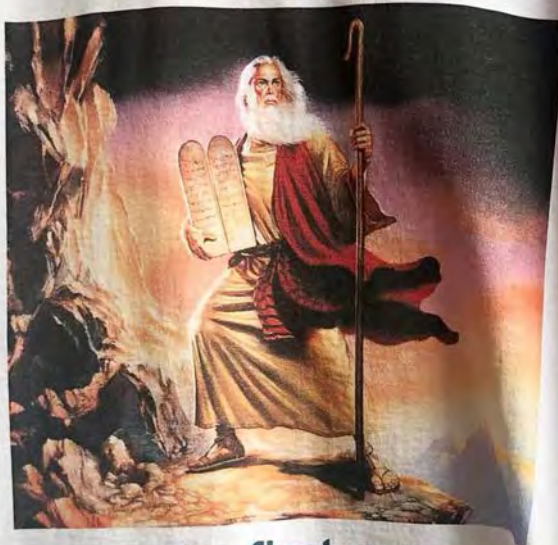


From Mount Sinai to Today

The Journey of Torah through Time



Technically, Moses



**was the first person
with a tablet
downloading data
from the cloud**

Translations – the Name of the Game

- Hebrew (+ Aramaic) is the original language
 - Less than 10 million speak the language to some extent
- There are probably 2 billion English Speakers
 - There are more than 100 Bible translations to English
 - ◆ About 80 of them in the last century...



Translations – Bad!



- Ta'anit Tractate (1st century CE):
 - “on the 8th day of Tevet, during the days of King Ptolemy [*Philadelphus, 309-246BCE*] the Torah was written in the Greek language, and darkness came onto the world for three days”
- Sofrim Tractate (8th century CE):
 - “... that day was difficult to Israel as the day the Golden Calf was made, since the Torah could not be adequately translated.”
- Why?
 - Divine text, with multi-layered meanings that would be lost,
 - Losing פֶּרֶשׁ - (Orchard) – Pshat (direct), Drash (implicit), Remez (typological, mystical), Sod (Kabbalistic mystical).

Translations – Good!

