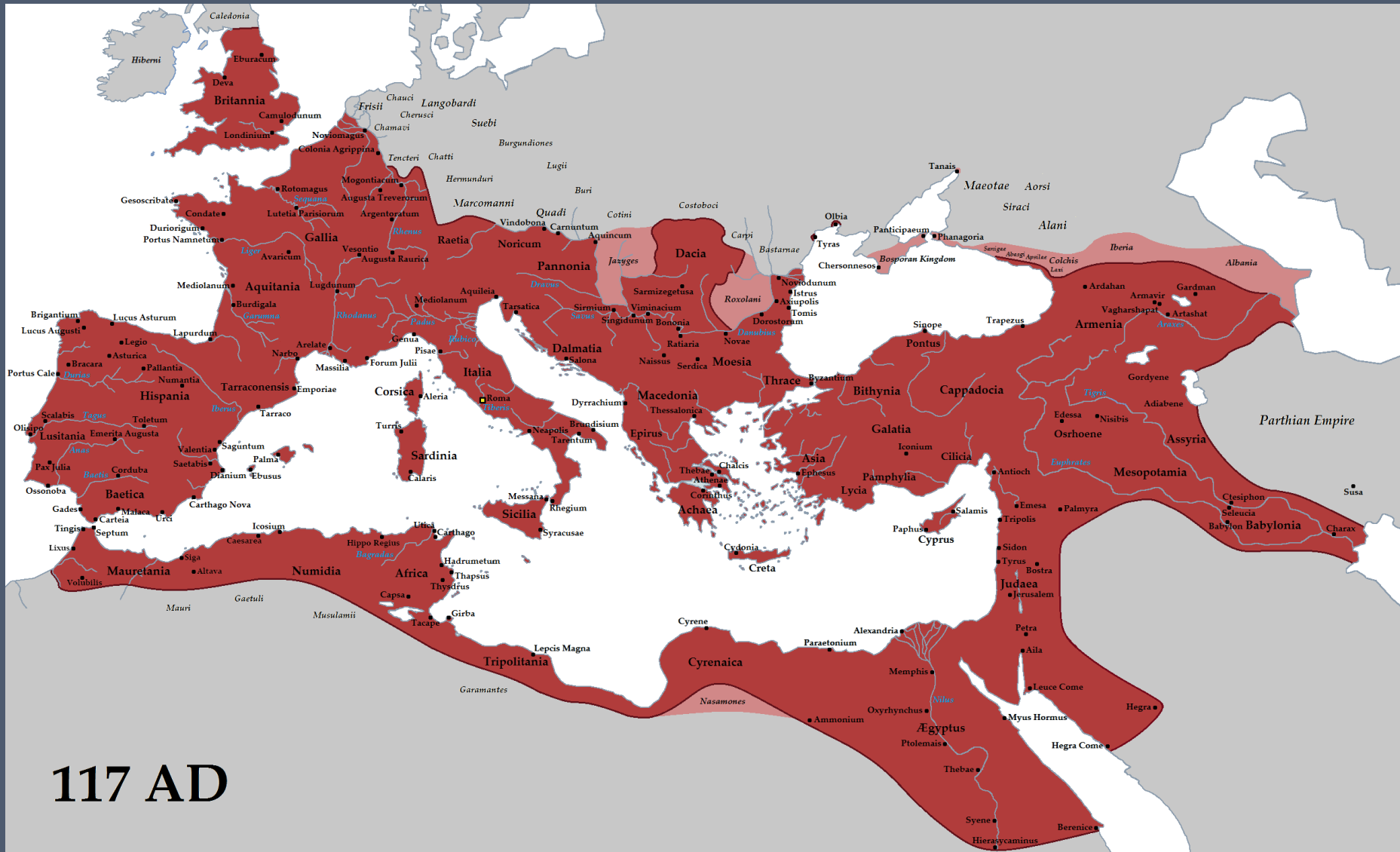
Scilliton Martyrs *(July 17, 180 AD)*

• 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

Tertullian (c. 155-240 AD)
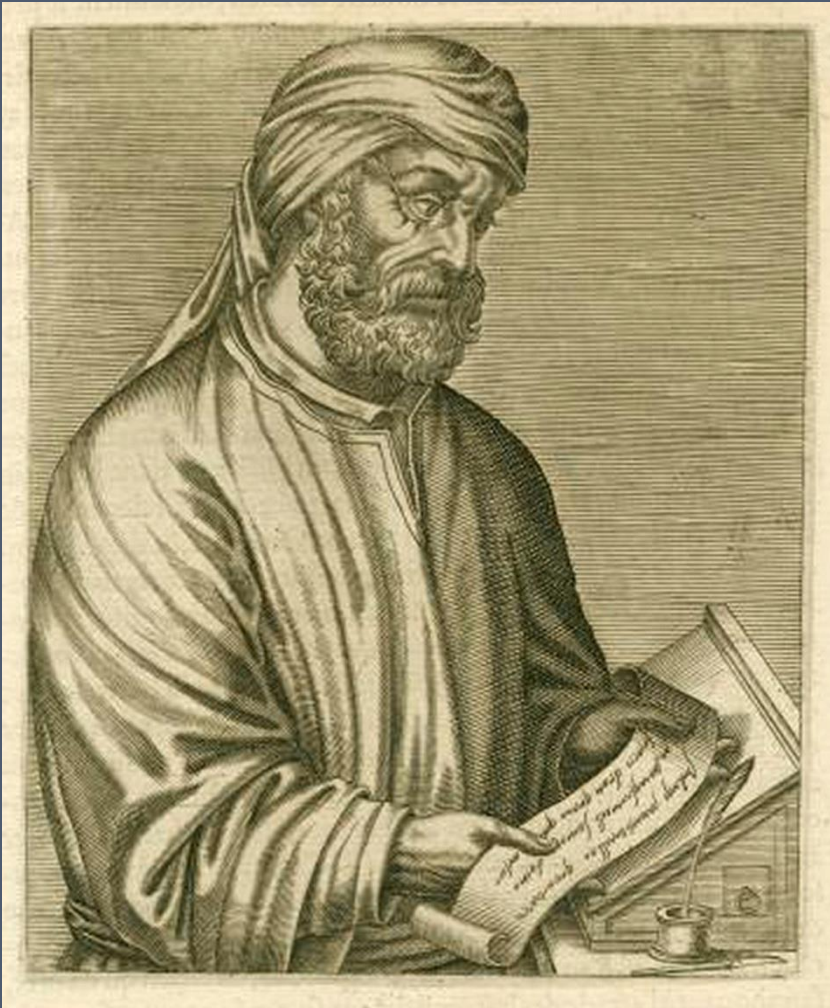
Image from Wikipedia

