

Cross Linguistic Study of the New Creation Story / Man on Day Three in Genesis

Languages 351 through 400

Read against 7 Days to Perfection, banner revision of September

7, 2026

Three studies for each language · the last of the four hundred

The last fifty of the four hundred

The separate list of indigenous and island languages follows after these.

No one was found worthy to open the book, or even to look inside it. That leaves no language holding a privileged reading, and every tongue holding something of its own.

This volume closes the list ranked by speakers. It holds a language related to nothing on earth, a Semitic language whose Christian speakers write it in Latin letters, and five Mayan languages that share one book.

The question this study is asking

What is God speaking — and do we have ears to hear?

7 Days to Perfection



Pleading the Cause of the Poor,
the Needy, the Fatherless...
TO WIN IT...

"Is that not what it means
to know Me?" says Yahuah



"In the whole land," declares the LORD,
"two-thirds of the 'fetuses'
will be struck down and perish;
yet one-third will be left in it.
This third I will put into the fire
I will refine them like silver
and test them like gold.
Zechariah 13:7-9 • present day



The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Do Not Lay a Hand on Him! The Mystery of God's Will: to End all Sacrifice & Offerings that Father be Glorified Again! Genesis 22:10-12

Jesus returns again as a Man, in a body prepared for Him in the fulness of the Book. Also as God the Maker, who by the power of His presence causes Old Heaven and Earth to pass away. **His Eternal Word & Name: Yashuah, exalted above the Heavens.**
The Master returns in the First Resurrection, in the Spirit of Prophecy, on the 3rd Day when the Hour of Judgment has come. He is **the Beginning** of the New Creation, and **the End** of the Old.
The Good Shepherd and Teacher returns as a thief, suddenly, unexpectedly robbing all claims of authority from those who throughout history have supposed themselves worthy to speak for God.
The Bridegroom is seeking a Bride from His side who rejoices seeing Him. One who is desiring to bring forth the generation not yet created, precious jewels of Zion, who inherit eternal life.
The Overcomer. The ONLY one found worthy. It is NOT GOOD that He be alone. — Revelation 12:11 **...and they overcame...** not loving their own souls even unto death.



01 DAY ONE

Light of the World

1 In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth.
2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.
3 And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
4 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
5 And God saw the light, that it was good.
6 And God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.
7 And the evening and the morning were the first day.

...we will no longer be infants, tossed back & forth by the waves & blown here & there by every wind of teaching & by the cunning & craftiness of people... speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ.

02 DAY TWO

Wisdom Above & Below

1 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.
2 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.
3 And God called the firmament Heaven.
4 And the evening and the morning were the second day.



Looking for evidence for a God?
One whose existence is eternal & therefore being communicated with us beyond time & space?

The Little Scroll

Revelation 10 & 14:6-8 & 5:1-5...
Psalm 118:22-24 — Haggai 2:6-9

03 DAY THREE

Humility: the End of Pride
Old Creation Order Passes Away

1 And God said, Let the waters under the Heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.
2 And God called the Dry Land: Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas:



There was no one found worthy to open The Bible or even look inside. Not even anyone who claimed unbiased Science, Reason & Skepticism, nor Materialism & Atheism.

God set aside all arguments as proud, foolish & stupid, shaking up every claim of knowledge & authority throughout history. **Two unshakable things in His Word** — hidden in plain sight — **expose the blindness of proud institutions of men.** They have become worth less than nothing, for having despised the Day of small beginnings.



Great White Throne Lamb's Book of Life
Very Good Judgment
Most Names Expunged
God Justified & Glorified
Revelation 20:11-21:4



John wept & wept. The Little Scroll.
Mystery of God revealed. Knowledge passes away. Proud waves halt. **Must prophecy again.**

03 THE MAN ON DAY 3

Making All Things New. **Rising** to Live Without Scars



3 This is the Genealogical Record of the Heavens and of the Earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the Earth and the Heavens,
4 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew:
5 for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.
6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.
7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
8 and God saw that it was good.
9 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his

kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.
10 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind.
11 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.
12 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden,
13 and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
14 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.
15 The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

16 And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.
17 And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.
18 And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.
19 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it:
20 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:
21 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.
22 and God saw that it was good.
23 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

04 DAY FOUR

Solving for Not Good

1 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him an help meet for him.
2 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:
3 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.
4 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.
5 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.
6 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness:
7 And God saw that it was good.
8 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

05 DAY FIVE

Restoring the Fish & Birds

1 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, **2** and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.
3 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, **4** and every winged fowl after his kind:
5 and God saw that it was good.
6 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.
7 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.



"Throw your net on the right side of the boat..." Even with 153 large fish, the net was not torn.
John 21:4-11

06 DAY SIX

Counting Mother AND Child 好 — **Valuing** Life AND Liberty — **The End of Child Sacrifice**

1 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.
2 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind:
3 and God saw that it was good.
4 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them:
5 and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.
6 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air; and to

every Beast of the field;
7 but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.
8 And God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness:
9 and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.
10 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;
11 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.
12 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he

him; male and female created he them.
13 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.
15 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.
16 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.
[the child, at moment of conception; Malachi 2:15]
17 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

18 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.
19 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.
20 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.
21 And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.



07 DAY SEVEN

Perfect Prince of Peace

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.
2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.
3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Key findings across languages 351 to 400

Ten results, before the individual studies.

1 **Basque is related to nothing.**

Every other language in Europe belongs to a family with living relatives. Basque has none. It was spoken in that corner of the continent before the Indo-European languages arrived, and its speakers are the descendants of whoever was there first.

2 **Maltese is a Semitic language written in Latin letters by Christians.**

Its grammar is Arabic, descended from the Arabic of Sicily. Its word for God is **Alla**, for heaven **sema**, for earth **art**, for good **tajjeb** — all cognate with the Hebrew of Genesis. A Maltese Catholic hears words at the load-bearing verses that are relatives of the originals.

3 **Five Mayan languages here share the Popol Vuh, and they are still counting the calendar.**

Yucatec, Mam, Tzeltal, Tzotzil and Kaqchikel all hold the account of the land raised from water, the clay that failed, and the people made from maize. Daykeepers still count the 260-day calendar by hand.

4 **Zapotec writing is among the oldest in the Americas.**

Inscriptions at Monte Albán date from around 500 BC, and the Zapotec script is one of a small number of writing systems invented independently anywhere on earth.