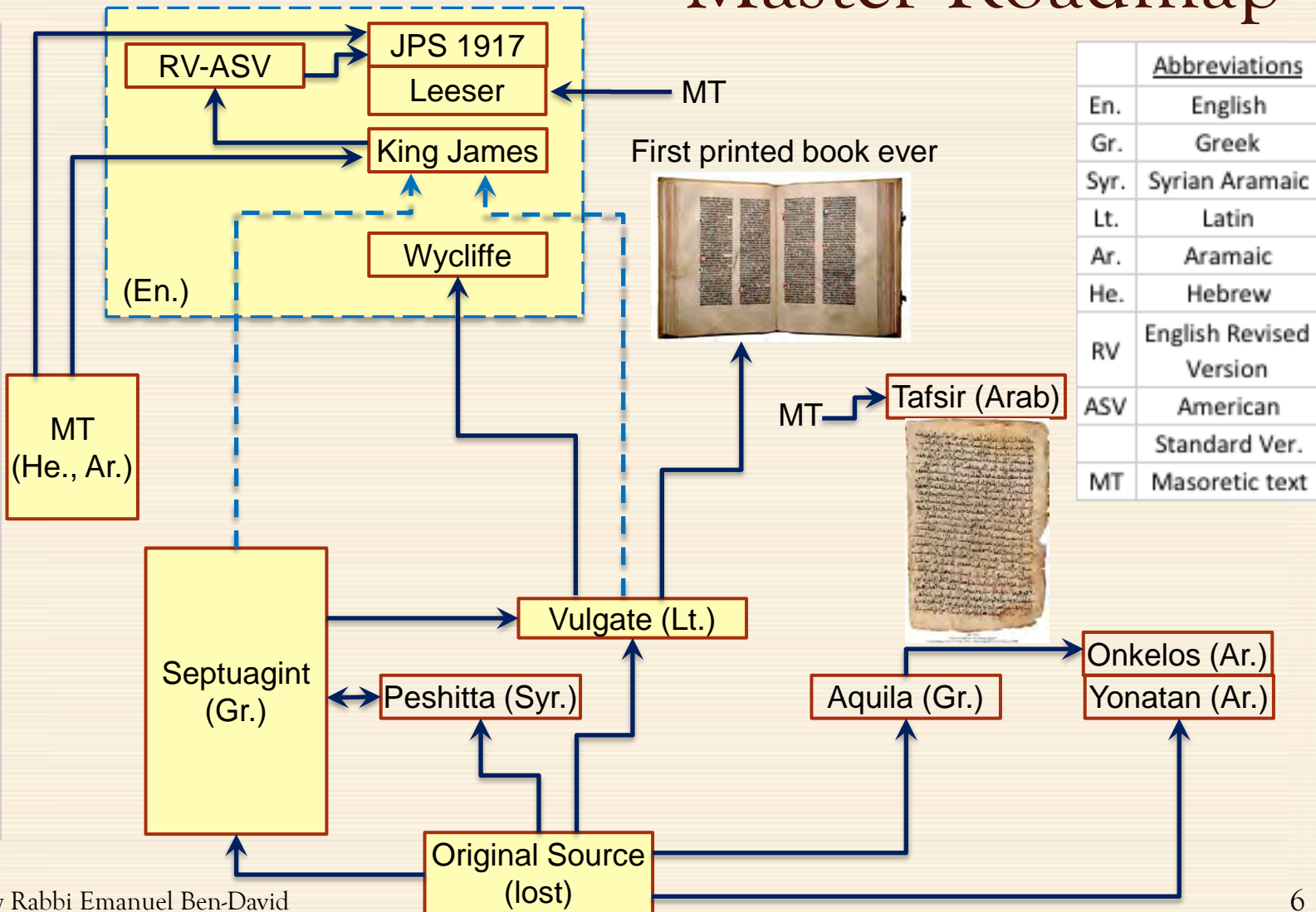


- Babylonian Talmud, B'rakhot Tractate:
 - Rabbi Ami said: “... one is required to read the Bible text of the Parashah twice and the translation once”.
 - This is called “שְׁנַיִם מִקְרָא אֶחָד תַּרְגוּם” – twice original Hebrew text, once translation (at that time – to Aramaic).
- Rabbi Asher Ben Yekhiel (late 13th century):
 - “... the translation is for the people that do not know the Holy Language. Even if one knows some, the translation explains things that are not understood directly from the Mikrah.”
- Rabbi David Halevi Segal (17th century):
 - Even Tzena Ur'ena (in Yiddish) is good!



Master Roadmap

20th CE
19th CE
18th CE
17th CE
16th CE
15th CE
14th CE
13th CE
12th CE
11th CE
10th CE
9th CE
8th CE
7th CE
6th CE
5th CE
4th CE
3rd CE
2nd CE
1st CE
1st BCE
2nd BCE
3rd BCE



<u>Abbreviations</u>	
En.	English
Gr.	Greek
Syr.	Syrian Aramaic
Lt.	Latin
Ar.	Aramaic
He.	Hebrew
RV	English Revised Version
ASV	American Standard Ver.
MT	Masoretic text

The Septuagint

- Initiated by Ptolemy II Philadelphus circa 250 BCE
 - Requested the High Priest for scholars to translate Torah
 - Eliezer sent 6 scholars from each tribe (=72, 4 times Chai)
 - According to Talmud:
 - ◆ It took them 72 days to finish the translation
 - ◆ Each of them translated the Torah INDEPENDENTLY from any other
 - ◆ All translations were IDENTICAL
 - ◆ Talmud even lists all the changes they made to the original text, along with the reasoning for the change.
 - Talmud description (also supported by external sources - Letter of Aristeas, Philo, Flavius) lends to a miraculous event.

What is Left of it Today

- Hexapala
 - Completed 245 CE, 7,000 pages... lost around 600 CE
 - Six columns:
 - ◆ Hebrew, Greek transliteration, 3 different Greek translations and the LXX with notes.
- Codex Vaticanus
 - 4th century CE, good condition
- Codex Alexandrinus
 - 5th century CE, includes comments regarding changes

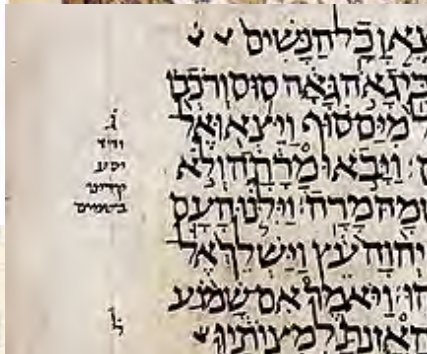


The Masoretic Text - MT

- The Bible was canonized in the 1st century CE.
 - Many versions, sometimes even conflicting.
 - A few variations afterwards (confirmed by Qumran and G'niza).
 - None of these sources (or any other) was available until recently.
- Two families (Ben-Asher, Ben-Naftali) compiled text that is the closest possible to the original - the MT.
 - Used Onkelos, Hexapala, Talmud, Mishna...
 - Worked on it for about 300 years, finalized around 930 CE.
 - Maimonides endorsed the Ben-Asher (that what is used today).
 - S'Ad'ya Gaon used the Ben-Naftaly as source to the Tafsir.



