

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HEBREW LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

Volume 2
G–O

General Editor
Geoffrey Khan

Associate Editors
Shmuel Bolokzy
Steven E. Fassberg
Gary A. Rendsburg
Aaron D. Rubin
Ora R. Schwarzwald
Tamar Zewi



BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON
2013

© 2013 Koninklijke Brill NV ISBN 978-90-04-17642-3

Table of Contents

VOLUME ONE

Introduction	vii
List of Contributors	ix
Transcription Tables	xiii
Articles A-F	I

VOLUME TWO

Transcription Tables	vii
Articles G-O	I

VOLUME THREE

Transcription Tables	vii
Articles P-Z	I

VOLUME FOUR

Transcription Tables	vii
Index	I

is visible in the vocalization of the Parma A manuscript of the Mishna, which was written in Salento (Ryzhik 2010; cf., for example, the frequent vocalizations with *šuruq* in place of *ḥolam*, which are parallel to the process $\varrho > u$ in the local dialect in words borrowed from other Italian dialects).

In the late 15th century confusion between *qamaš* and *ḥolam* and related phenomena are common in some northern Italian manuscripts (Ryzhik 2008:27–31). These phenomena provide evidence of processes that are parallel to those of contemporary Ashkenazic traditions in their passage from proto-Ashkenazic to Ashkenazic pronunciation. It appears that the massive influx of Sephardic Jews put an end to these processes in Italy.

REFERENCES

- Bar-Asher, Moshe. 1980. *The Tradition of Mishnaic Hebrew in the communities of Italy* (acc. to Ms. Paris 328–329) (in Hebrew). Jerusalem: Magnes.
- Ben-Toulila, Yaaqov. 1989. *The French-Italian tradition of the language of the Mishna* (in Hebrew). Jerusalem: Magnes.
- Colorni, Vittorio. 1970. “La parlata degli ebrei mantovani”. *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 36 (Scritti in memoria di Attilio Milano): 109–164.
- Fortis, Umberto. 1978. “About the Hebrew words in the literatural compositions in the Italian dialects in the 16th–18th centuries” (in Hebrew). *Lěšonenu* 42:126–136.
- Gumperz, Yehiel Gedalya Peretz. 1953. *Pronunciations of our language* (in Hebrew). Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook.
- Hartom, Elyahu Samuel. 1947. “The Hebrew pronunciation of the Italian Jews” (in Hebrew). *Lěšonenu* 15:52–61.
- Massariello, Giovanna. 1980. “La parlata giudeo-piemontese”. *L'Archivio Glottologico Italiano* 65:105–136.
- Milano, Attilio. 1992. *The ghetto of Rome*. Jerusalem: Maariv.
- Mortara, Marco. 1862. *La famiglia: sermone, recitato il Shabat teshwuh ha-Tarkhag*. Benvenuti.
- Rohlf, Gerhard. 1966. *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana e dei suoi dialetti*, vol. 1: *Fonetica*. Torino: Einaudi.
- Ryzhik, Michael. 2008. *The Traditions of Mishnaic Hebrew in Italy* (in Hebrew). Jerusalem: Bialik Institute.
- . 2009. “The five vowels’ Hebrew tradition and the pronunciation of the Italian Jews” (in Hebrew). *Lěšonenu* 72: 161–177.
- Segal, Moshe Zevi. 1928. *The foundations of Hebrew phonetics* (in Hebrew). Jerusalem: HaSefer.
- Shirman, Jefim. 1934. *Anthologie der Hebräischen Dichtung in Italien* (in Hebrew). Berlin: Schocken.
- Tur-Sinai, Naphthali. 1928. “The drinking song from Italy” (in Hebrew). *Lěšonenu* 9:49–55.

Weinreich, Max. 1959. “Sons of *he* and sons of *het* in Ashkenaz: The problem and what can we learn from its existence” (in Hebrew). *Lěšonenu* 23:85–96.

