Epigraphy and the Greek Language in Hellenistic Palestine[1]

Walter Ameling

1. Introduction

The first to study inscriptions were philologists as exemplified by the earliest corpus of Greek inscriptions, conceived by a scholar whose primary research had been as an editor of Pindar. However, the main bulk of the work on the *Inscriptiones Graecae* made its greatest progress under the *aegis* of Wilamowitz. Since then things have changed: the art of epigraphy is dominated by historians (even though there were and still are some exceptions). The board of editors of the new "*Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae / Palaestinae*" (*CIIP*), for instance, features no scholar whose interests are solely philological.

When the 19th century set out to organize the archives of the past, a *corpus inscriptionum* was one of its first endeavours. The reason for this can be illustrated by the famous *dictum* of the archaeologist Eduard Gerhard: '*monumentorum artis qui unum vidit, nullum vidit; qui millia vidit, unum vidit*'.[2] Gerhard referred to works of art, but this is applicable to every kind of source — written or unwritten. Louis Robert emphasised this for inscriptions: '*Une inscription isolée ne livre qu'une partie de son enseignement; elle ne prend son vrai sens qu'au sein d'une série; plus la série est abondante et variée, plus l'inscription devient intéressante*' — followed at the end by a reference to Gerhard.[3]

We bother with corpora, because a corpus has the potential to enable us to ask questions that transcend the information provided by a solitary inscription. The methodology of *Corpora* has in the meantime evolved so that there is a huge difference between the first volume of *CIG* and the first volume of *CIL* — not to speak of "*La Carie II*", the ultimate corpus. However, even after 200 years of publication of corpora, progress in conceptualisation is always possible, as in the case of the new *CIIP*. To quote from the introduction to its first volume, written by Hannah Cotton and Werner Eck:[4] 'the traditional linguistic divisions and exclusions previously adopted for epigraphic corpora (are) abandoned (in this corpus). Although restricted to the Greco-Roman period (beginning with Alexander and ending with the Arab Conquest of Palestine), the *CIIP*

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[1] A somewhat longer, German version of this paper with less focus on epigraphy and the *CIIP* appears in H. Niehr (ed.), *Die Sprachen in Palaestina während des ersten Jahrtausends v. Chr.* (ZDPV monograph); this paper is also the place to look for remarks on the Septuagint and Jewish Greek literature in their relation to Palestine (or to other parts of the diaspora, especially Egypt). This part was deliberately excluded here, as were the remarks on the language in question, i.e. the character of the Greek current in Hellenistic Palestine.

[2] Often quoted in slightly different versions; the original can be found in the *Annali dell'Instituto* 3, 1831, 111.

[3] L. Robert, in: *L'Histoire et ses méthodes*, Paris 1961, 453f.

[4] *CIIP* I 1, p. v.

(is) to be a comprehensive multilingual Corpus of all inscriptions, ..., encompassing the "sovereign languages", Greek and Latin, alongside the Semitic languages, namely Hebrew, Phoenician and the various Aramaic dialects: Jewish Aramaic, Samaritan, Nabataean, Northern Syriac and Southern Syriac (known also as Christian Palestinian Aramaic), as well as the proto-Arabic languages, Thamudic and Safaitic, and finally Armenian and Georgian.'

Language and its use were of enormous importance in the conception of the *CIIP* so that the editors have furnished us with a tool for examining linguistic usage where literary evidence is practically non-existent.[5] If we muster the texts known to us so far, it becomes clear that the greatest number of inscriptions are, when we put Aramaic ostraca aside, in the "sovereign languages" of Greek and Latin. By the end of 2014, the *CIIP* database contained 13,975 inscriptions: 7,717 in Greek, 4,731 in Jewish script (ostraca included), 862 in Latin — and less than 100 in each of the other languages mentioned above. Language, then, is one of the principal characteristics of the *CIIP* — and a splendid illustration for Millar's Near East as a place of linguistic variety and choice[6] — because we cannot assume that the numbers just mentioned represent the real ethnic or linguistic composition of the population itself.

Whereas Latin was an imperial language used in specific contexts and restricted to places like *coloniae*, Greek had become much more than an imperial language as is proved by the mere number of inscriptions. It certainly became, epigraphically, the dominant language during the first six centuries of the common era — and most probably it was also the most widely spoken languge from the third century on. How did that happen? Part of the answer goes back to the Hellenistic period because when the Romans arrived, Greek had already spread to every part of the region.