Aleppo Codex
כְּתֵר אָרֶם צוֹבָא



Leningrad Codex



Findings that Verify the MT

- The Cairo G'niza
 - 300K documents, from 9th to 19th centuries.
 - Documents in Hebrew and Aramaic
 - Many biblical and prayer manuscripts
- The Qumran Scrolls
 - Dated from ~3rd cen. BCE to 1st cen. CE
 - Biblical text, in addition to day-to-day documents
- The Priestly Blessing
 - ~6th century BCE
 - earliest known citations of texts also found in the Hebrew Bible



Vulgate

- Pope Damasus 1st commissioned St. Jerome (Hieronimus, 347 - 420 CE) to translate the Old and New Testaments to Latin.
- The Old Testament was translated directly from Hebrew (he knew Hebrew). For that, he moved to Israel (Jerusalem and Bet-Lekhem).
- Checked himself against various Greek Translations (Aquila, Theodotion, Hexapala).
- Comparing to the MT shows close adherence.
- The Church authorized it in 1546.
- The very first printed book ever.



Codex Amiatinus
8th cent. CE



Gutenberg Bible
circa 1450

English Translations

- The very first:
 - John Wycliffe, 1384. Used the Vulgate as a source.
- King James Bible (1611):
 - 47 members of the Church of England.
 - Used MT Hebrew and Aramaic source for the Old Testament.
 - ◆ Modified to reflect Christian points of view: **יָדַי וְרַגְלֵי** = They have pierced my hands and my feet (Psalm 22:16).
 - Authorized by the English Church years later. Revised in 1885 with newer “Oxford” English (The English Revised Version).
 - 1900 - American Standard Version.



English Jewish Translations

- Need is obvious- fix “Christianization” of the messages
- Isaac Leeser (Germany 1806, USA 1868):
 - Started with Torah to assist reading Parashat Hashavua
 - Used MT
 - Complete Jewish Bible published in 1853, served the Jewish community for over 50 years.
- Jewish Publications Society (JPS)
 - Used MT, ASV (=KJB), scholars from HUC, JTS, Dropsie
 - Max Margolis, the chief editor got the job done by 1917
 - 40,000 copies sold in 1917
 - Updated in 1985; many translations since.

So What is Lost in Translation?

Genesis Ch. 18 Vs. 2, 3 and 4:

- 1) The LORD appeared to him by the terebinths of Mamre; he was sitting at the entrance of the tent as the day grew hot.
- 2) Looking up, he saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them and, bowing to the ground,
- 3) "My lords," he told them, "if I have found favor with you, please don't leave your servant.
- 4) Let a little water be brought; bathe your feet and recline under the tree.

א. וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵלֵי מַמְרֵא וְהוּא יוֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח-הָאֵהָל כְּחֹם הַיּוֹם:

ב. וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיֵּרָא וַיֵּרֶץ לְקִרְאתָם מִפֶּתַח הָאֵהָל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה:

ג. וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי אִם-נָא מְצֵאתִי חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֵל-נָא תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ:

ד. יִקַּח-נָא מֵעֵט-מַיִם וְרִחְצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁעֲנוּ תַּחַת הָעֵץ:

Back-Translations as a Tool

Deut. 29:9: “You **stand** this day, all of you, before the LORD your God – your tribal heads, your elders and your officials, all the men of Israel” (Sefaria).

Translating it back to Hebrew:

אַתֶּם עֹמְדִים הַיּוֹם כְּלָכֶם, לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: רָאשֵׁיכֶם,
שְׂבֻטֵיכֶם, זְקֵנֵיכֶם וְשֹׁטְרֵיכֶם, כָּל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

However, Torah uses a different word for Standing:

נִצְבִים – Nitzavim (also the Name of the Parashah)

Why use a different word?

Root Analysis - י. צ. ב.

- Stands erect (V, Nif'al); - נָצַב
- Substituted, positioned (V, Hif'il) - הִצִּיב
- Reported to Duty (V, Hitpa'el) - הִתְיַצַּב
- Commissioner, High Rank Officer; Pillar; - נִיצָב
- Hilt of sword/knife; Perpendicular
- Headstone, Memorial; Census of all People/soldiers - מַצֵּבָה
- Situation - מַצָּב
- Garrison, Military Post - מַצָּב

A Better Translation?

“Today, at this very moment, here you are all together reporting erect – all of you – the heads of your tribes and the Tribes (women and children included), your elders, your officers to the very last one of you – all equally, in full attention, ready to receive your assignment, all of you are as the highest ranking officer, assuming the full responsibility to adhere to the instructions of your assignment, [lest you will become a pillar of salt?]”.

Are they Standing or Are They נִיֻּצָּבִים?





Thank you