

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ANCIENT GREEK LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

Volume 2  
G–O

*General Editor*  
Georgios K. Giannakis

*Associate Editors*  
Vit Bubenik  
Emilio Crespo  
Chris Golston  
Alexandra Lianeri  
Silvia Luraghi  
Stephanos Matthaios



BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON  
2014

# Table of Contents

## VOLUME ONE

Introduction .....	vii
List of Contributors .....	xi
Table of Contents Ordered by Thematic Category .....	xv
Transcription, Abbreviations, Bibliography .....	xxi
List of Illustrations .....	xxiii
Articles A–F .....	1

## VOLUME TWO

Transcription, Abbreviations, Bibliography .....	vii
Articles G–O .....	1

## VOLUME THREE

Transcription, Abbreviations, Bibliography .....	vii
Articles P–Z .....	1
Index .....	547

# J

## Jewish Greek

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Scholars have applied the term 'Jewish Greek', not always consistently, to different forms of linguistic expression that arose through the contact of the Greek language with the Jewish world. Here I will only deal with the Greek used by the Jews in the Hellenist-Roman period, leaving out what is more properly defined as 'Judaean-Greek', the Greek spoken by Romaniote Jews and written in the Hebrew alphabet, first attested in late antique times. Ever since the middle of the 20th century, a certain trend of scholarship used the expression 'Jewish Greek' to designate the Greek of the Septuagint. This term was originally applied only to the essentially homogeneous language used for the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek in the 3rd century BCE. Later on some scholars also applied it to the translation of the whole corpus of the Septuagint – including Prophets and Hagiographers – although this was carried out much later and followed different linguistic and translation approaches. Others use 'Jewish Greek' to designate the language of Judaean-Hellenist writers in general, or for the vernacular of most of the Jews of the western Diaspora until the Byzantine age.

### 2. THE RISE OF 'JEWISH GREEK THEORY'

The roots of 'Jewish Greek theory' go way back to the very beginning of studies – as early as the 18th century – on the languages of the Biblical text, and especially on the character of → New Testament Greek. It is Gehman (1951)

in particular who spoke of a 'Jewish Greek dialect' lexically and syntactically permeated with Hebrew and Aramaic elements. This was not merely a language used for the translation of the Bible. It was actually spoken by the Jewish community of Alexandria, or within religious circles. This would explain all its barbarisms, idioms and, in general, divergences from the coeval → Koine Greek. Later on the so-called 'Jewish Greek theory' was further developed, especially as regards the time and texts of the New Testament (Turner 1955; 1965), which, albeit with new distinctions and definitions, still has its upholders even today. Several scholars, however, have questioned the existence of a specific Jewish Greek dialect. Even before Thackeray's influential critical reflections on the existence of a 'Jewish Greek jargon' (1909:25–28), Deissmann, although admitting that Septuagint Greek had Semitic overtones, demonstrated the neutral character of New Testament Greek, where at the most one could find some Semitisms, but not a series of vulgarisms (Deissmann 1901; → Semitic Loanwords in Greek).

### 3. SEPTUAGINT GREEK

As to the language of the Septuagint, many scholars regard it rather as a Koine Greek whose partial Semitization was due to the translation method applied rather than to linguistic reasons. A comparison with coeval Judaean-Egyptian Greek → papyri of the Ptolemaic age seems to confirm this (Moulton 1919; Silva 1980; Lee 1983:11–30). Septuagint Greek is rich in → calques, semantic shifts, loanwords, and syntactic calques, especially in its preference for paratactic rather than

hypotactic constructions (especially in Psalms). The approach of the translators was further influenced not only by the Semitic *Vorlage* but also by the natural local development of the Greek language, which in Egypt was also influenced by Coptic, in Palestine only by Aramaic and Hebrew. ‘Biblical Greek’, according to some scholars, or ‘Synagogue Greek’, according to others, best describes this language, which was certainly used in translation and liturgy, but was not necessarily spoken. Horsley (1989) provides an exhaustive overview of the situation, claiming that the notion of ‘Jewish Greek’ stems from pre-modern linguistic theories. Some more recently recognized variables, Horsley argues, that depend on phenomena such as linguistic interference, → diglossia, and register shifts are enough to explain the peculiarities of the Greek used in Jewish literary sources of the Hellenistic-Roman period, whose only specifically Hebrew traits can be found in some phonological aspects. Some consider these conclusions too radical. To strike a balance among the many valid arguments put forward from both camps, today some scholars prefer not to take an aprioristic stand, especially since new texts, mainly on papyri, are constantly coming to light in Egypt and the Syro-Palestinian region.