- 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)*

SĀT⊃ CIIPRIANVS EPS E ·M·

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

Ending of Mark

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
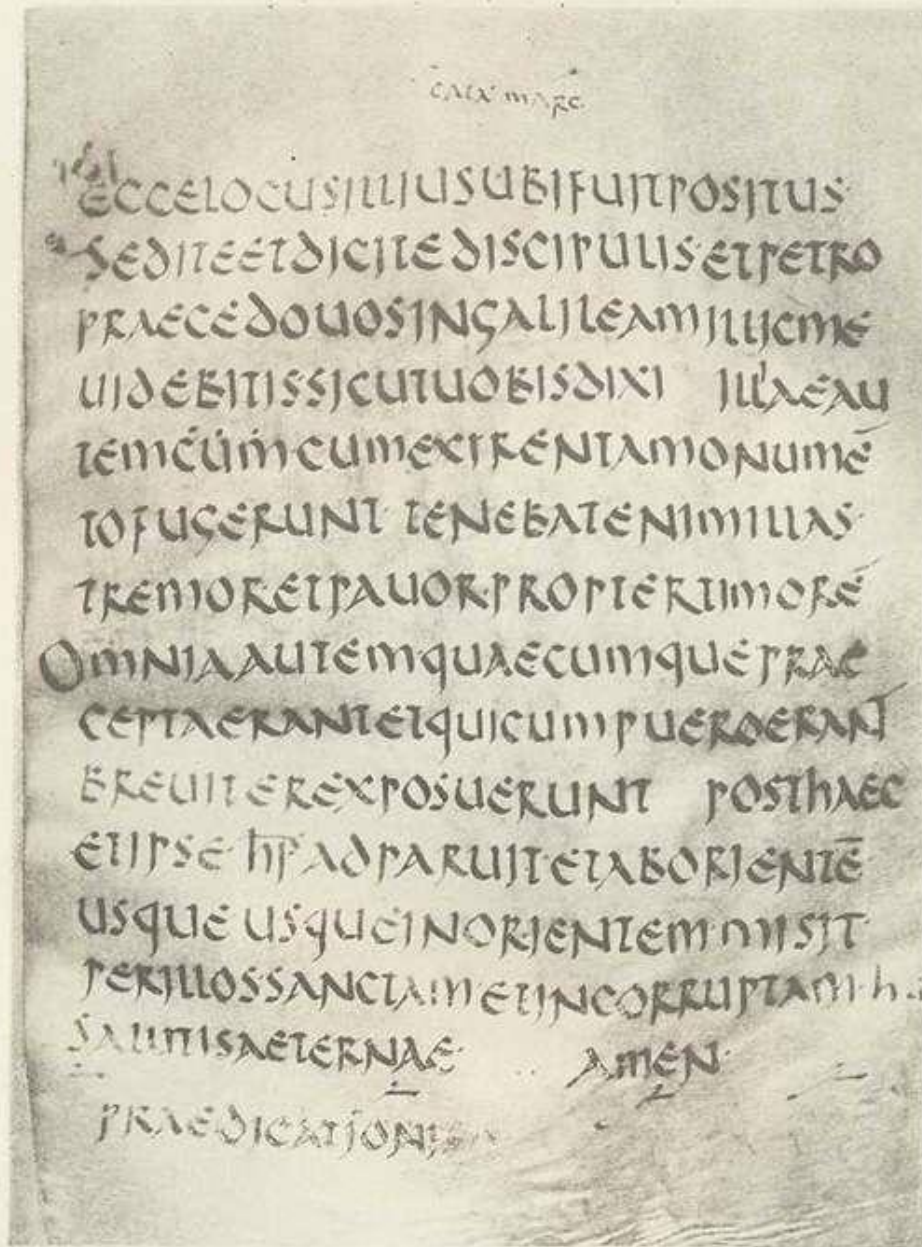
Image from Wikipedia

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)*

- 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*
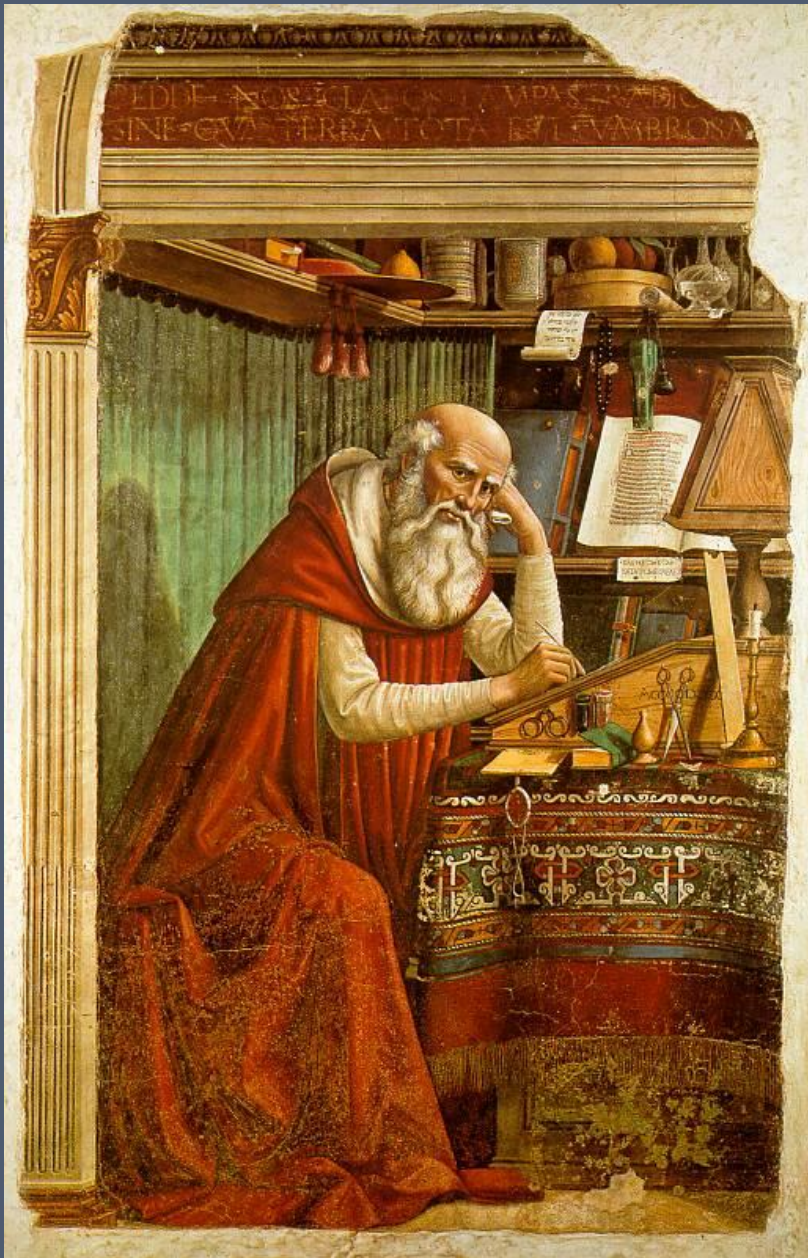
Jerome *(347-420 AD)*

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

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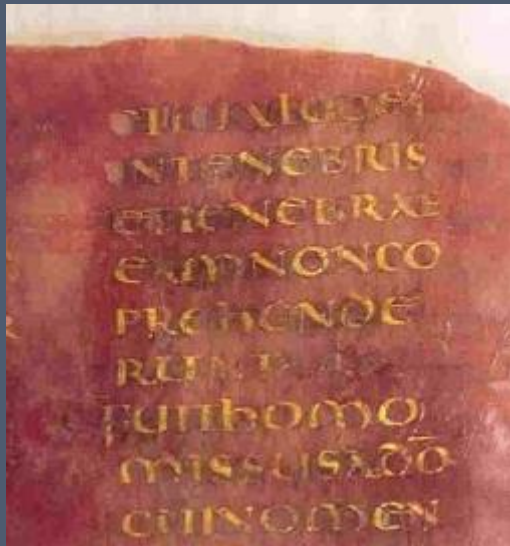
5th century Old Latin manuscript *Codex Veronensis* with purple dye and gold lettering [image from Wikipedia]