5 **Yiddish is Germanic written in the Hebrew alphabet.**

A thousand years of German, Hebrew, Aramaic and Slavic in one language, read right to left. Most of its speakers were killed within one decade, and it went from eleven million speakers to a fraction of that.

6 **The Welsh Bible of 1588 is credited with saving the language.**

William Morgan's translation gave Welsh a standard literary form at the moment it might have been lost, and it is widely held that Welsh survives as a living tongue because of it.

7 **Nubian was a Christian language for eight hundred years.**

The Nubian kingdoms south of Egypt held Christianity from the sixth century until the fifteenth. Old Nubian is among the oldest written languages of Africa, and its scripture predates most European vernacular Bibles by a thousand years.

8 West Frisian is English's closest living relative.

Closer than Dutch, closer than German. The old rhyme runs that bread, butter and green cheese is good English and good Fries, and it works in both.

9 The Sakha sing an epic in which one performer takes every voice.

The **Olonkho** runs to tens of thousands of lines and is performed by a single singer who speaks the narration and sings each character in a different voice, through the night. UNESCO lists it.

10 Samoan is the only Pacific language in the top four hundred.

Every other Polynesian, Melanesian and Micronesian language falls below the cut-off. Samoan holds **Tagaloa**, who reached down into the water and drew up the islands.

351. Iu Mien

Speakers: about 800,000 · **Family:** Hmong-Mien · **Where:** China, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, and the diaspora · **Bible:** from 1990s

One What the language holds

Iu Mien is tonal and was written with Chinese characters for centuries by ritual specialists, and now in a Latin orthography agreed between communities in several countries in 1984.

Two What the tradition holds

Mien tradition holds **Pan Hu**, a dog ancestor, and a charter document, the **Kia Sen Pong**, said to have been granted by a Chinese emperor exempting the Mien from tax and allowing them to move freely. Copies were kept and produced when challenged.

A people who held a written grant of freedom and carried it with them.

Mien Daoist ritual uses scrolls painted with the deities, unrolled for ceremonies and kept otherwise.

Three At the seams

A people whose standing rested on producing a document meet a text whose whole claim rests on what is written and what can be checked.

352. Khmu

Speakers: about 800,000 · **Family:** Austroasiatic · **Where:** Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, China · **Bible:** partial

One What the language holds

Khmu is Austroasiatic and not tonal, using voice quality instead. Its speakers were in Laos before the Lao arrived, and Khmu is treated as the language of the original inhabitants.

Two What the tradition holds

Khmu tradition holds that they once had writing, given on a buffalo hide or a piece of leather, and that it was eaten or lost in a fire — the same account as the Hmong.

Lao ritual acknowledged the Khmu as the prior inhabitants, and in some royal ceremonies a Khmu had a part because the land was understood to be theirs first.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 11, where the man is put into the garden, meets a people whose neighbours acknowledged in ceremony that the land had been theirs.

A second people who remember losing a writing.

353. Lezgian

Speakers: about 800,000 · **Family:** Northeast Caucasian · **Where:** Dagestan, Azerbaijan · **Bible:** partial

One What the language holds

Lezgian has eighteen grammatical cases, among the most of any language, and a large consonant inventory. It is ergative, treating the subject of an intransitive verb like the object of a transitive one.

It belongs to a family found only in the Caucasus.

Two What the tradition holds

The Lezgins are divided by the border between Russia and Azerbaijan, which runs through their territory.

Dagestan holds some thirty languages in a small mountainous area, and villages a few miles apart may be unable to speak to each other without a shared third language.

Three At the seams

Eighteen cases means the relation of every noun to every other is marked explicitly, so a Lezgian sentence states connections English leaves to word order.

354. Lozi

Speakers: about 800,000 · **Family:** Niger-Congo, Bantu · **Where:** western Zambia · **Bible:** from 1900s

One What the language holds

Lozi is Bantu with a strong Sotho layer, from a period when a Sotho-speaking group ruled the floodplain. The divine name is **Nyambe**.

Two What the tradition holds

The Pleiades carries the inherited Bantu digging name, and its rising was used to set the new year.

The **Kuomboka** is kept when the Zambezi floods: the king's barge leads the whole people from the plain to higher ground, with drums, and the move is made in a single day. It happens every year and everyone goes.

A people whose chief ceremony is a crossing out of rising water.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 1 into verse 2, the waters gathered and the dry land appearing, meets a people who move to dry land in procession every year when the water comes up.

355. Magar

Speakers: about 800,000 · **Family:** Sino-Tibetan · **Where:** Nepal · **Bible:** partial

One What the language holds

Magar is Tibeto-Burman, spoken in the Nepali hills among Indo-Aryan neighbours, and is one of the largest indigenous languages of Nepal.

Two What the tradition holds

Magar tradition holds both Hindu and Buddhist elements alongside the **bhusal** and shamanic practice, with a practitioner who deals with spirits and illness.

The **Maruni** dance and the **Kaura** songs carry the tradition, and Magar communities are known for beekeeping on cliff faces.

Three At the seams

Day 1 verse 1 meets a reader who may hold a creator account and a beginningless one from the same household.

356. Mizo

Speakers: about 800,000 · Family: Sino-Tibetan · Where: Mizoram, India · Bible: 1959

One What the language holds

Mizo is tonal and written in Latin script. Mizoram has among the highest literacy rates in India, and the Bible is central to that — the script was made by missionaries and reading was taught to read it.

Two What the tradition holds

Older Mizo tradition holds **Pathian** as the creator and the account of people emerging from a cave or from under a rock at **Chhinlung**, which was then closed.

Tlawmngaihna is the Mizo code: to do what is needed for others without being asked and without expecting return. It is the word Mizo use to explain themselves.

Mizo society is now overwhelmingly Christian, and the churches hold community life.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 7 into verse 8 meets a people whose own account has the first people coming out from under a rock that was then shut.

357. Tetela

Speakers: about 800,000 · **Family:** Niger-Congo, Bantu · **Where:** DR Congo · **Bible:** partial

One What the language holds

Tetela has noun classes and tone, and is spoken in the forest of the central Congo basin.

Two What the tradition holds

The Pleiades carries the inherited Bantu digging name. The forest sets everything, and hunting and gathering stand alongside cultivation.

The Tetela lived at the edge of the region where the Kongo and Luba traditions met, and carry material from both.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 10 into verse 11, the plants into the garden, meets a forest people for whom the trees are the household.