MICHAEL RYZHIK
(Bar-Ilan University)

Italy: Roman Period to Late Antiquity

There are to date no comprehensive studies on the question of how widespread and deep knowledge of Hebrew was among Jews in Italy of the Roman Period and Late Antiquity. So far this question has only been addressed on specific points (see esp. Rosén 1995; de Lange 1996; Noy 1999). Our main sources, beginning around the 1st century C.E., are funerary inscriptions (epitaphs) which, although abundant, provide only a very partial picture of the broader context in which they were produced. Moreover, the inscriptions rarely contain Hebrew, and when they do, its interpretation is often controversial. Hebrew began to appear in other epigraphic sources (short texts on rings, seals, amulets, amphorae, lamps, etc.) in the 4th or 5th century. These must be carefully assessed to determine their proper place in the variegated historical framework of the vast Jewish presence on Italy’s mainland and islands.

Jews probably first began to settle in significant numbers in Italy around the time of the first treaties between Rome and the Hasmoneans (161 and 142 B.C.E.; see 1 Macc. 8.7–30, 15–17), perhaps at first in the port cities of Sicily and southern Italy, then in Rome and in the country’s other commercial centers. Contacts and trade with Alexandria may have stimulated this immigration. However, the main influx of Jews was the result of the deportation *en masse* of slaves from Judea, in several waves: initially in 63–61 B.C.E., during Pompey’s wars; then in 68–71 C.E., under Vespasian and Titus; and finally in 132–135 C.E., under Hadrian. Other waves of immigrants came at different times from Egypt, North Africa, and Mesopotamia.

This huge influx of Jews—whose native languages were predominantly Aramaic and Greek—led to the establishment of many communities, soon organized in various ways

according to their provenance, languages, and customs. In Julio-Claudian times, the Jews of Rome had at least ten synagogues (for example, those of the *Herodiani*, the *Agrippenses*, and the *Augustenses*; in Ostia there was a synagogue, too), but nothing is known of their liturgical language(s). A fact of possible relevance to this issue is the existence—attested in Greek epitaphs of the 3rd–4th centuries (JIWE II.2, 33, 578–579)—of a synagogue ‘of the Hebrews’ (*tōn hebreōn*), an appellative probably referring to Jews whose liturgical language was Hebrew and/or Aramaic and whose spoken language was Aramaic. Soon after the Bar Kokhba revolt many Jewish scholars fled Judea. One of them, Mattiyah ben Ḥereš, moved to Rome, where he established a yeshivah (Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 32b; Sifra Deut. 80); Hebrew was surely used and understood in his academy.

In the 3rd century, literary evidence for the Jewish communities temporarily wanes, but this is offset by numerous Jewish epitaphs which begin to appear about this time in Italy. The catacombs of Rome alone have yielded about six-hundred inscriptions, i.e., about thirty percent of all the Jewish inscriptions in the Mediterranean area. Another two-hundred texts, mainly from the 4th to the 6th century, have been found in the rest of Italy, mostly in the South and in Sicily. The languages used in the inscriptions from Rome are Greek (approximately seventy-eight percent), Latin (twenty-one percent), and Hebrew or Aramaic (only one percent; three percent if we include inscriptions with isolated Hebrew words). The predominance of Greek in these epitaphs has been interpreted in various ways. According to some scholars (e.g., Leon 1927), it reflects the language commonly spoken by the Roman Jews; this is not an inevitable conclusion, for—especially in late ancient times, when most Roman Jews surely spoke Latin—Greek was also used as a liturgical language. In any case, Hebrew rarely appears in these inscriptions, and when it does, it is mainly in stereotyped formulas and phrases such as *שלום* *šalom* ‘peace’, *ישראל* *yiśra’el* ‘Israel’, and *שלום על ישראל* *šalom ‘al yiśra’el* ‘peace upon Israel’ (JIWE II.92, 529, etc.). Due to their frequent association with figurative symbols—especially the *menorah* and the Sukkoth symbols—it has been suggested that these short formulas in