#### 4. JUDAEO-HELLENIST WRITERS

Along with the language of the Septuagint – whose stylistic curve has its highest point in the Pentateuch and the lowest in the Tobit – and the New Testament, we also need to take into consideration the language of Judaeo-Hellenist writers. The most important of these writers, if not the majority of them, had a mastery of Greek equal or even superior to that of many of their Gentile contemporaries. This is true, for example, of Caecilius of Calacte, a grammarian and rhetor of the Augustan age who was possibly the foremost expert on Demosthenean orations of his time; of Justus of Tiberias and Nicholas of Damascus; of a number of authors, mostly anonymous, of literary-philosophical syntheses of Biblical tradition and the most diverse expressions of Greek culture, many fragments of which have come down to us (see Denis 1970); of the best known of these, Ezechiel the Tragedian, who applied the styles of Aeschylus to his tragedy on the Exodus; not to mention several historians, and Philo of Alexandria, with his extraordinary although

far from unique mastery of epic, philosophy, and rhetoric. Flavius Josephus is sometimes included among these writers, but his case is different, because he had his works revised before publication to improve their style (*Contra Apionem* 1.9). The language of Josephus’ works is usually of not especially good quality and diverse, a reflection of the different hands of his various collaborators. It has been investigated much less than his subject matter, the most in-depth analysis still being Schmidt (1893). In Josephus as well as in all the other Judeo-Hellenist writers there is not the slightest hint of a special variety of Greek. This is also true of texts on papyri.

#### 5. DIASTRATIC VARIATIONS

There is no doubt, on the other hand, that the sources we have referred to so far adopt – or strive to adopt – a higher variety of language, with some variations in register that can be perceived in papyri, and sometimes also in the Biblical texts. For example, in the book of the Siracides there is a marked difference between Yešua’ ben Sirā’s sophisticated prologue, written directly in Greek, and his translation of the text itself, which is in an evidently lower register, in spite of being by the same hand. The fact is that we do not have sufficient documentation to understand diastratic variations in the Greek used by the Jews in the Hellenistic-Roman period. It is probably naïve to strive to trace the variety and characteristics of their language in the linguistically filtered writings of rhetors, poets, historians and philosophers. In other words, we lack sufficient evidence to analyze the sociolinguistic aspects of the question. The most solid evidence we have is quantitative: we know, not so much from literary texts as from papyri and, even more, from inscriptions, that Greek was the language of the Jews. Indeed, in some milieus the use of Greek can even be regarded as a distinctive Jewish trait.

#### 6. EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

It is worth taking seriously the evidence for the diffusion of Greek in Jewish inscriptions of the western Diaspora and the eastern Mediterranean, including Judaea itself. In the western Diaspora, even without counting the evidence posterior to 400 CE, about 70% of inscriptions are in Greek. In Judaea, in spite of the diffusion