358. Yucatec Maya

Speakers: about 800,000 · **Family:** Mayan · **Where:** Yucatán, Mexico; Belize · **Bible:** from 1860s

One What the language holds

Yucatec has tone and glottalised consonants, and is ergative. It is written in Latin script now, and was written in Maya glyphs for well over a thousand years before that.

Three of the four surviving Maya codices are in a Yucatec tradition, and one of them is an astronomical table tracking Venus over centuries.

Two What the tradition holds

Books written after the burning

The **Books of Chilam Balam** were written in Yucatec in Latin letters by Maya scribes after the Spanish burned the older books. They hold prophecy, calendar, medicine and history.

They record the sky collapsing and a flood, then the raising of the sky again and the setting up of five world trees, one at each direction and one at the centre.

Day 3 verse 10 has the tree of life in the midst of the garden.

The 260-day calendar is still counted. Offerings are made to the **aluxo'ob** and to the powers of the land before planting.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 10 into verse 11, into the garden with a tree in the midst, meets a people whose own account has a tree set at the centre and one at each of the four directions.

A people who rewrote their books after the burning meet a text about a book no one could open.

359. Angika

Speakers: about 750,000 · **Family:** Indo-European, Indo-Aryan · **Where:** Bihar, Jharkhand · **Bible:** Hindi is used

One What the language holds

Angika is close to Maithili and Magahi and is counted as a dialect of Hindi. No scripture of its own.

Two What the tradition holds

Anga was an ancient kingdom named in the Mahabharata, and the region holds Vikramshila, a Buddhist university of the eighth century, and the Kharmas and Chhath observances.

Chhath, the festival addressed to the sun, is kept here as across Bhojpuri and Magahi country.

Three At the seams

Met in Hindi. The crossing out of Day 4 verse 1 into verse 2 meets Chhath.

360. Basque

Speakers: about 750,000 · **Family:** none · **Where:** Spain, France · **Bible:** New Testament 1571; full Bible later

One What the language holds

A language with no relatives anywhere

Basque is an isolate. It is not Indo-European, not Afroasiatic, not related to Iberian, not related to the Caucasian languages despite long attempts to connect them. Every serious proposal has failed.

It was spoken in that corner of Europe before Latin arrived, before the Celts, before Indo-European speakers came into the continent at all. Its speakers are the linguistic descendants of whoever was there first.

Some Basque words for tools — the axe, the knife — are built on the word for stone, which has been taken as a trace of how old the vocabulary is, though the inference is argued over.

Basque is ergative, like the Mayan languages and Lezgian, and its verbs agree with the subject, the object and the indirect object at once. It was banned from public use under Franco and revived through schools.

Joanes Leizarraga translated the New Testament into Basque in 1571, one of the earliest vernacular translations anywhere, made at the request of the Queen of Navarre.

Two What the tradition holds

Basque tradition holds **Mari**, a female figure who dwells in caves and moves through the sky, and **Sugaar**, a serpent, and the **jentilak**, giants who are said to have left when a bright cloud appeared.

The **eguzkillore**, a thistle flower shaped like the sun, is fixed to the door to keep the night away, and the practice continues.

The **bertsolari** compose and sing verse on a given subject without preparation, before an audience, and championships are held. Verse made on the spot, in public.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 1 verse 5, the light called good and divided from darkness, meets a people who still fix a flower shaped like the sun to the door at night.

A reader whose language has no known relative meets a text whose whole claim is that it is meant for every tongue.

361. Ga

Speakers: about 750,000 · Family: Niger-Congo, Kwa · Where: Accra, Ghana · Bible: from 1866

One What the language holds

Ga is tonal and is spoken in Accra, so it is the language of a capital city in which most people now speak something else.

The divine name is **Nyɔɣɔmɔ**, which is also the word for rain.

Two What the tradition holds

Homowo means hooting at hunger, and the festival remembers a famine the Ga survived. A special food is prepared and sprinkled through the town, and the people mock the hunger they came through.

A festival whose name is a taunt aimed at starvation.

A ban on drumming and noise is kept for weeks before it, so the crops may grow in quiet.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 6 verses 18 and 19, where the herb and the fruit are given for meat, meets a people whose great festival celebrates having come through hunger.

A word for God that is also the word for rain places Day 4 and Day 3 in one vocabulary.

362. Krio

Speakers: about 700,000 first language, most of Sierra Leone as second · **Family:** English-based creole
Where: Sierra Leone · **Bible:** New Testament 1986

One What the language holds

Krio took English vocabulary into a grammar shaped by Yoruba, Igbo and other African languages. It marks no gender and does not change verbs for time.

It grew among people who had been enslaved and were resettled in Freetown — from Nova Scotia, from Jamaica, from ships intercepted at sea, and from Britain. A language made by people brought together from every direction by the ending of the trade.

Two What the tradition holds

Krio speakers, the Krio people, carry a mixed inheritance: Yoruba **awujoh** feasts for the ancestors, Christian churches, and the traditions of the interior peoples among whom they settled.

Freetown was founded as a settlement for the freed, and that is the community's founding fact.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 2 into verse 3, into the genealogical record, meets a people assembled from broken genealogies who built a new one where they landed.

363. Lahu

Speakers: about 700,000 · **Family:** Sino-Tibetan · **Where:** China, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos · **Bible:** 1989

One What the language holds

Lahu is tonal and is written in a Latin orthography made by missionaries. A large proportion of Lahu are Christian.

Two What the tradition holds

G'ui sha, and a writing expected

Lahu tradition holds **G'ui sha** as the creator of heaven and earth, and held that G'ui sha had once given the Lahu a written law which was lost, and that it would be restored.

Missionaries arriving in the early twentieth century found this expectation, as had happened among the Karen, and were received in the same way.

Lahu tradition also holds a creator described in paired terms, male and female together, in the ritual language.

Three At the seams

A second people, unrelated to the Karen, who held that a writing had been given and lost and would come back.

The crossing at Day 6 verse 11 into verse 12 meets a ritual vocabulary in which the creator is spoken of as a pair.

364. Li (Hlai)

Speakers: about 700,000 · **Family:** Kra-Dai · **Where:** Hainan, China · **Bible:** partial

One What the language holds

Hlai is Kra-Dai and split from the rest of the family early, so it stands apart from Thai and Zhuang. It is tonal and was written only from the 1950s.

Two What the tradition holds

Hlai tradition holds a flood from which a brother and sister survived, and from whom the people came again — the same account found among the Hmong, the Lisu and across the region.