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

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

Image from http://www.helsinki.fi/teol/pro/gnosti/eng_maps/maps.html

Coptic Versions

1. Coptic versions
   A. Translated from Alexandrian Greek texts into all four major dialects
   B. Sahidic
      i. First translation in 2nd century
      ii. mss extant from 4th
   C. Bohairic
      i. First translation early 3rd century
      ii. Very literal translation
      iii. Most helpful in reconstructing original Greek text
      iv. Over 100 manuscripts extant
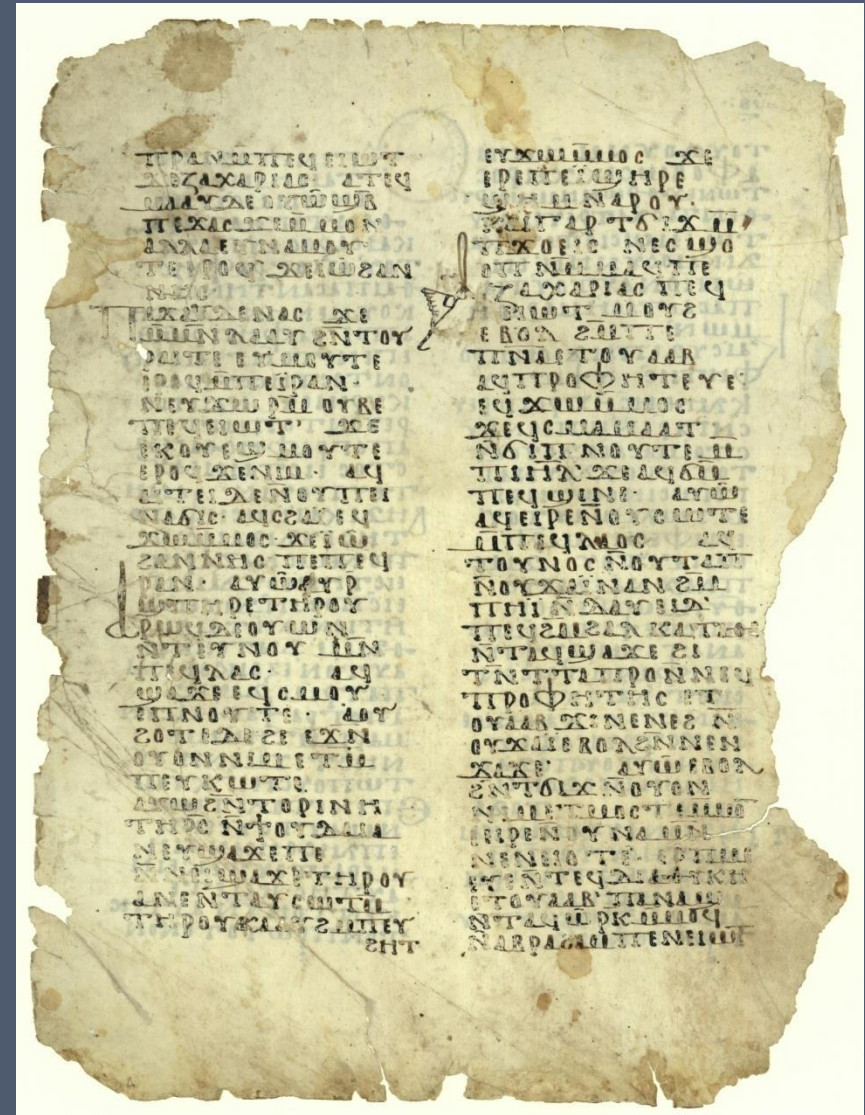
Uncial manuscript 0177 (10th century) of Luke 1:59-73
A Greek-Coptic diglot

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 ~4th century
   B. Version probably appeared in the 5th century
   C. Likely translated from the Greek or Coptic
   D. Most extant manuscripts are from the 11th century or younger, most from 14th century on

Gospel of Matthew from Ethiopian Manuscript 59874 at the British Library

Image from Wikipedia

Ethiopic Manuscript:
Garima Gospels

Date: late 5th – 7th Century
Text: Gospels
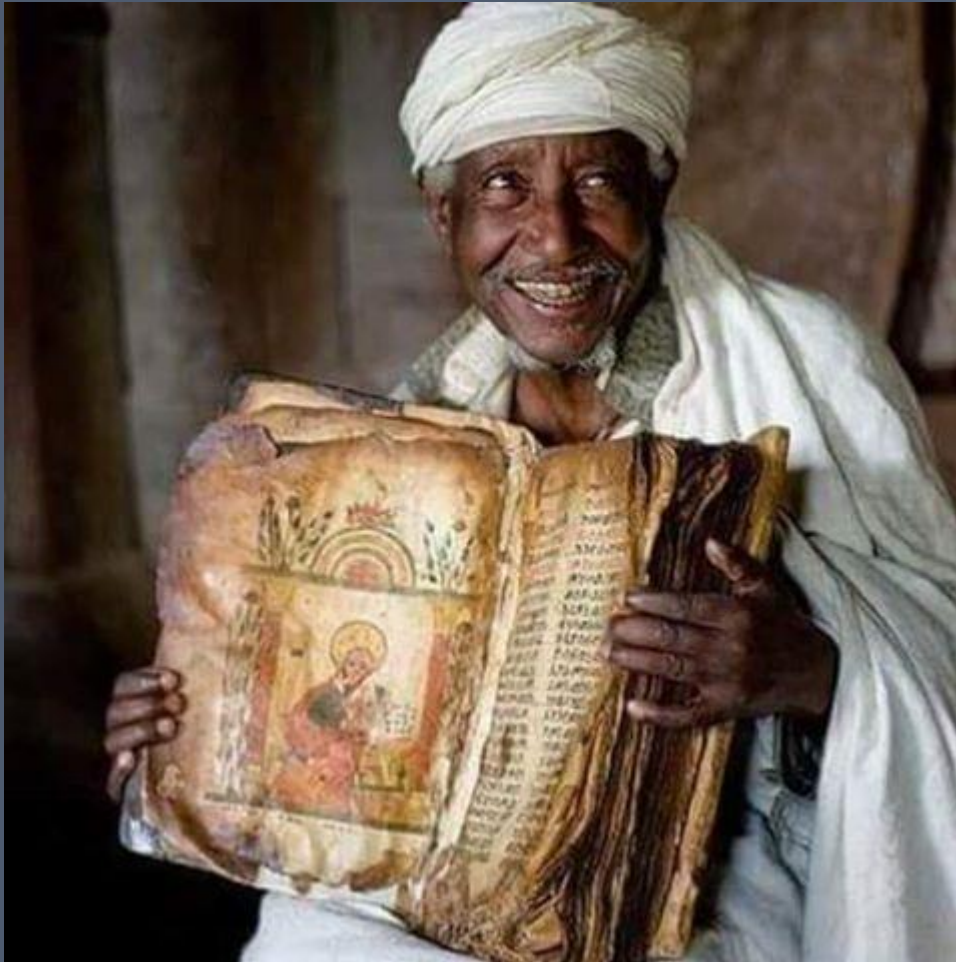
• Two ancient manuscripts in Ge'ez (Ethiopic) of the gospels
• Likely the earliest surviving illuminated Christian manuscript
• Some of the earliest witnesses to the Byzantine text type
• Possibly copied by Abba Garima who traveled from Constantinople to Ethiopia in 494 AD
• The oldest known book with original binding in the world
• First became known outside Ethiopia in 1950

