For over 1500 years after we received the Torah on Har Sinai, the Torah sheba'al peh, the Oral Torah, was exactly that – transmitted orally from teacher to student. Just over 1800 years ago, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi began the arduous process of writing down the Oral Torah, with the compiling and editing of the Mishnah. We take a closer look at some of the significant periods, persons, and books in the history of the recording of the Oral Tradition | BY ROBERT SUSSMAN

From c. 3979 – 4235

Period of the Amoraim

(the Rabbis of The Talmud)

4121 – Hillel II established the current calendar system (which was no longer based upon witnesses giving testimony about seeing the new moon)

C. 4152 – Rav Ashi and Ravina began the compiling and editing of **The Talmud**, comprised of the texts of the Mishnah and the Gemara (an elucidation of the Mishnah).

C. 4235 – **The Talmud** was completed.

From c. 4349 – 4800

Period of the Gaonim

(aka the Heads of the Yeshivos in Bavel/ Babylon) such as Rav Amram Gaon, Rav Saadia Gaon, and Rav Hai Gaon

– the earliest known book of written prayers (aka **The Siddur**), as well as the text of **The Haggadah** as we know it today both date back to this period

From c. 4800 – 5250

Period of the Rishonim *(aka Early Sages) such as Rashi, the Ibn Ezra, the Rambam, the Ramban, and the Rosh*

C. 4863 **Sefer Halachot** by the Rif – an innovative work functioning as a halachic summary of the Talmud

C. 4965 **Mishneh Torah** by the Rambam was published

5100 – **Arbah Turim** by Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher (aka the Tur or the Ba'al HaTurim), who was the son of the Rosh, was published. The systematic arrangement of halacha contained within this work (dividing the entire corpus of halacha into four main categories and then, within each of those categories, dividing again by topic, and then, within each of those topics, by chapter and number) was later followed by the Shulchan Aruch.

C. 5200 – Invention of the printing press

From c. 5250 – 5700

Period of the Achronim *(aka Later Sages) such as the Maharal, the Ramchal, the Magen Avraham, the Vilna Gaon, Rabbi Akiva Eiger, the Chayei Adam, and the Chofetz Chaim*

5278 – **Chumash Mikraos Gedolos** – the text of the Chumash alongside various major commentaries was first published in Venice

5323 – **Shulchan Aruch** (aka The Code of Jewish Law) was completed by Rabbi Yosef Caro (aka the Beit Yoseph) – and seven years later it was published with the interlinear commentary of Rabbi Moshe Isserles (aka the Rema)

5646 – Completion of the printing of the **Vilna Shas** (what has become the traditional layout and pagination (aka tzuras hadaf) of the Babylonian Talmud, accompanied by the commentaries of Rashi on the inner margins and the Ba'alei Tosafos on the outer margins of each page)

4121 | c. 4152 | c. 4235 | c. 4349 | c. 4800 | c. 4863 | c. 4965 | 5100 | 5200 | 5278 | 5323 | 5646

Based primarily upon The Jewish Timeline Encyclopedia by Rabbi Mattis Kantor