

What Does the Torah Say and How Do We Know? A Second Temple Perspective

המקרא בתקופת בית שני לאור תרגומים עתיקים וממצאים ארכאולוגיים

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1) What is in the Torah?

A. Rambam (1138-1204), Commentary to Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 10.1

וזהו ענין אין תורה מן השמים אמרו זה שסובר שכל התורה כולה מפי הגבורה חוץ מפסוק אחד שלא אמרו הקב"ה אלא משה מפי עצמו, וזה דבר ה' בזה

And this is the notion of "The Torah is not from heaven"...that is, one who believes that the entire Torah is divine except for one verse, which God did not say, but rather Moshe on his own said. And this is, "for he has despised the word of the Lord" (Num 15.31).

B. Radak (12th-13 cent.), Introduction to commentary on Joshua

ונראה כי המלות האלו נמצאו כן לפי שבגלות הראשונה אבדו הספרים ונטלטלו, והחכמים יודעי המקרא מתו ואנשי כנסת הגדולה שהחזירו התורה לישנה מצאו מחלוקות בספרים והלכו בהם אחר הרוב לפי דעתם ובמקום שלא השיגה דעתם על הבירור כתבו האחד ולא נקדו או כתבו מבחין ולא כתבו מבפנים, וכן כתבו ב[דרך] אחד מבפנים וב[דרך] אחר מבחין

It seems that these words [i.e. words listed as *keri and ketib*] exist in this fashion because during the first exile the books were lost or taken, and the sages expert in Scripture had died. So when the Men of the Great Assembly, who restored the Torah to its former state, found conflicting readings in different books, they followed the reading in the majority of copies according to their understanding. And in a case where they could not make a clear determination, they wrote down one reading but did not vocalize it, or wrote it in the margin but did not write it in the text. Similarly, they would write one reading in the text and another in the margin.

2) Central Texts

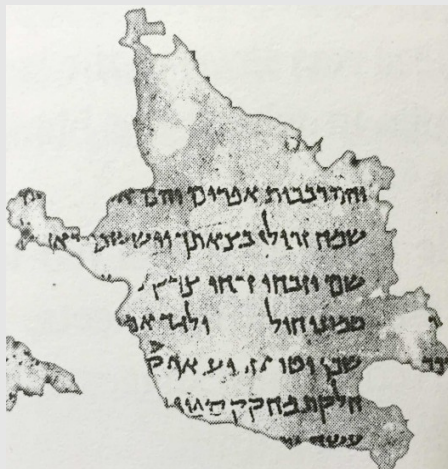
Sifre *Devarim* 356 (ca. late 3rd century CE)

שלשה ספרים נמצאו בעזרה אחד של מעונים ואחד של היא ואחד נקרא ספר זעטוטים...באחד כתיב...בטלו חכמים את האחד וקיימו השנים

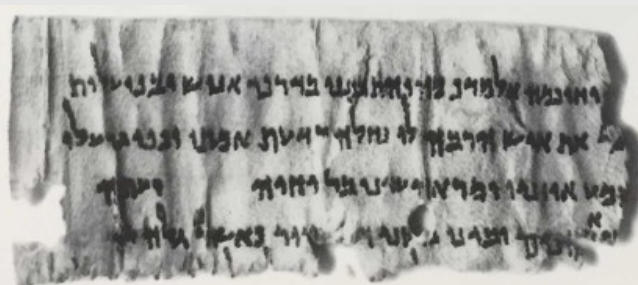
Three Torah scrolls were found in the Temple courtyard, one of *me'onim* [i.e. which read the word *ma'on*, instead of *me'onah* in Deut 33.27], one of *hi* [i.e. which possessed more instances of the feminine pronoun written with a *yod* rather than a *vav* than the other versions], and one known as "the book of *ze'atutim*" [i.e. which preserved an alternate form of the word for "*na'ar*," meaning "young man"]...One [copy] would have a certain textual tradition...[but] the sages nullified it in favor of the [textual tradition found in] the other two [copies].

3) Deluxe Editions

Masada, Fragment of Deuteronomy 33.17–21 (ca. late 1st century BCE)



4QComposition concerning Divine Providence (ca. late 1st century BCE [?])



4) Other Versions

A. Midrash Bereshit Rabbati, <i>Vayigash</i> 45.8 (early 11 th century, but citing earlier material)			
<p>דין הוא מן מליא דכתיבן באורייתא דנפקת מן ירושלם בשבייתא וסלקת לרומי והות גניזא בכנישתא דאסוירוס...לאדם ולאשתו כתנות אור. ארדה נא ואראה הכצעקתם</p>		<p>This is one of the words which were written in the Torah scroll which was captured in Jerusalem and was brought to Rome and was stored in the synagogue of Severus... [another example is]: “for Adam and his wife garments of light.” (Gen 3.21) [Another example is]: “I will go down now and see whether according to their cry” (Gen. 18.21)</p>	
B1. Genesis 3.21 (Masoretic Text)	B2. Genesis Rabbah 20.21 (ca. 5 th century CE)	C1. Gen 18.21 (Masoretic Text)	C2. Onqelos to Gen 18.21 (ca. 4 th c. CE)
<p>כא ויעש יהוה אלהים לאדם ולאשתו, כתנות עור-- וילבשם</p>	<p>בתורתו של ר' מאיר מצאו כתוב כותנות אור</p>	<p>כא ארדה-נא ואראה, הכצעקתה הבאה אלי עשו בלה; ואם-לא, אדעה</p>	<p>אתגלי כען ואידין הקבילתהון דעלת לקדמי עבדו</p>
<p>21 And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them</p>	<p>In the Torah scroll of Rabbi Meir we find it written, “garments of light.”</p>	<p>21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know.'</p>	<p>I will make myself known now, and I will determine whether according to their cry that has come up to me they have done...</p>

5) Corrected Versions

A. 5QDeut [Deut 7.15-24] (early-mid 2 nd century BCE)		B. Deuteronomy 7.15	
<p>1, col. I: Deut 7¹⁵⁻²⁴</p> <p>15 [ממך כָּל] הרעי[ם אשר ידעת לא ישימם</p> <p>16 [י]הוה אלהיך [תן לך לא תחס] עיניך עליהם ולא תעבד את[</p> <p>[האל ממני איך אוכל להורשם¹⁸ לא תירא מהם [ו]כר תוכר[</p>		<p>טו והסיר יהוה ממך, כל-חלי; וכל-מדי מצרים הרעים אשר ידעת, לא ישימם בך, ונתנם, בכל-שנאיך</p> <p>15 And the Lord will take away from you all sickness; and He will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you knew, upon you but will lay them upon all them that hate you.</p>	
C. Septuagint to Deuteronomy 7.15			
<p>15 ὑμῖν ἄγονος, οὐδὲ στείρα, καὶ ἐν τοῖς κτήνεσί σου. Καὶ περιελεί Κύριος ὁ Θεός σου ἀπὸ σοῦ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν, καὶ πᾶσας νόσους Αἰγύπτου τὰς πονηρὰς, ἃς ἑώρακας, καὶ ὅσα ἔγνως, οὐκ ἐπιθήσει ἐπὶ σέ· καὶ ἐπιθήσει αὐτὰ ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς μισοῦντάς σε.</p>		<p>ren one, 7 or among thy cattle. ¹⁵ And the Lord thy God shall remove from thee all sickness; and none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou hast seen, and all that thou hast known, will he lay upon thee; but he will lay them upon all that hate thee.</p>	