The arrival and diffusion of the the Greek language in Palestine had been a long process, since Greeks — mostly as mercenaries — had been present as far back as Myceneaen times or at the latest during the dark ages. Let me only recall: the mentioning of '*yawan*' in the Bible; the suggestion of a garrison of Greek mercenaries at Mesad Hashavyahu; the brother of the poet Alcaeus; and the Attic mercenary, who made his fortune in Akko in the 4th cent. B.C.[7] Greek, especially Attic currency was widely accepted in Palestine with Greek letters first employed on imitation Attic coins showing the letters ΑΘΕ(ναίων). However, the many bungled versions of these three letters show

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[5]   Since I omit a discussion of the Septuagint and Jewish literature in Greek, let me just remark that I find it methodologically almost impossible to pinpoint the origin of most translations and of most — biblical and non-biblical — books written in Greek.

[6]   The same linguistic variety can be found in the papyri, H. Cotton, W. Cockle, F. Millar, *JRS* 85, 1995, 214. Cf. already Meleagros of Gadara, *AP* 7, 419: ἀλλ᾽ εἰ μὲν Σύρος ἐσσί, Σαλάμ, εἰ δ᾽ οὖν σύ γε Φοῖνιξ, +ναιδιος+, εἰ δ᾽ Ἕλλην, χαῖρε, τὸ δ᾽ αὐτὸ φράσον (on the Phoenician, see F. Briquel-Chatonnet, *RSF* 19, 1991, 11f.).

[7]   Mezad Hashavyahu: J. Naveh, *IEJ* 12, 1962, 89ff.; Alcaeus F 350 Voigt; Ascalon is mentioned in F 48 Voigt; if F 350, 4-7 is also F 59 b, then a passing remark of a scholiast might be testimony to this brother's presence at the siege of Jerusalem, ἀν(τὶ τοῦ) ἱεροσυ[λ... (cf. S. Luria, *Acta Ant.* 8, 1960, 265f.); on the Attic mercenary see Isaeus, or. 4, 7. On the coins in general O. Tal, in: W.E. Metcalf (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, Oxford 2012, 252ff. (and note that the word drachma is borrowed in Esr 2, 69; Neh 7, 69ff.: M. Hengel, *Judaica et Hellenistica*, Tübingen 1996, 16).

that they were used not because their owners knew what they meant, but rather as a visual identification mark. All of this implies the presence of some Greek speakers in Palestine, albeit not the actual use of the Greek language. Even though Palestine and its inhabitants triggered restricted ethnographic interest among the Greeks, one cannot doubt a continuous presence of limited numbers of the latter in the country just as one has to assume that a small number of people from Palestine also came to Asia Minor, to the Aegaean area or even to mainland Greece itself.[8] This changed with Alexander the Great when both Macedonians and Greeks arrived to stay in this area, importing their language with them, with the language outstaying the political dominance of the Greeks.[9] In this paper, I will attempt to trace the developments in the following steps: *poleis* and administration (2), Judaea (3), and Jerusalem (4).[10]

2. *Poleis* and administration

Alexander the Great left a garrison in Gaza, probably made up of Macedonians or Greeks.[11] If we judge by his arrangements in other parts of his empire, the administration of "Coele Syria" would have been left in the hands of Macedonians and Greeks as well.[12] A Macedonian military colony was instituted in Samaria — perhaps already in the time of Alexander, but certainly under Perdikkas.[13] The wars of the diadochi brought soldiers and settlers to the land. Among the Hellenistic foundations to be counted are: Apollonia, Arethusa, Anthedon, Philoteria and Pella and more prominent [?] than, for instance,

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[8]   Unfortunately, this is not really attested. Sardeis, Sepharad, is mentioned in the bilingual *KAI* 260 and in the prophet *Obadiah* 5, 20 — but this might be a late book, written in Seleucid times (W. Kornfeld, *Mélanges bibliques ... André Robert*, Paris, 1957, 180ff.; W. Rudolph, *Joel-Amos-Obadja-Jona*, Gütersloh 1971, 314ff.; H.W. Wolff, *Obadja und Jona*, Neukirchen 1977, 47f.; P.R. Raabe, *Obadiah*, New York 1996, 266ff.).— Clearchus featured Aristotle as a participant in his dialogue περὶ ὕπνου and this (fictitious?) Aristotle reports meeting a Jew in Asia Minor, Clearchus, F 6 Wehrli (M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, Jerusalem 1974, I 49ff. no. 15).