Image from http://orthochristian.com/94812.html

Garima Gospels

Gothic Versions

1. The Gothic language
   A. An extinct language
   B. The first Germanic language
   C. Known from *Codex Argenteus* (a 6th century copy of a 4th 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.protogermanic.com/search/label/ancient%20germanic
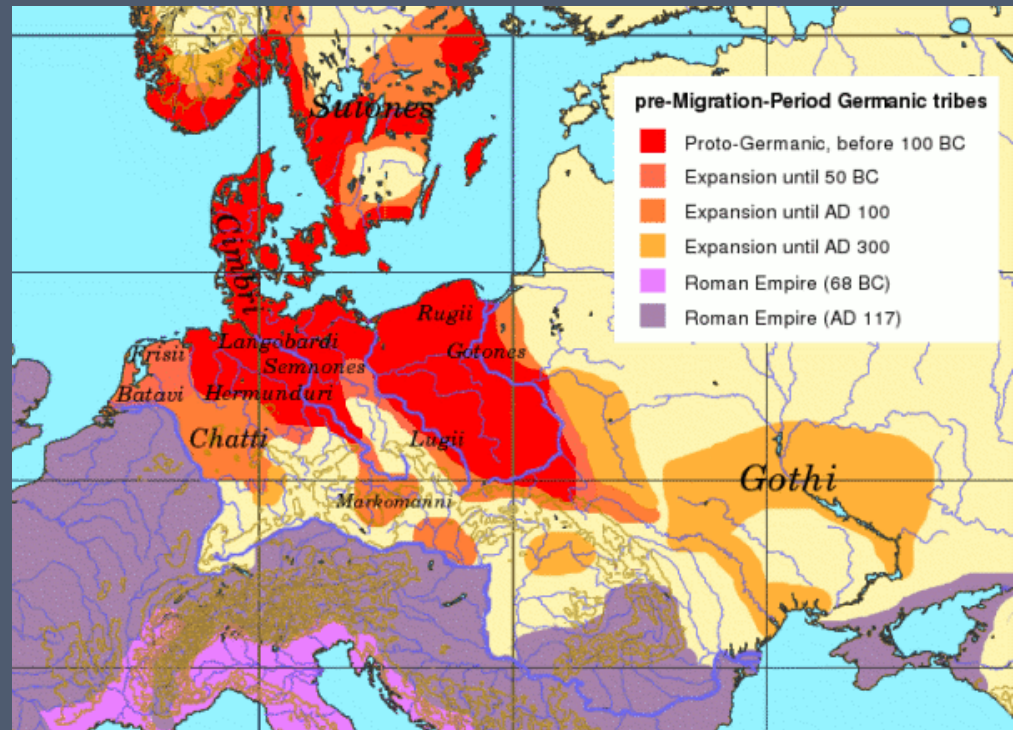
Wulfila (or Ulfila) (c. 311-383 AD)

- 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
- Converted many among the Goths and preached an Arian Christianity and moved towards the western Mediterranean (and orthodox Christianity and persecution)
- Ordained as a bishop and returned to his people as a missionary
- In 348 AD he and his converts escaped to Bulgaria where he devised the Gothic alphabet and translated the Bible from the Greek
- His translation is the earliest known literary piece in a Germanic language
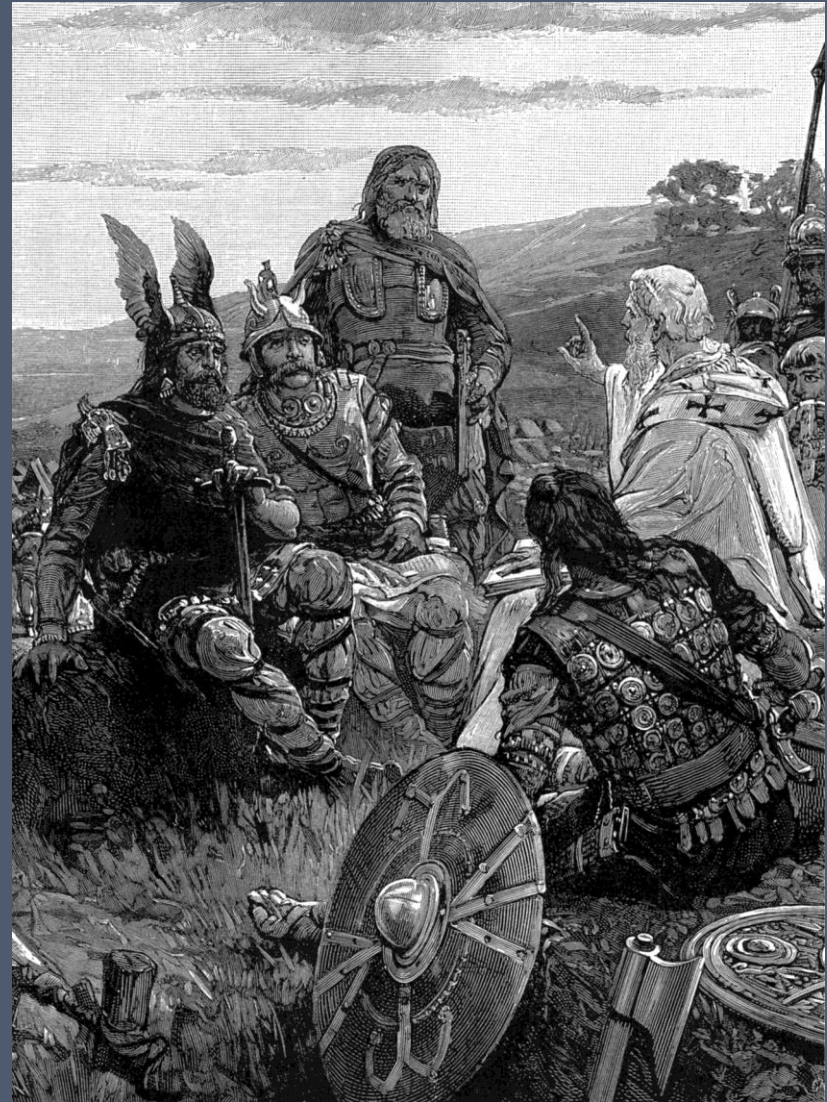
Wulfila sharing the gospel with the Goths
Image from Wikipedia