Hebrew may have been used not so much for the meanings which they conveyed, as for their magical properties and sanctity, attributed to the Hebrew letters themselves (Noy 1999:141; Rutgers 2000:302–305). This is not the case, however, with the rare inscriptions in Hebrew and/or Aramaic entirely in Jewish script, such as JIWE II.153, a very uncertain reading of which is *תהי לברכתה* *le-birkata tehi* ‘may she be a blessing’ (in Aramaic); JIWE II.58, perhaps to be read *אניה התנה דבר קלבריה* *’nyh htnh dbr qlbryh* ‘Annia (?) the son-in-law (?) of Bar-Calabria’ (also in Aramaic); or the bilingual Greek-Aramaic epitaph of Isidora (JIWE II.33). Further clues about Italian Jews’ knowledge of Semitic languages are provided by JIWE II.551, the Greek epitaph of Hermione, in which only the deceased’s surname, Barše’oda, was written in Latin characters, though with a Hebrew *šin* in the middle (BARŞEODA) to stress the correct pronunciation. The use of the Hebrew letter here points to some knowledge of Hebrew.

In inscriptions found outside of Rome short Hebrew formulas appear almost everywhere, but are especially elaborate and sophisticated in the South. In a group of late ancient Latin funerary inscriptions from Naples (JIWE I.27–35, 5th–6th centuries), alongside the widespread use of the Hebrew word *שלום* *šalom* ‘peace’, there appear expressions such as *שלום על מנוחתך* *šalom ‘al menuḥatka* ‘peace upon your resting-place’ and words of liturgical provenance, such as *סלה* *sela* and *אמן* *’amen*. In one case the name of the deceased, *Numerius* (qualified as *ebreus*, as are two others), is transcribed in Hebrew letters (JIWE I.33). Also from Naples comes a seal with the Hebrew name or expression *יתשלום* *yiṯšalom* ‘be pacified(?)’ (JIWE I.25).

Biblical quotations in these epitaphs are rare. In Rome, there are a few epitaphs which quote Prov. 10.7, “the memory of the righteous shall be for a blessing”, all in Greek and drawing on both the Septuagint and Aquila’s Greek version (JIWE II.112, 276, 307). The formula concluding many epigraphs, “may he/she sleep peacefully”, is possibly inspired by Ps. 4.9. It has been suggested that, via the Semitized use of Greek among the Roman Jews, a Jewish influence on the vulgar and late Latin vocabulary can be detected (Rosén 1995:26–39). No Hebrew biblical citations have been found among the

epitaphs of Rome so far, but many occur in southern Italy. In the epitaph of Glyka from Otranto (JIWE I.134; 3rd/4th century), the source of the Hebrew expression **משכבם עים צדיקים** *miškabam 'im šaddiqim* 'they rest with the righteous' is unclear. A short distance away, in Taranto, we have the noteworthy Greek-Hebrew epitaph of Daudatus son of 'Azaryah and Susannah (JIWE I.118), which carries on its verso an elaborate Hebrew text, consisting of a collection of eulogies including a formula taken from Prov. 10.7 (**זכר צדיק לברכה**) *zeker šaddiq li-braka* 'the memory of the righteous shall be for a blessing', along with elements from Dan. 12.2 (**נשמתו לחיי עולם**) *nišma'oto la-ḥayye 'olam* 'may his spirit have eternal life' and 1 Sam. 25.29 (**תנוח נפשו בצרור החיים**) *tanuah nafsō bi-šror ha-ḥayyim* 'may his soul rest in the bundle of life'. Such a concatenation of eulogies in long texts is common in later epitaphs from the same area (see JIWE I.120–133, Taranto, 7th–8th centuries), but it is surprising to find them in a text dated between the 4th and the 6th centuries.

While none of these examples necessarily point to a widespread knowledge of Hebrew, there must have been some familiarity with the Hebrew Bible, probably gained through liturgy and prayer. Hebrew and Aramaic literacy must have existed among scholars and religious leaders, although even this should not be taken for granted in every period. All this evidence, in any case, fits well with Jerome's testimony (Ep. 32.1; 36.1, 5) concerning the ease with which a Jew could have access to the Hebrew Bible in late ancient Rome. As Jerome wrote in the year 384, Roman Jews were wont to spend time studying; he also mentions having borrowed some scrolls (*volumina*) of the Hebrew Bible from a Jew (*hebreus*) who, in his turn, had borrowed them from a synagogue.