[9]   On the Greek language in Palestine see the earlier studies by G. Mussies, in: S. Safrai, M. Stern (edd.), *The Jewish People in the First Century*, Amsterdam 1976, 1067ff.; J. Barr, in: *The Cambridge History of Judaism* II, Cambridge 1989, 79ff.; on the time of the empire, see J. Fitzmyer, *CBQ* 32, 1970, 501ff.; H. Rosén, in: G. Neumann, J. Untermann (edd.), *Die Sprachen im römischen Reich der Kaiserzeit*, Bonn 1980, 215ff.; P. van der Horst, in: J.J. Collins, G.E. Sterling (edd.), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, Notre Dame 2001, 154ff.

[10] These sections show that the greater part of our evidence relates to the realms of Jewish history (or belongs to regions that came under Jewish sway in the course of time; cf. F. Millar, *Roman Near East 31 BC — AD 337*, Cambridge 1993, 342ff. on the range of Jewish settlement and its changes).

[11] Arr. *An*. 2, 27, 7. Gaza was resettled ἐκ τῶν περιοίκων, but these could not make the city into a φρούριον ἐς τὸν πόλεμον.

[12] Cf. A. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander* I, Oxford 1980, 224f. on the scant hints; H. Berve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage*, München 1926, I 258f.; W. Heckel, *Who's Who in the Age of Alexander the Great*, Oxford 2006, 166, s. v. Menon (1).

[13] Eus. *Chron.* p. 197; 199 Karst; for the context Curt. Ruf. 4, 8, 9f.; G. Cohen, *The Hellenistic Settlements in Syria, the Red Sea Basin, and North Africa*, Berkeley 2006, 275f.

Dion, Hippos and Gadara in modern Transjordan.[14] Unfortunately, we can give no date for most of these foundations, but some of them must be very early and must have been instituted by Antigonos Monophthalmos. In later times, all of them were regarded as πόλεις, including even places like Sykaminonpolis, Boukolonpolis, Krokodilopolis. How far the territory of these πόλεις extended can be illustrated by the fact that Ekron and Gazara became only a part of Judaea in the 2nd cent. B.C.

Most of these new "cities" had already been established long before the Greeks came and each had acquired its status as a πόλις at a time when the majority of the population was still "indigenous" and retaining its own language. However, the transformation of a city into a a πόλις — recognized as such by the authorities — necessarily implied a Greek constitution, Greek laws, an ἐκκλησία as well as Greek methods of administration — but all this has to be expressed in the Greek language. Greek had to be used in important contexts even though the majority of the population may still have been raised speaking another tongue. However, the importance of Greek must have at least induced the upper classes to learn that language if they aspired to gain political participation.[15]

Cities still had some chance for manifesting some measure of autonomy. Coins employed Greek iconography (sometimes also with Greek lettering),[16] and the local weights were marked with Greek letters.[17] These everyday items incised with Greek lettering show that the use of Greek proliferated down into society and was not restricted to formal political business.

The new rulers were Greek and their administration spoke Greek[18] so that to communicate with them required the use of that language. The important question is, then, how far this proliferation was needed if you lived outside of the Greek cities and the military settlements?, Was it only the upper echelon of the society who needed to understand and speak this foreign language — or were there others who used it on a daily basis? To begin with an important point: we never hear of interpreters.[19] The

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[14] See in general E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. - A.D.135)*, rev. ed., Edinburgh 1986, II 50f.; Cohen (n. 13) 223ff.; O. Tal, in: in: L. Grabbe, O. Lipschits (edd.), *Judah between East and West*, Edinburgh 2011, 242ff. — Greek cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem: 2 Macc 6, 8.

[15] Cf. the remarks by H. Cotton, in: C. Frevel (ed.), *Medien im antiken Palästina*. Tübingen 2005, 159 on the (Roman) provincialisation of Arabia: 'Some of the citizens ... may have known Greek before. It is hardly likely that a polis status would be conferred without this prerequisite.'

