

The Doctrine of Scripture (2)

Lesson Nine: Transmission of Scripture (part 5)

Transmission of the OT

Differences from the NT

1. The time period during which the OT manuscripts were copied is much greater
2. The number of early extant manuscripts is significantly less for the Old Testament ("uniform text")
3. The process of transmission was very different – professional scribes and priests were responsible for maintaining the sacred Hebrew text

Transmission of the OT

History of Transmission

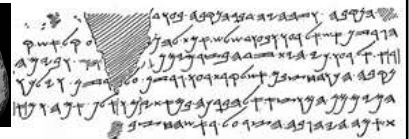
A. Prior to 400 B.C.

- copied by priests or scribes who revered and maintained them as records of Israel's history and their relationship to Yahweh
- written in paleo-Hebrew script; no word division or vowel pointing



Seal of Jeroboam II
(786-746 B.C.)

Inscription at the end of Hezekiah's tunnel (700 B.C.)



Silver Amulet – the oldest known fragment of the Old Testament (7th century B.C.)

Larger Silver Amulet	MT
Line 1	ב[ש]
Line 2	נ יהו
Line 3	ח
Line 4	עִר
Line 5	יִבְרָכְךָ v. 24
Line 6	יְהוָה י
Line 7	שִׁמְרֶךָ
Line 8	יְאֹר יֵה v. 25
Line 9	וְהָ פָנֶיךָ וְיִחַן
Line 10	שָׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְי
Line 11	שָׂם לְךָ ש
Line 12	לִים

Figure 6.1. A drawing of the larger silver amulet, discovered in 1985 in a grave near St. Andrew's Church of Scotland, Jerusalem. The paleo-Hebrew is transcribed into square script for comparison. [John C. Trever]

Transmission of the OT

B. 500 B.C. – A.D. 100

- rise of the "scribe" (*sopherim*) – group of teachers and interpreters of the Law

Transmission of the OT

B. 500 B.C. – A.D. 100

1. Revising the text

- change from paleo-Hebrew to Assyrian square script
- spelling and archaic forms were updated; some comparison of manuscripts
- “matres lectionis” – consonants added to represent vowel sounds to aid in pronunciation

Transmission of the OT

B. 500 B.C. – A.D. 100

2. Textual Divergence (?)

- Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) – version of the first five books developed around 100 B.C.
- Septuagint (LXX) – Greek translation of the Hebrew Scripture produced between 3rd – 1st centuries B.C.
- proto-Masoretic – the majority of the Qumran MMS reflect this text-type

Transmission of the OT

B. 500 B.C. – A.D. 100

3. Unified Text

- the formation of a unified, authoritative text of the Hebrew Bible by the mid-first century A.D.
- modifications were no longer permitted after this point



Nahal Hever MMS (A.D. 132)

Transmission of the OT

C. A.D. 100 – 500

- group of scribes called the “Tannaim” (repeaters) – rules to preserve the text
- Jerome’s Latin Vulgate (400 A.D.) – same Hebrew text as the MT; showed no awareness of differences in the Hebrew text

Transmission of the OT

D. A.D. 500 – 1100

➤ Masoretic Text (MT)

- *Masoretes* – group of scribes who copied and maintained the traditions of the Hebrew text
- diligently made meticulous notes regarding the text (“*Marosah*”) to ensure textual accuracy
- developed vowel pointing and the “*Kethib/Qere*” readings (~ 1000 in MT)