The Venosa catacombs provide the clearest evidence for the gradual reappropriation of Hebrew by the Jews of southern Italy. These catacombs were in use from the 3rd to the 6th century. When epitaphs reappear in the area, after a break—possibly due to the Byzantine oppression of Mediterranean Jewry—at the end of 7th century, and in another cemetery outside of the catacombs, a significant cultural change appears to have occurred in the meantime: the language used is exclusively Hebrew. In the catacombs, which are still not fully explored,

the earliest inscriptions are all in Greek, then there is a gradual switch to Latin, and finally to Hebrew. Hebrew appears at first in short stereotypical formulas, then becomes increasingly common. Of special interest in this context is the inscription of the aged 'presbyter' Secundinus (JIWE I.75, 5th century), where a Hebrew introductory formula is followed by an epitaph in Greek written in the Hebrew script, which can be counted among the earliest Judeo-Greek texts:

שלום על מי שכבו. טפוס סהקונדינו פרסוביטרו. קימיטי
אן ירינא. אטון אונדואנטא.

šalom 'al miškabo / tafos sekoundinou presbyterou / (e)koimēthē en eirēnē / etōn ogdoēnta

'Peace on his resting place. Tomb of Secundinus (the) elder, who fell asleep in peace, aged eighty'.

In Venosa the use of Hebrew is proportionally much more frequent than in Rome: out of seventy-one epigraphs, twenty-nine (forty-one percent) contain Hebrew expressions supplementing the Greek or Latin text, and nine (thirteen percent) are entirely in Hebrew.

As regards the Italian islands, in Sardinia some acquaintance with the Hebrew language and script can be detected in the elaborate Jewish tombs of Sant'Antioco (5th–6th century) where, along with the usual formulas, there was a painted epitaph (JIWE I.173)—now lost and known only from copies—with a Latin text between two lines of Hebrew, quite conventional in content (*amen, amen, šalom 'al Yisra'el*), but curiously miswritten left to right, with some letters reversed. The same Hebrew expressions occur in Sicily, along with the deceased's name (*Šemu'el*) in Hebrew script, in a long Latin text from Catania dated to the year 383 (JIWE I.145). A remarkable find in Sicily consists of magical inscriptions and amulets from late antiquity, mostly in Greek but sometimes in Hebrew or Aramaic. These show that fairly complicated texts were in local circulation at the time; it cannot be proved, however, that these objects were locally manufactured.

From the 6th to 9th/10th century Hebrew written documentation disappears from Italian soil, as from everywhere in Europe, with the exception of southern Italy, where a number of texts from Venosa and various centers in eastern Puglia (Bari, Taranto, Oria, Otranto) bear witness to increasing mastery of the Hebrew language up until the early Middle

Ages, although only among the upper strata of local Jewish society.