Codex Argenteus

47
Ag
Silver
107.868

Gothic Manuscript: Codex Argenteus

Date: 6th Century
Text: Gospels
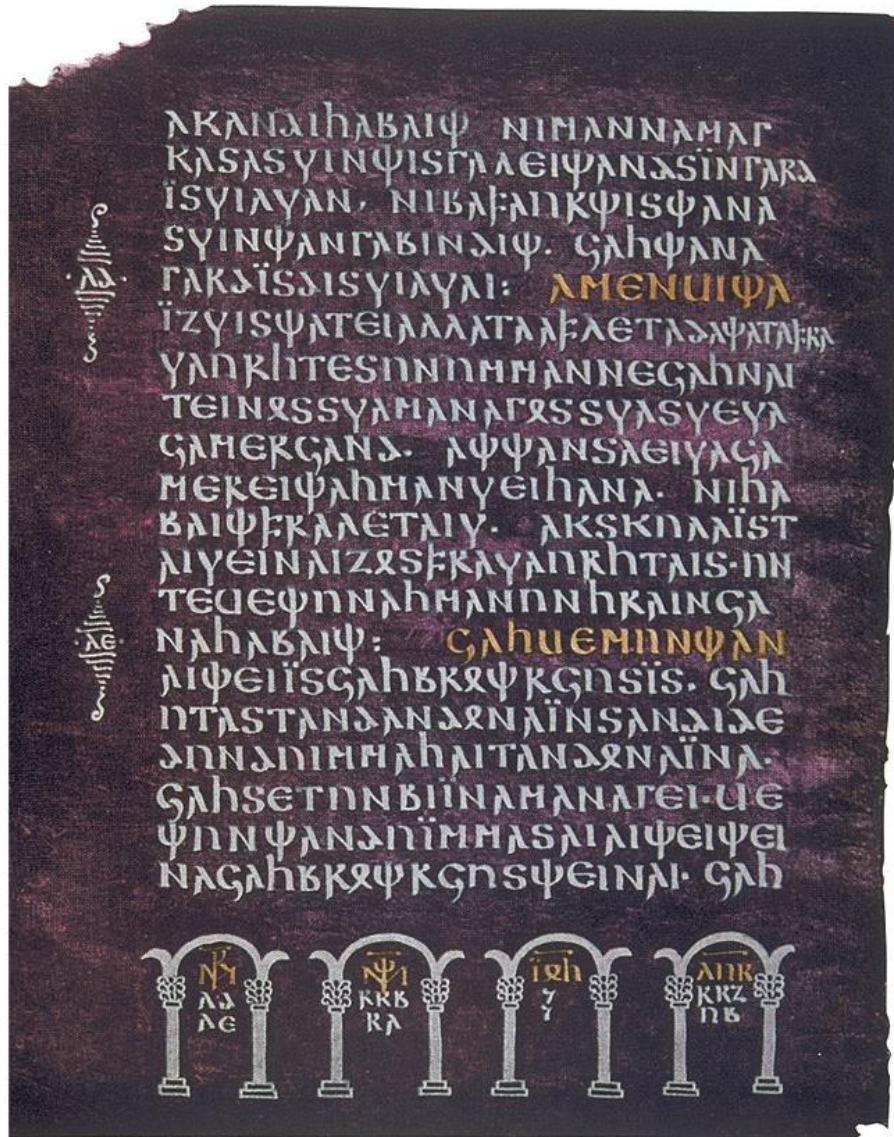
- A copy of Wulfila's original 4th century translation into the Gothic language, which he created
- Written on purple vellum in large silver (hence the name "silver codex") letters, the first line of each section are in gold
- Copied in Ravenna (northern Italy) possibly for the Gothic King Theoderic the Great
- Presented to Uppsala University in Sweden in 1669

Romans 15:3-8

Gothic Manuscript: Codex Carolinas

Date: 6th – 7th Century
Text: Romans 11-15
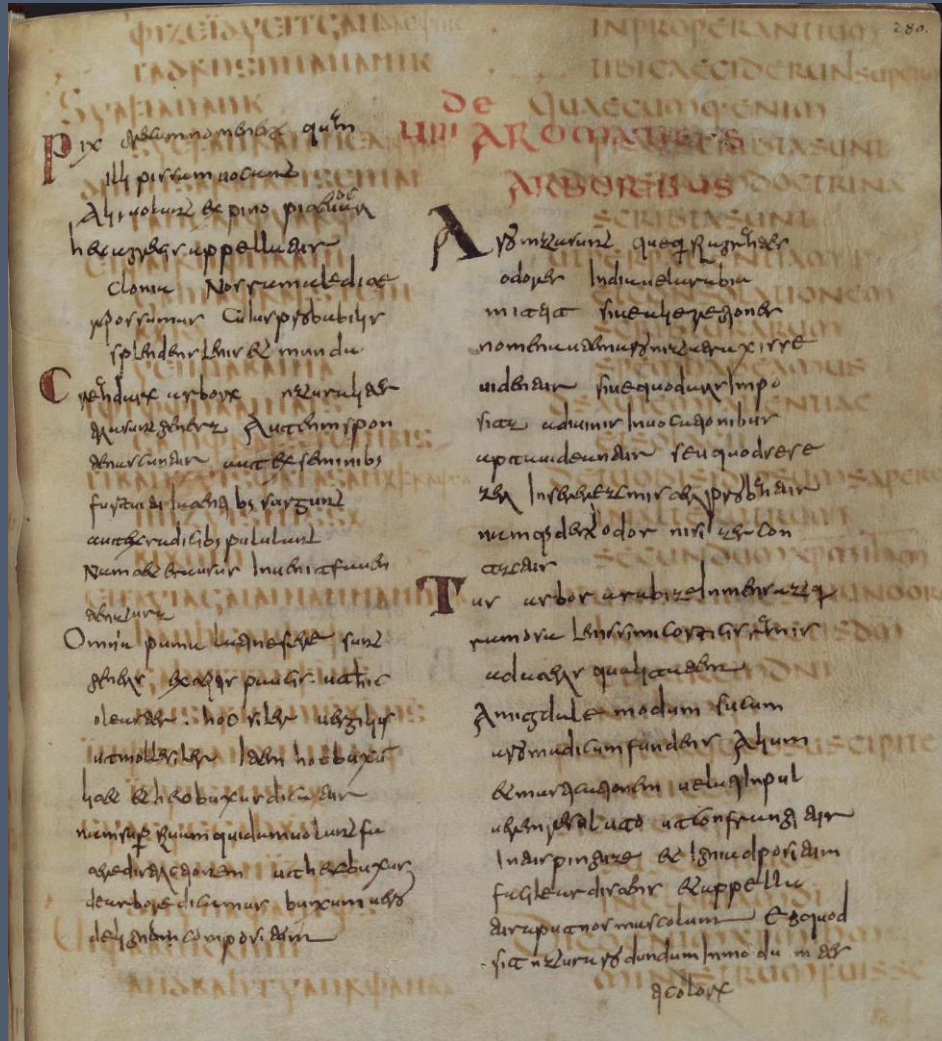
• Probably written in Italy in the 6th century
• A Gothic-Latin diglot palimpsest (overwritten with Latin text in 12th – 13th century)
• Gothic gets the place of importance in the left column. Old Latin is in the right column

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)

Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius

1. Cyril (826-869); Methodius (815-885)
2. Brothers and Byzantine Christian theologians and missionaries
3. Called the "Apostles to the Slavs"
4. Devised the Glagolitic alphabet, the first alphabet for the Old Church Slavonic translation of the Bible in 863
5. 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