Hlai women's face tattooing was done at initiation, with patterns differing by group, and the practice has now nearly ended with the last generation who bear them.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 6 verse 11 into verse 12 meets a people whose account has one man and one woman from whom everyone descends.

365. Luvale

Speakers: about 700,000 · **Family:** Niger–Congo, Bantu · **Where:** Zambia, Angola · **Bible:** from 1950s

One What the language holds

Luvale has noun classes and tone. The divine name is **Kalunga**, the same word the Kongo use for the force that emerged in the emptiness and for the boundary of water between the living and the dead.

Two What the tradition holds

The Pleiades carries the inherited Bantu digging name.

The **Makishi** masquerade attends the boys' initiation, with masked figures representing ancestors who appear when the boys come out. UNESCO lists it.

The **sona** sand drawings are shared with the Chokwe: whole figures traced in one unbroken line.

Three At the seams

A name for God that is also the word for the water dividing the living from the dead meets Day 2, where the waters are divided and no verdict is given.

366. She

Speakers: about 700,000 in the group, far fewer speaking the language · **Family:** Hmong–Mien
Where: Fujian, Zhejiang, China · **Bible:** none

One What the language holds

Most She people now speak a Chinese variety, and the She language proper is spoken by only a few thousand. The count

above is of the people, not the speakers — one of the clearest cases in these volumes of a people outliving their tongue.

Two What the tradition holds

The She hold **Pan Hu**, a dog ancestor, as the lu Mien do, and keep painted ancestral scrolls unrolled at ceremonies.

Their wedding songs and mountain songs carry the tradition, and the songs are sung antiphonally, one side answering the other.

Three At the seams

A people whose language has nearly gone while they remain meet a text whose claim is that it reaches every tongue. There may soon be no She tongue to reach.

367. Adyghe

Speakers: about 600,000 · Family: Northwest Caucasian · Where: Russia, Turkey, Jordan, Israel · Bible: partial

One What the language holds

Adyghe, like Kabardian, has a very large consonant inventory against two or three vowels. It is Northwest Caucasian, related to nothing outside the region.

Most Adyghe live outside the Caucasus, descendants of those expelled in the nineteenth century.

Two What the tradition holds

The **Nart sagas** are held here, telling of a race of heroes before the present age, including a figure chained to a mountain and a hero born from a stone.

Adyghe Xabze governs conduct: hospitality first, restraint in speech, and the rule that a guest is under protection regardless of who they are.

Tha is the name for God, and the older tradition held a supreme being alongside the Narts.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 11, the man placed in a prepared garden and given leave, meets a people whose central obligation is what is owed a guest.

368. Bariba

Speakers: about 600,000 · Family: Niger-Congo · Where: Benin, Nigeria · Bible: partial

One What the language holds

Bariba, or Baatonum, is tonal and forms its own branch within Niger-Congo, with no close relatives.

Two What the tradition holds

The Bariba kingdom of Nikki held horses and cavalry, unusual in the forest zone, and the **Gaani** festival is marked by horsemen in procession.

Bariba tradition holds the **wasangari**, the warrior nobility, and their own account of descent from an ancestor who came from the east.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 2 into verse 3, into the genealogical record, meets a people who trace descent from a named founder who arrived from elsewhere.

369. Diola (Jola)

Speakers: about 600,000 · Family: Niger-Congo, Atlantic · Where: Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau · Bible: partial

One What the language holds

Jola sorts nouns into classes and is Atlantic, a branch quite distinct from Mande or Bantu. The divine name is **Emitai**, which also means the sky and the rain.

Two What the tradition holds

The Jola of the Casamance farm rice in paddies cut out of mangrove, built up over generations with a long-handled shovel, the **kajendu**, worked standing.

Jola society had no chiefs in the ordinary sense; authority lay with shrine-holders and with the age-sets, and decisions were reached in assembly.

Aline Sitoé Diatta, a young woman who called for resistance to French demands in the 1940s, is held in memory as a prophet.

Three At the seams

A word for God that is also the word for rain and sky meets Day 1 and Day 4 in one vocabulary.

The crossing at Day 3 verse 11, the man set to dress and keep the ground, meets a people who made their fields out of salt marsh by hand.

370. Ewondo

Speakers: about 600,000 · **Family:** Niger-Congo, Bantu · **Where:** Cameroon · **Bible:** from 1930s

One What the language holds

Ewondo has noun classes and tone and is close to Fang and Bulu. It is spoken in and around Yaoundé and serves as a church and market language.

Two What the tradition holds

The **mvét** epic tradition is shared with the Fang and Bulu: the people who cannot die and the people who can.

The **Missa Ayong**, an Ewondo mass composed in the 1950s using local melodies and the balafon, was among the first African-language liturgies of its kind and is still sung.

The Pleiades carries the inherited Bantu digging name.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 7 into verse 8 meets an epic tradition about the difference between dying and not dying.

371. Kissi

Speakers: about 600,000 · **Family:** Niger-Congo, Atlantic · **Where:** Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia · **Bible:** partial

One What the language holds

Kissi is Atlantic and tonal, spoken where three borders meet. The divine name is **Hala**.

Two What the tradition holds

Stone figures nobody remembers carving

The **pomdo** are small soapstone figures found buried in Kissi fields. The Kissi did not make them and do not know who did; they are found while digging and are taken up and kept.

They are treated as ancestors, set in shrines, consulted, and sometimes questioned and even punished if a matter goes badly. Figures of stone, taken out of the ground, that speak for the dead.

The Kissi are rice farmers, and the headwaters of the Niger rise in their country.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 7 into verse 8, the man formed out of the ground, meets a people who take human figures out of the ground and treat them as those who went before.

372. Kurmali

Speakers: about 600,000 · **Family:** Indo-European, Indo-Aryan · **Where:** Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha · **Bible:** limited

One What the language holds

Kurmali is spoken among Munda and Dravidian neighbours and serves partly as a bridge, like Sadri. It has no widely used written standard.

Two What the tradition holds

The Adivasi traditions of the region stand behind: the Santal account of the failed clay and the birds' eggs, the sacred grove, the sal tree festival at the new year.

The **Tusu** festival is kept at midwinter by young women, with songs composed for it each year.

Three At the seams

Largely unverified. The regional Adivasi material is the gap, and it is carried by speech.

373. Mam

Speakers: about 600,000 · **Family:** Mayan · **Where:** Guatemala, Mexico · **Bible:** from 1990s

One What the language holds

Mam is ergative and has a complex system of positional roots describing the shape and posture of things — how something is lying, leaning, bunched or spread — where English needs a phrase.