of local languages such as Aramaic and the unchallenged prestige of Hebrew, the percentage is higher than 50%. This is also true of Jerusalem (Lifshitz 1977:459; van der Horst 1991:22–24). In first-century-BCE Rome, Greek is used in almost 80% of Jewish funerary inscriptions (Solin 1983:701–702), while all other classes or groups of the population, including the Orientals, used Latin, whether partially, preferably, or exclusively. In such a vast pool of Greek speakers not native either to Greece or to Asia Minor, and furthermore characterized by well-defined socio-cultural markers, several forms of interference must have developed, which may have even influenced Latin (Rosén 1995). This epigraphic Greek is usually poorly written and is full of spelling mistakes. It does not contain features that could attest to the existence of an exclusively ‘Judaic’ Greek, which only emerges in the early Byzantine period.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Boyd-Taylor, Cameron. 2004. “Linguistic register and Septuagintal lexicography”. In: *Biblical Greek language and lexicography: essays in honor of Frederick W. Danker*, ed. by B. A. Taylor et al., 149–166. Grand Rapids.
- Deissmann, Gustav A. 1901. *Bible studies. Contributions chiefly from papyri and inscriptions to the history of language, the literature and the religion of Hellenistic Judaism and primitive Christianity*. Edinburgh.
- Denis, Albert-Marie. 1970. *Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt graeca. Una cum historicum et auctorum judaeorum hellenistarum fragmentis*. Leiden.
- Gehman, Henry S. 1951. “The Hebraic character of Septuagint Greek,” *Vetus Testamentum* 1:81–90.
- Harl, Marguerite. 1991. “Le renouvellement du lexique des Septante d’après le témoignage des recensions, révisions et commentaires grecs anciens”. In: *7th Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Leuven 1989*, ed. by C. E. Cox, 239–259. Atlanta (repr. in Ead. 1992. *La langue de Japhet. Quinze études sur la Septante et le grec des Chrétiens*, 145–165. Paris).
- Hezser, Catherine. 2001. *Jewish literacy in Roman Palestine*. Tübingen.
- Horsley, Greg H. R. 1989. “The fiction of Jewish Greek”. In: *New documents illustrating early Christianity, 5: linguistic essays*, ed. by Greg H. R. Horsley, 5–40. Sydney.
- van der Horst, Pieter W. 1991. *Ancient Jewish epitaphs. An introductory survey of a millennium of Jewish funerary epigraphy (300 BCE–700 CE)*. Kampen.
- Janse, Mark. 1998. “La koiné au contact des langues sémitiques de la Septante au Nouveau Testament (questions de méthode)”. In: *La koiné grecque antique, III. Les Contacts*, ed. by C. Brixhe, 99–111. Nancy – Paris.
- Lee, John A. L. 1983. *A lexical study of the Septuagint version of the Pentateuch*. Chico.
- Lieberman, Saul. 1942. *Greek in Jewish Palestine. Studies in the life and manners of Jewish Palestine in the II-IV centuries C.E.* New York.
- Lifshitz, Baruch. 1977. “Jérusalem sous la domination romaine. Histoire de la ville depuis la conquête de Pompée jusqu’à Constantin (63 a.C.–325 p.C.)”. In: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt II.8*, 444–489. Berlin – New York.
- Moulton, James H. 1909. “New Testament Greek in the light of modern discovery”. In: *Essays on some biblical questions of the day*, ed. by H.B. Sweete, 462–505. London (repr. in 1991. *The language of the New Testament: classic essays*, ed. by S. E. Porter, 60–97: JSOT).
- Passoni Dell’Acqua, Anna. 1999. “Il Pentateuco dei LXX testimone di istituzioni di età tolemaica”, *Annali di Scienze Religiose* 4:171–199.
- Rosén, Haiim B. 1995. “The language of the Jewish Diaspora of Rome”. In: *Hebrew at the crossroads of cultures. From outgoing Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, 23–39. Leuven.
- . 1997. “The lexical semitism of Septuagint Greek as a reflex of the history of the Hebrew vocabulary: implications concerning lexical diachrony and historical lexicography”. In: *Historical, Indo-European and lexicographical studies. A Festschrift for L. Zgusta on the occasion of his 70th birthday*, ed. by Hans H. Hock, 301–318. Berlin – New York.
- Schmidt, Guilelmus [Wilhelm]. 1893. *De Flavii Iosephi elocutione observationes criticae*. Leipzig.
- Silva, Moisés. 1980. “Bilingualism and the character of Palestinian Greek”, *Biblica* 61:198–219.
- Solin, Heikki. 1983. “Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt, II.29.2, ed. by H. Temporini and H. Haase, 587–789, 1222–1249. Berlin – New York.
- Tcherikover, Victor A., Alexander Fuks and Menahem Stern. 1957–1964. *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum I–III*. Jerusalem – Cambridge.
- Thackeray, Henry St. John. 1909. *A grammar of the Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint, I. Introduction, orthography and accidence*. Cambridge.
- Thumb, Albert. 1901. *Die griechische Sprache im Zeitalter des Hellenismus. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Beurteilung der κοινή*. Strassburg.
- Turner, Nigel. 1955. “The unique character of Biblical Greek”, *Vetus Testamentum* 5:208–213.
- . 1965. “The language of Jesus and his disciples”. In: *Grammatical insights into the New Testament*, 174–188. Edinburgh (repr. in 1991. *The language of the New Testament* cit.).
- Vergote, Jozef. 1938. “Grec biblique”. In: *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible III*, ed. by L. Pirot, 1320–1369. Paris.

DOROTA HARTMAN