1. The Slavonic Bible
   A. Still the Bible of Slavic Orthodox church
   B. Translators were venerated but not scholars of Jerome's caliber
   C. Has received little critical attention
   D. Around 860 the brothers Methodius and Constantine (Cyril) were sent to evangelize the Slavs
   E. Oldest manuscripts are 10th century in the Glagolitic alphabet, but Cyrillic followed soon after
   F. 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, comissioned 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 8th century from Greek
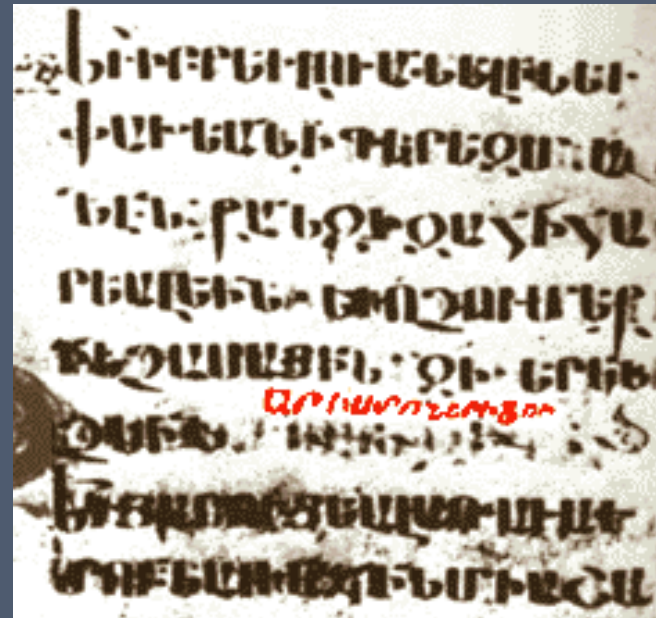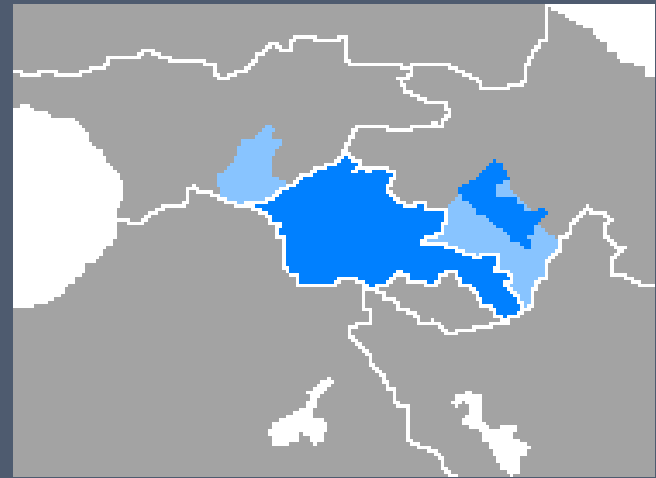
A portion of one column of the famous Armenian MS. Matenadaran 2374 (formerly Etchmiadzin 229), dated 989 C.E. Mark 16:8-9 are shown. The famous reference to the presbyter Arist(i)on is highlighted in red.

St. Mesrop (362-440 AD)

- Mesrop Mashtots was an early medieval Armenian linguist, statesman & theologian
- Invented the Armenian alphabet around 405 AD
- 1st 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 19th, and virtually every town has a street named after him

The first sentence written in Armenian…

" Ճանաչել զիմաստութիւն եւ զխրատ, իմանալ զբանս հանճարոյ:

Čanačʿel zimastutʿiwn ew zxrat, imanal zbans hančaroy.

«To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding.» "

— *Book of Proverbs*, 1:2.

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. Neither Indo-European nor Semitic language
   C. Written language was likely a consequence of Christianity and the need for a Bible translation in the first half of the 4th century
   D. Had first translation by the 5th century from the Armenian text
2. Manuscripts and versions
   A. Oldest non-fragmentary manuscripts are the Adysh (897 AD), Opiza (913 AD) and the Tbet' (995 AD)
   B. Base text was probably Armenian and later revised towards Greek
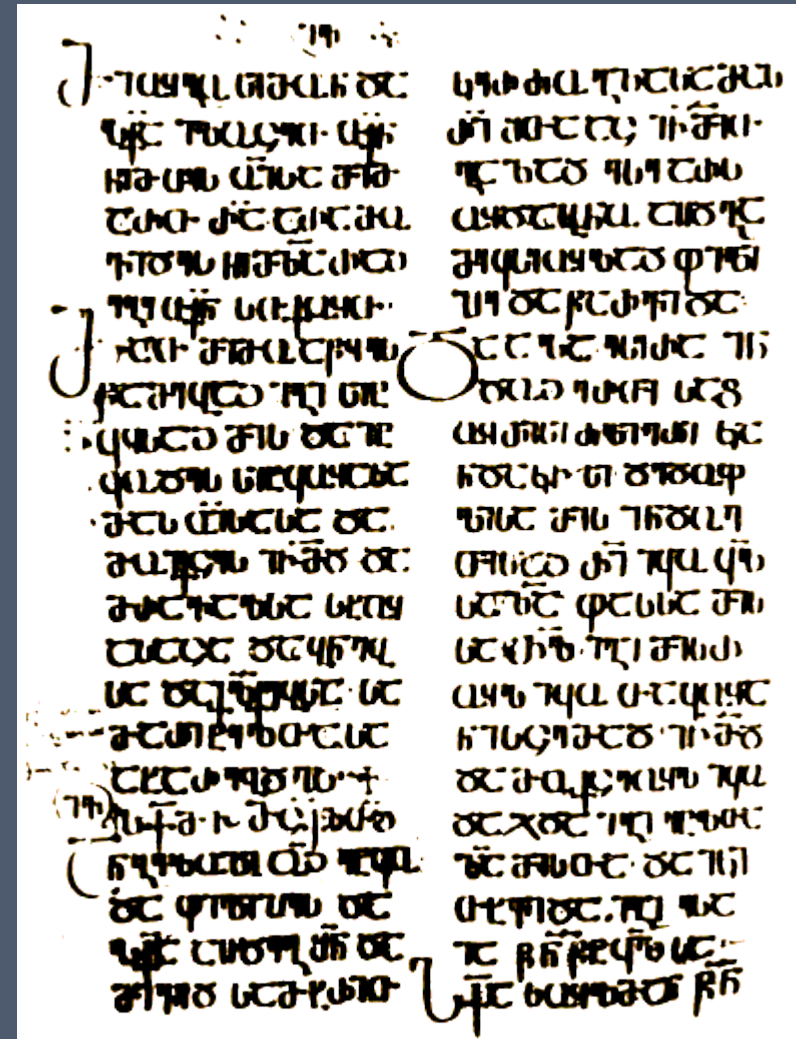
Sinai Georgian 31, dated 877, folio 54 verso, Acts 8:24-29.