It marks the source of knowledge.

Two What the tradition holds

The Popol Vuh world is shared. The 260-day calendar is counted by **ajq'ij**, daykeepers, who name the day and read it, and the office is still held.

Mam communities in the western highlands were among the hardest hit in the Guatemalan violence of the 1980s, and much of what was held was carried into exile.

Three At the seams

The crossing out of Day 4 verse 1 into verse 2, the lights for days and years, meets a people still counting a calendar by hand.

The crossing at Day 3 verse 7 into verse 8 meets the account of the clay that would not hold.

374. Nobiin Nubian

Speakers: about 600,000 · **Family:** Nilo-Saharan · **Where:** Egypt, Sudan · **Bible:** Old Nubian from the 8th century; little modern

One What the language holds

Eight hundred years of Christian Nubia

The Nubian kingdoms south of Egypt received Christianity in the sixth century and held it until the fifteenth. **Old Nubian** was written in a Coptic-derived alphabet with extra letters, and scripture, sermons and liturgy survive in it.

It is among the oldest written languages of Africa after Egyptian and Ge'ez, and its Christian texts predate most European vernacular scripture by close to a thousand years.

The modern language has almost no written standard and no modern Bible.

Much Nubian land was flooded by the Aswan dam in the 1960s and the population was moved.

Two What the tradition holds

Nubians are Muslim now, and the Quranic Adam stands behind a reader, with the memory of the Christian centuries carried in ruined churches and in the name of places.

The Nile set the year, and the flooding that the dam ended had done so for as long as anyone counted.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 2, the waters divided, meets a people whose river was dammed and whose villages are under the water.

A people who had scripture in their own tongue a thousand years ago and have none now.

375. Ossetian

Speakers: about 600,000 · **Family:** Indo-European, Iranian · **Where:** North and South Ossetia · **Bible:** from 2000s

One What the language holds

Ossetian is the last living descendant of the Scythian and Alan languages, Iranian speech carried onto the steppe and then into the Caucasus. It has absorbed case structure and sounds from its Caucasian neighbours and stands apart from every other Iranian language.

Two What the tradition holds

The **Nart sagas** are held here in their fullest form, and scholars have traced elements of the Arthurian material — a sword returned to water, a cup that cannot be lifted by the unworthy — to Alan contact with the Roman west.

Ossetian tradition holds a supreme being, **Khuytsau**, with lesser powers, and the three pies set on the table with a prayer, one for God, one for the sun, one for the earth.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 2 into verse 3 meets a people whose oral cycle may lie behind stories told at the other end of Europe.

376. Rusyn

Speakers: about 600,000 · **Family:** Indo-European, Balto-Slavic · **Where:** Slovakia, Ukraine, Poland, Serbia · **Bible:** partial

One What the language holds

Rusyn is East Slavic and is recognised as a language in some countries and treated as a dialect of Ukrainian in others. It has no state.

Aspect on every verb and a vocative, as across Slavic.

Two What the tradition holds

The Rusyns are Greek Catholic, in communion with Rome while keeping the Eastern liturgy, and Church Slavonic was their liturgical language.

Their wooden churches in the Carpathians, built without nails and topped with three towers, are listed by UNESCO.

Andy Warhol's parents were Rusyn, and the family's church in Pittsburgh shaped what he saw of images and repetition.

Three At the seams

A people without a country of their own meet a text whose seams they read in a liturgical language older than their own.

377. Tzeltal

Speakers: about 600,000 · **Family:** Mayan · **Where:** Chiapas, Mexico · **Bible:** from 1950s

One What the language holds

A language that points by the landscape

Tzeltal does not use left and right for locating things in space. It uses uphill, downhill and across, fixed to the slope of the land, regardless of which way the speaker is facing.

Speakers keep track of the direction of the mountain at all times without thinking about it. This was studied closely and changed how psychologists think about spatial reasoning.

Tzeltal is ergative and has an extensive set of positional roots for how a thing is placed.

Two What the tradition holds

The Popol Vuh world is shared, with the land raised from water and the people made from maize.

Tzeltal communities hold the **ch'ulel**, a soul that may leave the body in sleep and that has an animal counterpart living in a mountain. What happens to the animal happens to the person.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 6 verse 9 into verse 10, into the deep sleep, meets a people who hold that the soul goes out during sleep.

A reader who locates everything by the slope of the ground meets an account of a ground that was raised.

378. Yiddish

Speakers: about 600,000 · **Family:** Indo-European, Germanic · **Where:** worldwide · **Script:** Hebrew alphabet · **Bible:** Yehoash translation, 1941

One What the language holds

Germanic grammar, Hebrew letters

Yiddish is a Germanic language, close to Middle High German in its structure, carrying a large body of Hebrew and Aramaic vocabulary and a Slavic layer picked up in eastern Europe.

It is written in the Hebrew alphabet, right to left. A page of Yiddish looks like Hebrew and reads as German.

So a Yiddish reader meeting Genesis meets a Germanic sentence in the letters the Hebrew was written in, with the Hebrew words for the holy things standing untranslated inside it.

The Yehoash translation of 1941 is regarded as a literary achievement in its own right, and was made while its readership was being killed.

Yiddish had some eleven million speakers before the war. Most were murdered, and the language went in one decade from a major European tongue to one carried by survivors and by Hasidic communities where it is now growing again.

Two What the tradition holds

Yiddish carries the Ashkenazi tradition: the study house, the commentary, the argument over the text as the ordinary form of piety.

The **tkhines**, supplications composed in Yiddish for women who did not read Hebrew, are among the few surviving devotional writings by and for women in the tradition.

Hasidic storytelling, the **mayse**, carries teaching in narrative rather than in argument, and its great figures are remembered as tellers.

Three At the seams

Yiddish is the only language in these volumes whose reader sees the Hebrew alphabet and the Germanic sentence at once, so both sides of the long chain of translation are present on the same line.

The crossing at Day 3 verse 2 into verse 3, into the genealogical record, meets a people whose genealogies were destroyed within living memory and who kept counting anyway.

379. Welsh

Speakers: about 560,000 · **Family:** Indo-European, Celtic · **Where:** Wales · **Bible:** William Morgan, 1588

One What the language holds

A translation credited with saving a language

William Morgan's Welsh Bible of 1588 gave Welsh a standard written form at a point when it might have been lost to English. It was read aloud in every parish church for centuries.