REFERENCES

- Bengtsson, Per Å. 2001. "Semitic inscriptions in Rome". *The synagogue of ancient Ostia and the Jews of Rome: Interdisciplinary studies*, ed. by Birger Olsson et al., 151–165. Stockholm: Astrom.
- Colafemmina, Cesare. 1983. "Archeologia ed epigrafia ebraica nell'Italia meridionale". *Italia Judaica*, 199–210. Rome: Ministero per i Beni Culturali.
- de Lange, Nicholas. 1996. "The Hebrew language in the European diaspora". *Studies on the Jewish diaspora in the Hellenistic and Roman periods*, ed. by Benjamin Isaac and Aharon Oppenheimer, 111–137. Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University and Ramot.
- Frey, Jean-Baptiste. 1936. *Corpus inscriptionum judaicarum, I. Europe*. Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana (reprinted as *Corpus of Jewish inscriptions*, with a prolegomenon by Baruch Lifshitz, New York: Ktav, 1975).
- JIWE = Noy 1993, 1995.
- Lacerenza, Giancarlo. 1996. "Graffiti aramaici nella Casa del Criptoportico a Pompei (Regio I, insula VI, 2)". *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 56: 166–188.
- . 1998. "Magia giudaica nella Sicilia tardoantica". *Gli Ebrei in Sicilia dal tardoantico al medioevo*, ed. by Nicolò Bucaria, 293–310. Palermo: Flaccovio.
- . 2003. "Le iscrizioni giudaiche in Italia dal I al VI secolo: Tipologie, origine, distribuzione", Perani 2003a, 71–92.
- . 2004. "Ebraiche liturgie e peregrini *apostuli* nell'Italia bizantina". *Una manna buona per Mantova Studi in onore di Vittore Colorni*, ed. by Mauro Perani, 61–72. Firenze: Olschki.
- Leon, Harry J. 1927. "The language of the Greek inscriptions from the Jewish catacombs of Rome". *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 58:210–233.
- . 1960. *The Jews of ancient Rome*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America.
- Noy, David. 1993. *Jewish inscriptions of Western Europe, I. Italy (excluding the city of Rome), Spain and Gaul*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (= JIWE I).
- . 1995. *Jewish inscriptions of Western Europe, II. The city of Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (= JIWE II).
- . 1997. "Writing in tongues: The use of Greek, Latin and Hebrew in Jewish inscriptions from Roman Italy". *Journal of Jewish Studies* 48:300–311.
- . 1999. "'Peace upon Israel': Hebrew formulae and names in Jewish inscriptions from the Western Roman Empire". *Hebrew study from Ezra to Ben-Yehuda*, ed. by William Horbury, 135–146. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.
- . 2005. "Jewish inscriptions of Western Europe: Addenda and corrigenda". *Hebraica hereditas: Studi in onore di C. Colafemmina*, ed. by Giancarlo Lacerenza, 123–142. Naples: Università "L'Orientale".
- Perani, Mauro (ed.) 2003a. *I beni culturali ebraici in Italia*. Ravenna: Longo.
- . 2003b. "Le testimonianze archeologiche sugli ebrei in Sardegna", Perani 2003a, 147–163.
- Rosén, Haim B. 1995. "The Language of the Jewish diaspora of Rome". *Hebrew at the crossroads of cultures: From outgoing Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, 23–39. Leuven / Paris: Peeters.
- Rutgers, Leonard V. 1995. *The Jews in late ancient Rome: Evidence of cultural interaction in the Roman diaspora*. Leiden: Brill.
- . 2006. "The Jews of Italy, c. 235–638". *The Cambridge history of Judaism, IV. The late Roman-Rabbinic period*, ed. by Steven T. Katz, 492–508. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

GIANCARLO LACERENZA
(University of Naples "L'Orientale")

Italy: Middle Ages

This entry will summarize the historical development and use of the Hebrew language in Italy from the 9th to the 14th centuries. Distribution and distinctive features of the Hebrew language will be discussed with regard to different literary genres, geographical areas, and time periods.

I. THE LANGUAGE OF THE PAYĀNIM OF THE 9TH–10TH CENTURIES

While for the first centuries of the Common Era Hebrew literacy in Italy apparently remained circumscribed to exclusively epigraphic testimonies, documentary evidence proves that already in 9th-century Apulia, in Southern Italy, Italian authors composed liturgical poems following the model of classical Palestinian *piyyut*, although with some distinctive peculiarities. The apparently sudden emergence of such phenomenon must not have been entirely *ex nihilo*, and reveals close connections between the local communities and Palestine. Nevertheless, the reconstruction of the process of its dissemination and absorption remains unclear. Thus, although its beginnings should probably be ascribed to an earlier period, the apparently abrupt passage from solely epigraphic evidence to liturgical poetry still presents scholars with a complex, puzzling problem (Schirmann 1966:249ff; Fleischer 1983:415–416). The representatives of early Italian *piyyut* in the second half of 9th century include poets like Silano of Venosa (Klar 1974:55–58; Beeri 1997–1998), Shephathiah bar Amittai (Colafemmina 1977–