Image from https://www.skypoint.com/members/waltzmn/Versions.html

Arabic Versions

1. The Arabic language
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
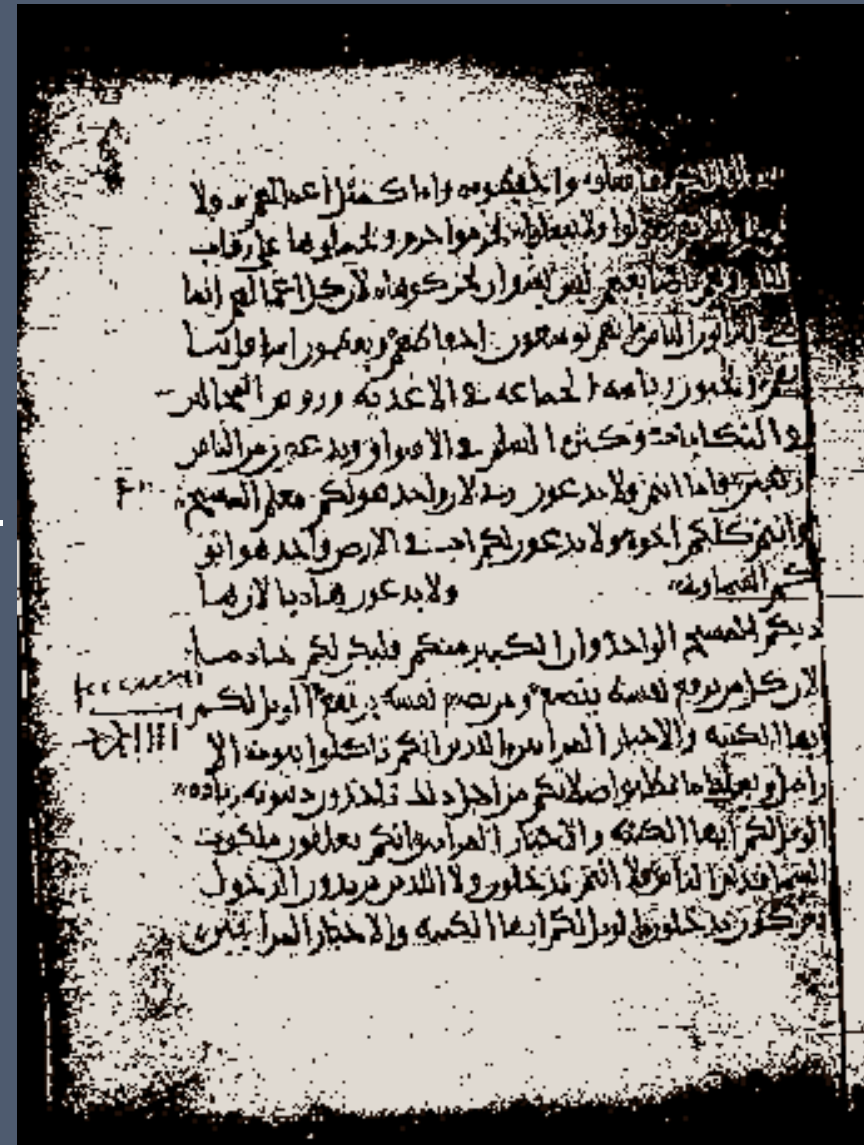
Folio 1 recto of Sinai Arabic 71 (10th century), Matthew 23:3-15.

Image from https://www.skypoint.com/members/waltzmn/Versions.html

MS 579
Codex Arabicus. Mt. Sinai, Egypt.
Underlying text in Syriac, 5th c. Overlying text in Arabic, ca. 900

Arabic Manuscript:
Codex Arabicus (Ms. 579)

Date: ~900 AD palimpsest over 5th century Syriac text
Text: John 9:16-38
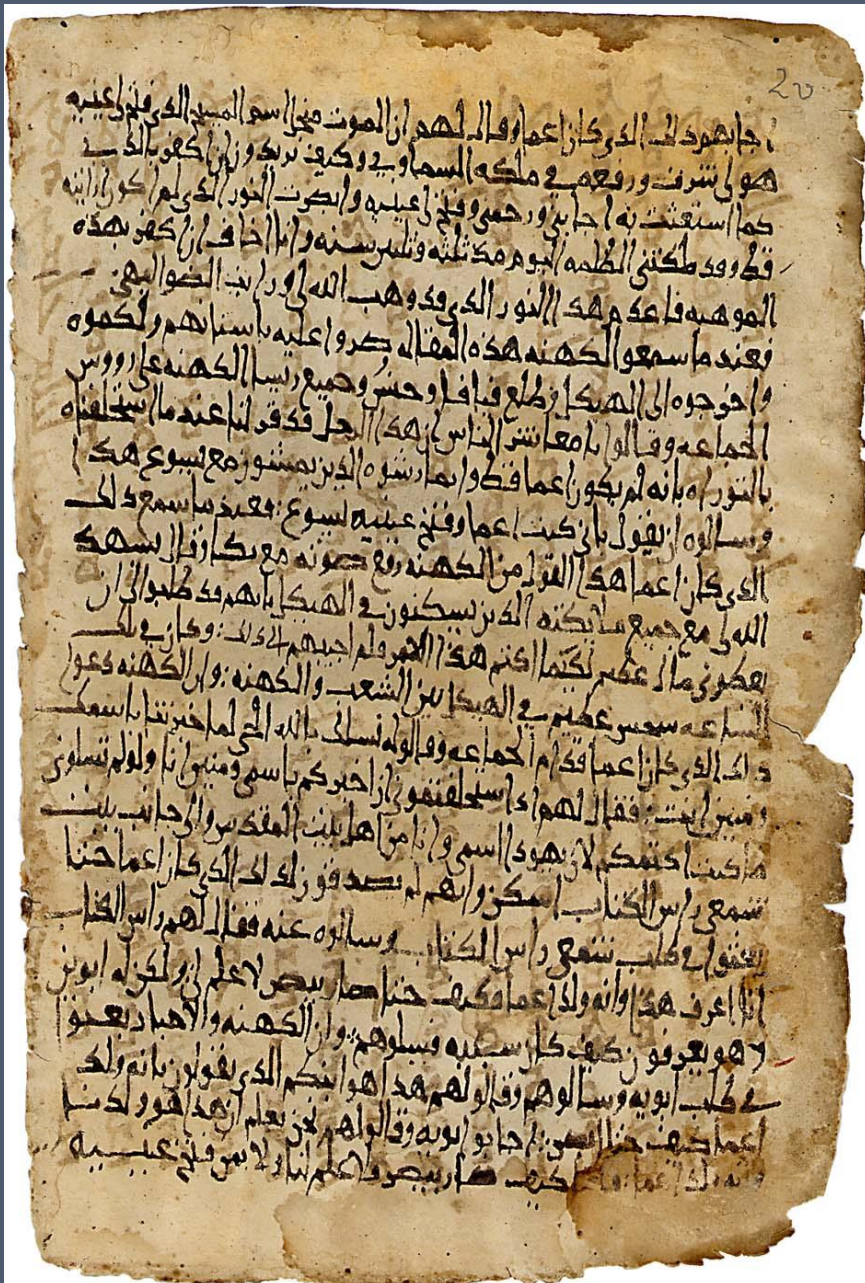
Sogdian Versions

- Sogdia was an ancient Iranian civilization
- Sogdian language is a Middle Iranian tongue, an eastern member of the Indo-European family
- Script similar to Syriac
- Fragments of biblical manuscripts found in Turfan in 1903
  - Gospel lectionary C5 containing Matthew, Luke & John
  - Other bilingual (Syriac & Sogdian) fragments of gospels and Pauline epistles
- Translations probably made during Nestorian mission in the 7th century