It is widely held that Welsh survives as a living language because of it, and it is the reason Welsh has a continuous literary standard where other Celtic languages do not.

Welsh mutates the first consonant of a word depending on what precedes it, so the same word begins differently in different sentences. It has vowel-less words to English eyes, using *w* and *y* as vowels.

Two What the tradition holds

The **Mabinogion** holds the oldest prose narratives in Britain, with figures older than the Arthurian material that grew from them.

The **Eisteddfod** is a festival of poetry and song going back centuries, where a chair is awarded to the best poet in strict metre. In 1917 the winner had been killed at Passchendaele, and the chair was draped in black.

Welsh poetry in **cynganedd** uses a system of consonant and stress correspondence within each line that has no parallel in English.

Three At the seams

A people who hold that their language lives because someone translated this text meet the seams of it in that translation.

380. Tzotzil

Speakers: about 550,000 · Family: Mayan · Where: Chiapas, Mexico · Bible: from 1970s

One What the language holds

Tzotzil is close to Tzeltal and shares the landscape-based directions: uphill, downhill and across rather than left and right.

It is ergative and marks the source of knowledge.

Two What the tradition holds

The Popol Vuh world is shared. Tzotzil communities hold the **ch'ulel** soul and its animal counterpart in the mountain.

In Chamula the church holds no ordinary mass: the floor is covered in pine needles, candles are set out in rows on the ground, and healing is done there, in a building that is Catholic in form and Maya in use.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 6 verse 9 into verse 10, into the deep sleep, meets a people who hold that the soul leaves during sleep.

A people who took a church and used it their own way meet a text taken and braided a new way.

381. Maltese

Speakers: about 520,000 · **Family:** Afroasiatic, Semitic · **Where:** Malta · **Script:** Latin · **Bible:** complete 1984

One What the language holds

A Semitic language in Latin letters, read by Christians

Maltese descends from the Arabic of Sicily. Its grammar is Semitic: roots of three consonants, broken plurals, verb patterns built by changing the vowels inside the root.

Its vocabulary is about a third Semitic and the rest Sicilian, Italian and English. It is written in the Latin alphabet, and it is the only Semitic language that is an official language of the European Union.

Its speakers are overwhelmingly Catholic.

The load-bearing words are cognates

Alla — God. **sema** — heaven, cognate with Hebrew shamayim. **art** — earth, cognate with eretz. **dawl** — light. **tajjeb** — good, cognate with tov. **ruħ** — spirit or breath, cognate with ruach.

At Day 1 verse 1, in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, a Maltese reader meets three words that are relatives of the Hebrew ones. At Day 1 verse 5, and God saw the light that it was good, the same.

No other European language does this. A Maltese Catholic reading Genesis in Maltese is reading a Semitic language.

Two What the tradition holds

Malta holds the **Ġgantija** and **Haġar Qim** temples, built from about 3600 BC — older than the pyramids and older than Stonehenge, and among the oldest free-standing structures anywhere. Nobody knows what language their builders spoke.

Paul is recorded as having been shipwrecked on Malta, and the island keeps that as its founding Christian fact.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 7 into verse 8 meets a language whose word for breath is a cognate of the Hebrew, in the mouth of a Christian reader.

Every verdict in the Maltese text uses a word that is a relative of the Hebrew **tov**. Of all four hundred languages, Maltese comes closest to hearing the verdicts as they were first said.

382. Bété

Speakers: about 500,000 · Family: Niger-Congo, Kru · Where: Côte d'Ivoire · Bible: partial

One What the language holds

Bété is Kru and tonal. In the 1950s **Frédéric Bruly Bouabré**, a Bété, produced a syllabary of some four hundred and forty-nine pictographic signs for the language, after a vision he described in detail.

The fourth such account in these volumes of a script said to have been given rather than devised.

Two What the tradition holds

Bouabré also spent decades drawing small cards recording what he called the knowledge of the world, and his work is now held in major collections.

Bété tradition holds masks and a society of initiates, and the **gbégbé** dance is performed at funerals.

Three At the seams

A people whose script came to one man in a vision meet a text whose braid is claimed to have been shown rather than devised.

383. Dargin

Speakers: about 500,000 · **Family:** Northeast Caucasian · **Where:** Dagestan · **Bible:** partial

One What the language holds

Dargin is a cluster of varieties so different from each other that some linguists count them as separate languages. It is ergative with noun classes marked on verbs.

Two What the tradition holds

Kubachi, a Dargin village, has made silver and metalwork for a thousand years, and the craft passes within families. The village men historically spoke a secret language of the trade.

Dagestan's villages each kept their own customary law and their own craft.

Three At the seams

A people whose craft knowledge was carried within families in a language of its own meet a text whose seams are open to anyone with the page.

384. Ibanag

Speakers: about 500,000 · **Family:** Austronesian · **Where:** Cagayan, Philippines · **Bible:** from 1900s

One What the language holds

Ibanag has two words for we, so Day 6 verse 8 takes a position. The name means people of the river.

It has sounds no other Philippine language has, including a distinct f, and was among the first Philippine languages the Spanish wrote grammars for.

Two What the tradition holds

The Philippine bamboo account of the first man and woman stands.

The Cagayan river sets the year, and Ibanag communities live along it.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 6 verse 11 into verse 12 meets the bamboo account. Day 6 verse 8 is answered by the language.

385. Kaqchikel

Speakers: about 500,000 · **Family:** Mayan · **Where:** Guatemala · **Bible:** from 1970s

One What the language holds

Kaqchikel is close to K'iche' and is ergative, marking the source of knowledge.

The **Annals of the Kaqchikels** were written in Kaqchikel in Latin letters in the sixteenth century, a record of the people's own history kept by their own scribes alongside the Popol Vuh.

Two What the tradition holds

The Popol Vuh world is shared: the sea and sky alone, the land raised, the clay that failed, the people of maize, and the women placed beside the sleeping men.

The 260-day calendar is counted, and daykeepers hold the office. Lake Atitlán and the volcanoes around it are named powers.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 6 verse 9 into verse 10 and into verse 11 meets the account of the sleeping men and the women placed beside them.

The crossing at Day 3 verse 2 into verse 3, into the genealogical record, meets a people who wrote their own annals when they could no longer keep their books.

386. Karbi

Speakers: about 500,000 · **Family:** Sino-Tibetan · **Where:** Assam, India · **Bible:** from 1950s

One What the language holds

Karbi is Tibeto-Burman, spoken in the Assam hills, and is written in Latin and Assamese scripts.

Two What the tradition holds

Karbi tradition holds long sung narratives, and the **Chomangkan** is the death ceremony, held over four days with dancing, drumming and the recitation of the journey the dead must make.

The **Mosera** is the recollection of the past, a chanted account of the people's origin and migration performed at gatherings.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 2 into verse 3, into the genealogical record, meets a people whose gatherings include a chanted recollection of where they came from.

387. Kusaal

Speakers: about 500,000 · **Family:** Niger-Congo, Gur · **Where:** northeastern Ghana, Burkina Faso · **Bible:** from 1996

One What the language holds

Kusaal is tonal with noun classes marked by suffixes. The divine name is **Wina'am**, cognate with the names used across the Gur languages, and it is also the word for the sun.

Two What the tradition holds

The **tengban**, the earth-shrine, holds the land and its custodian is of the people who were there first, as across the Gur-speaking region.

Kusaal communities farm the dry savannah and keep granaries built of mud against the household wall.

Three At the seams

A word for God that is also the word for the sun meets Day 1 verse 5 and Day 4 verse 7, where the light and the lights are both called good.

388. Limba

Speakers: about 500,000 · **Family:** Niger-Congo, Atlantic · **Where:** Sierra Leone · **Bible:** partial

One What the language holds

Limba is Atlantic and is thought to be among the oldest established languages in Sierra Leone, its speakers regarded as having been there before their neighbours.

Two What the tradition holds

Limba storytelling was recorded in detail in the twentieth century, and the collection is among the fullest anywhere for a small African language — including what the tellers themselves said about how and why they told.

Limba tradition holds **Kanu** as the creator, and the palm wine tapping the Limba are known for.

Three At the seams

A people whose account of their own storytelling was written down alongside the stories meet a text that is itself a telling with its joins made visible.

389. Mixtec

Speakers: about 500,000 · **Family:** Oto-Manguean · **Where:** Oaxaca, Mexico, and migrant communities in the United States · **Bible:** partial, several varieties

One What the language holds

Mixtec is tonal and is a cluster of varieties, many not intelligible with each other, counted together here. It belongs to Oto-Manguean, a family found only in Mexico.

Two What the tradition holds

Books that survived, and a people born from a tree

Several Mixtec codices survive, painted on deerskin and folded, recording dynasties and events over centuries. They are among the few pre-conquest books from the Americas that were not burned.

The Mixtec account holds that the lords were born from a tree at Apoala, which split and brought them forth.

A fifth people, after the Zulu, Tagalog, Norse, Persian and Wa, whose first people came out of a plant.

The Mixteca is one of the most eroded regions of Mexico, and large numbers have gone north for work, so Mixtec is now widely spoken in California and Oregon.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 7 into verse 8 meets a people whose lords came out of a tree.

The crossing at Day 3 verse 2 into verse 3, into the genealogical record, meets a people whose surviving books are genealogies.

390. Samoan

Speakers: about 500,000 · **Family:** Austronesian, Polynesian · **Where:** Samoa, American Samoa, New Zealand · **Bible:** 1855

One What the language holds

Samoan has two words for we, and a dual as well as a plural, so it can say exactly two. At Day 6 verse 12, male and female created he them, Samoan has a form for two.

It keeps a separate formal vocabulary, the **gagana fa'aaloalo**, used in oratory and toward chiefs — different words for the same acts.

Samoan is the only Pacific language above the cut-off for the top four hundred; every other is on the separate list.

Two What the tradition holds

Tagaloa dwelt in the expanse, and there was no sky, no land, no sea. He made a rock, and the rock brought forth, and he reached down and drew up the islands out of the water, and then made a man and a woman.

Fa'a Samoa, the Samoan way, governs the **matai** system, in which each extended family chooses a titled head who speaks for them and holds the land on their behalf. Land is not owned by individuals.

The **fale**, the meeting house, is round and open on all sides, so that what is discussed is visible to everyone.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 1 into verse 2, the waters gathered and the dry land appearing, meets a people whose own account has the islands drawn up out of the sea.

The crossing at Day 6 verse 11 into verse 12 meets a language with a form for exactly two.

391. Surigaonon

Speakers: about 500,000 · **Family:** Austronesian · **Where:** Mindanao, Philippines · **Bible:** partial

One What the language holds

Surigaonon is Visayan, close to Cebuano, with two words for we. Day 6 verse 8 takes a position.

Two What the tradition holds

The Visayan bamboo account stands: the first man and woman emerging together from one stalk.

Surigao is coastal and its people are seafarers and fishers, with the Pacific on one side.

Three At the seams

Day 5, the waters bringing forth abundantly, meets a coastal people. The crossing at Day 6 verse 11 into verse 12 meets the bamboo.

392. Tetum

Speakers: about 500,000 first language, most of the country as second · **Family:** Austronesian
Where: Timor-Leste · **Bible:** complete 2000s

One What the language holds

Tetum is co-official in Timor-Leste with Portuguese, and it absorbed a great deal of Portuguese vocabulary over four centuries, so a Semitic-free Austronesian grammar carries Latin words.

It has two words for we, so Day 6 verse 8 takes a position.

Two What the tradition holds

Lulik is the Tetum word for the sacred, and the **uma lulik**, the sacred house, holds a lineage's objects and its obligations. Destroyed in the occupation, many have been rebuilt.

The **tara bandu** is a prohibition hung publicly — a sign placed on a tree or a field declaring that it may not be cut or fished or entered for a season. A ban that everyone can see.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 20 into verse 21, where the man is told he may eat freely of every tree but one, meets a people who hang a visible prohibition on a particular tree.

393. West Frisian

Speakers: about 470,000 · **Family:** Indo-European, Germanic · **Where:** Friesland, Netherlands · **Bible:** 1943

One What the language holds

English's closest living relative

Frisian is closer to English than Dutch is, and closer than German. The old saying runs that bread, butter and green cheese is good English and good Fries, and it is nearly the same sentence in both.

The two split when the Angles and Saxons crossed to Britain and the Frisians stayed.

Frisian was a spoken language for centuries with little written standing, and the Bible of 1943 was part of establishing it.

Two What the tradition holds

The Frisians resisted incorporation into the Frankish empire longer than their neighbours, and the old **Frisian freedom** — that they held no lord but the emperor — is still part of how they speak of themselves.

Friesland is below sea level and held by dikes, and the land was made by building them. Much of what the province is was taken from the water by hand.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 1 into verse 2, the waters gathered together and the dry land appearing, meets a people whose land appeared because they made it appear.