Descendents of Latin

2. Romance languages in the Europe

Legend		
1. Galician+Portuguese	11. Romansh	23. Rumanian
2. Astur+Leonese	12. Gallo-Italian	24. Istro-Rumanian
3. Spanish	13. Ladin	25. South Balkan Romance
4. Upper Aragonese	14. Venet	
5. Catalan	15. Friulan	
6. Judeo-Spanish	16. Istriot	26. Sardinian proper
7. Occitan	17. Central Italian	bilingual areas
8. Gascon	a. Generalized Italian	
	18. Corsican+Gallurese	BOUNDARIES
9. Langues d'oïl (French)	19. Sassarese	national
a. Generalized French	20. South-East Median	language
10. Arpitan	21. Southern Italian	dialectal
	22. Extreme Southern Italian	

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ybkoryakov@gmail.com

0 100 200 300km

Image from Wikipedia

French Bibles

- Bible *Historiale* (image to left) was te 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'Etaples)

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

- 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 (contemporary with Luther's German version) 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 this (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

Spanish Bibles

La Biblia, QVE ES, LOS SACROS LIBROS DEL VIEIO Y NVEVO TESTAMENTO. *Trasladada en Español.*

רבר אלהינו יקום לעולם

La Palabra del Dios nuestro permanece para siempre. Isa. 40.

M. D. LXIX.

Image from Wikipedia

- 1430 – Alba Bible – one of the earliest translations into a Romance language, 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 mediaeval German manuscripts extant
- Earliest Germanic Bible translation was by Wulfila (d. 380) into Gothic
- Charlemagne promoted Frankish translations in the 9th century
- 1350 - Augsberger Bible (OT)
- 1389 – Wenceslas Bible (image to left) – commissioned by King Wenceslaus IV of Bohemia, made in Prague, splendid illuminations, translated from the Latin Vulgate
- 1466 – First printed German Bible by Johannes Mentelin (Mentel Bible) at Strasbourg

German - Luther Bible [1522, 1534]
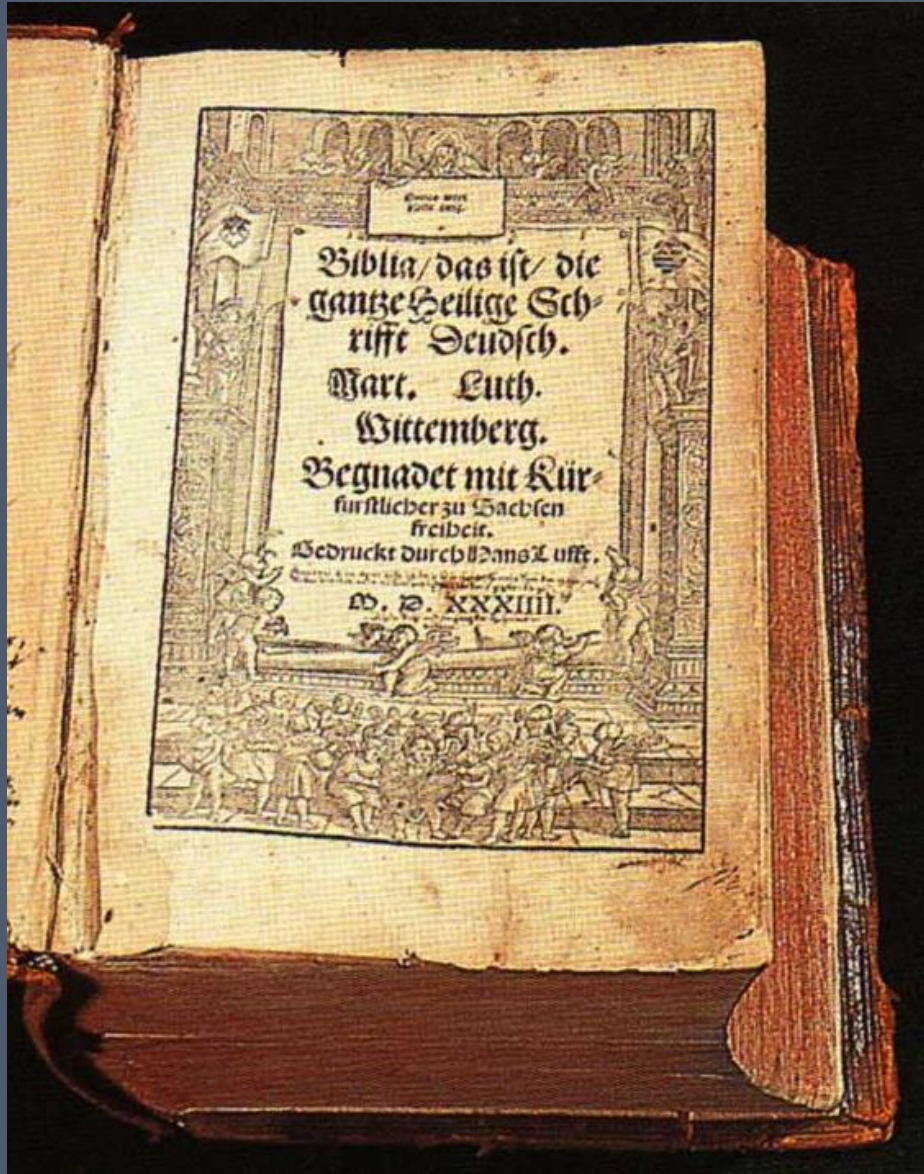
- 18 German Bibles preceded Luther's, but his was the most influential
- First German translation from the original languages
- The NT was published in 1522, the OT & Apocrypha in 1534
- Luther used Erasmus' 2nd edition (1519) of Greek NT
- Hebrews & James found at the end after Jude and Revelation because 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.

Image from Wikipedia

Allein!

"So halten wir nun dafür, daß der Mensch gerecht werde ohne des Gesetzes Werke, allein durch den Glauben."

- **Romans 3:28 (Luther Bible)**

"Thus, we conclude that a man is justified without the deeds of the law through faith alone."

"If your papist wants to make so much fuss about the word sola (alone) tell him this, 'Dr. Martin Luther will have it so, and says that a papist and an ass are the same thing.'"

- **Pelikan, et al., *Luther's Works*, vol. 35, pp. 185-189**

Matthew 15:14-31
Image from Wikipedia

Bulgarian:
Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander (1355-1356)

- Copied by a monk named Simeon in 1355-1356 on the orders of Ivan Alexander
- Illuminated manuscript of the four gospels in Middle Bulgarian
- One of the most important manuscripts of medieval Bulgarian culture
- Contains 366 miniatures and 286 parchment folios
- Located in the British Museum

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 14th century
- **Czech** – 14th century, including translations of the Latin Vulgate by Jan Hus
- **Polish** – Partial translations beginning in the 13th 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 14th century

Timeline of Bible Translations

Tatian's Diatessaron (Syriac)

Peshitta (Syriac)

Armenian

King James Version (1611)

Original NT writings (Greek)

Ethiopic

Wycliffe Bible (English) [1382]

Old English

Sogdian

500 BC

1 AD

500 AD

1000 AD

1500 AD

Septuagint [LXX] (Greek)

Targums (Aramaic)

Slavonic

Czech

French

Gothic

Coptic

Georgian

Arabic

Old German

Old Latin

Jerome's Vulgate (Latin)

Original OT writings (Hebrew) [1400-400 BC]