394. Kumyk

Speakers: about 450,000 · **Family:** Turkic · **Where:** Dagestan · **Bible:** partial

One What the language holds

Kumyk is Turkic and served as the lingua franca of the northeastern Caucasus for centuries, used between peoples speaking unrelated Caucasian languages.

It marks evidentiality, so a narrator of the seven days takes a position on how they know.

Two What the tradition holds

The Turkic **Tengri** material stands beneath Islam, with the sky as the name of God.

Kumyk poetry, and the **yir** heroic songs, carried the region's history before writing was widespread.

Three At the seams

A language used to speak between peoples who could not otherwise understand each other meets a text meant to reach all of them.

395. Lobi

Speakers: about 450,000 · **Family:** Niger-Congo, Gur · **Where:** Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana · **Bible:** partial

One What the language holds

Lobi is Gur and tonal. The divine name is **Thangba**, held as remote, with the **thil**, spirits, as the ordinary means of approach.

Two What the tradition holds

The Lobi carve wooden figures, the **bateba**, which are placed on shrines at the instruction of a diviner and are understood to act — to warn, to turn away harm, to stand guard. A figure may be commissioned because a spirit asked for it.

Lobi houses are built as flat-roofed fortified compounds, each family separate, and the Lobi resisted centralised authority throughout their history.

Three At the seams

The crossing at Day 3 verse 7 into verse 8 meets a people who carve human figures at the instruction of what they cannot see, and set them to act on their behalf.

396. Sakha (Yakut)

Speakers: about 450,000 · **Family:** Turkic · **Where:** Sakha Republic, Siberia · **Bible:** complete 2004

One What the language holds

Sakha is Turkic, carried further north than any other language of the family, into a region where the winter reaches sixty below. It marks evidentiality.

It has absorbed vocabulary from the Tungusic languages around it and stands some distance from the rest of Turkic.

Two What the tradition holds

One singer takes every voice

The **Olonkho** runs to tens of thousands of lines. A single performer speaks the narration and sings each character in a different voice, without instruments, through the night and sometimes for several nights.

UNESCO listed it in 2005. The epics tell of the upper, middle and lower worlds, and of a hero sent down into the middle world to make it fit for people.

The **Aiyy** tradition holds sky beings and a world tree, and the **Ysyakh** festival at the summer solstice greets the sun with kumys poured out and a round dance that goes on for hours.

Three At the seams

The crossing out of Day 4 verse 1 into verse 2, and Day 1 verse 5, meet a people who keep a festival to greet the sun in a place where it disappears for much of the year.

Their epics have a figure sent down into the middle world to make it fit for people, as the La Galigo does at the other end of Asia.

397. Zapotec

Speakers: about 450,000 · **Family:** Oto-Manguean · **Where:** Oaxaca, Mexico · **Bible:** partial, several varieties

One What the language holds

Among the oldest writing in the Americas

Inscriptions at Monte Albán in Zapotec date from around 500 BC, and Zapotec writing is among the earliest in the Americas — one of a small number of writing systems invented independently anywhere on earth.

The script is only partly deciphered.

Zapotec is tonal and is a cluster of varieties, many not mutually intelligible.

Two What the tradition holds

The Zapotec held Monte Albán for over a thousand years, and the **Danzantes** carved there are among the oldest monumental sculpture in Mesoamerica.

Juchitán and the Isthmus Zapotec are known for the **muxe**, recognised as a third social gender within the community, and for a strong economic role held by women in the markets.

The 260-day calendar was counted here as across Mesoamerica.

Three At the seams

A people who invented writing independently meet a text that came to them in an alphabet from elsewhere.

398. Masalit

Speakers: about 440,000 · **Family:** Nilo-Saharan · **Where:** Darfur, Sudan; Chad · **Bible:** limited

One What the language holds

Masalit is Nilo-Saharan, in the Maban group, spoken on the Sudan-Chad border. It has no widely used written standard.

Two What the tradition holds

The Masalit held their own sultanate until the twentieth century. They are Muslim, and the Quranic Adam stands behind a reader.

They are farmers in a region where farming and herding have come into conflict, and they have been killed and driven out in very large numbers in this century and the last.

Three At the seams

Largely unverified. What this language holds is now carried mostly in camps across a border, and recording it is urgent in a way that most entries in these volumes are not.

399. Friulian

Speakers: about 420,000 · **Family:** Indo-European, Romance · **Where:** northeastern Italy · **Bible:** from 1990s

One What the language holds

Friulian is Rhaeto-Romance, related to Romansh and Ladin rather than to Italian directly, and kept Latin features that Italian lost — including final consonants that Italian dropped.

Two What the tradition holds

Aquileia, in Friuli, was among the earliest Christian centres in the west, and its basilica holds a fourth-century mosaic floor with Jonah and the fish laid out in three scenes.

Pier Paolo Pasolini wrote his first poems in Friulian, and defended it as a language in which things could be said that Italian had lost the ability to say.

Three At the seams

A reader whose language kept what Italian dropped meets the seams in a tongue standing a little nearer to the Latin than its larger neighbour.

400. Erzya

Speakers: about 400,000 · Family: Uralic · Where: Mordovia, Russia · Bible: complete 2016

One What the language holds

Erzya is Uralic, related to Finnish, Estonian and Hungarian at a distance. It has no grammatical gender and one pronoun for he and she, and around a dozen cases.

It also has a definite and indefinite conjugation, as Hungarian does: the verb changes depending on whether the object is already known.

Two What the tradition holds

Erzya tradition holds **Inyeshkipaz** as the creator and **Ange Patyai** as the mother of life, with a prayer tradition addressed at sacred trees and springs.

The **Rasken Ozks**, the national prayer, was revived in the 1990s after long suppression, and is held at a named place with bread and with candles.

The Erzya kept their own tradition later than most peoples of European Russia, and it is being deliberately recovered now while the language declines.

Three At the seams

A complete Bible arrived in 2016, so an Erzya reader can now meet all fourteen seams in their own language for the first time.

The crossing at Day 3 verse 10 into verse 11, into the garden with its trees, meets a people whose prayers were made at trees.

Cross Linguistic Study of the New Creation Story / Man on Day Three in Genesis — languages 351 through 400
This completes the list ranked by native speakers. The separate list of 90 indigenous and island languages follows.

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Verse references follow the banner revision of September 7, 2026. Native speaker and specialist review welcome throughout.