[16] This started mostly in the 3rd cent., reached a first peak under the Seleucids and was "rejuvenated" after the Romans had liberated the cities; the material is in all the corpora (*BMC*; *RPC* I; *RPC* Suppl. I p. 46f.). Jewish coins had Greek legends from Alexander Iannaeus on, Herod was the first to use no other language — when he used legends (*RPC* I 678ff.).

[17] *CIIP* II 1732; 2135; III 2257f. (Jaffa); 2298-2300 (Ashdod); 2358 (Askalon?); 2438 (Kh. Lakijah); 2582f. (Askalon); 2634f. (from the South Coast) — to quote only the examples published in *CIIP*.

[18] Ptolemaic administration: R. Bagnall, *The Administration of the Ptolemaic Possessions Outside Egypt*, Leiden 1976, 11ff.; Seleucid administration: L. Capdetrey, *Le pouvoir séleucide*, Rennes 2007, 248ff.

[19] C. Wiotte-Franz, *Hermeneus und Interpres*, Saarbrücken 2001, 61: 'Das Schweigen über das Dolmetscherwesen in den griechischen Quellen hat sicherlich seinen Grund im Vordringen

Ptolemies simply demanded that all farm animals be declared to the οἰκονόμος within 60 days of the publication of a πρόσταγμα (*COrdPtol* 21) viz., after allowing for it to be read out — and as regards fines one is referred to another document, that is to another Greek document. Even the comarchs and the publicans of single villages comprised its bureaucracy and the administrative use of Greek letters.[20] Even a part of the jurisdiction may have been perfomed by Greek-speaking δικασταί in accord with Greek law.[21]

All the Seleucid texts that address their subjects were written in Greek, and the subjects addressed their rulers in the same language.[22] The chancellery of the Seleucids similarly communicated with their subjects in Coele Syria and Palestine as it did with the other subjects. This was in the complicated Greek style of royal letters which were expected to be understood down to the last nuance.[23] The publication of royal decisions on stone suggest that they could be read and understood by a large enough number of men. Sometimes, the motivation of a decision is meant to give an impression of the royal ideas and the provision for their subjects:[24] necessary and suitable only when read. We have no real idea how many of the royal decisions were not only published on stone, but even exhibited in a temporary form although we do not know if every one of them was published in every city or even in every sanctuary of the country (as Hannah Cotton suggested to me regarding a special case). Greek was the language of administration employed by the Ptolemies and the Seleucids[25] and in Capdetray's formulation: 'les Séleucides surent imposer un monolinguisme du pouvoir dans l'acceptation évidente du plurilinguisme des populations soumises à ce pouvoir.'[26]

Greek necessarily prospered because a large part of the administration in Palestine was carried out by Greeks, but also because Greek soldiers and their families were a

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der griechischen Sprache als Verkehrs- und Verwaltungssprache … Ein Grieche und insbesondere ein Mitglied der führenden Schicht in Politik, Verwaltung und Wirtschaft … (konnte erwarten), daß überall Griechisch verstanden wurde. Der Nicht-Grieche … sollte sich gegebenenfalls selbst um einen Dolmetscher bemühen.' — Josephus as interpreter of Titus (*BJ* 5, 361; 6, 97; cf. 6, 327) is a different case. LXX *Esth* 11 refers to a literary translation (ἣν ἔφασαν ... ἑρμηνευκέναι Λυσίμαχον Πτολεμαίου τῶν ἐν Ιερουσαλημ).

[20] For the expectation of a brisk reaction to a royal decree, cf. *COrdPtol* 22, 1ff.; 37ff. (πρὸς τὸν ἐν [ἑ]κάστηι ὑπαρχείαι [οἰκο]νόμον [τὸν ἀπεσ]ταλμένον ἐν ἡμέ[ρ]αις ξ', ἀφ' ἧς ἂν ἡμ[έ]ρας τὸ [πρόσταγμ]α ἐκτεθῆι — πρὸ[ς τὸν οἰκον]όμον τὸν ἐ[ν ἑκάστηι] ὑπαρχείαι καθεστηκότα, ἀφ' ἧς ἂν ἡμέρα[ς] τὸ πρόσταγμα ἐκτεθῆι, ἐν ἡμέραις κ').

[21] *CPJ* I 1 (*PCairZen* 59003, 18); Edgar commented: 'Greek judge with jurisdiction in cases in which members of the Greek community were concerned', but Bagnall (n. 18) 21 thought of wider competences.

[22] *CIIP* III 2265: παρὰ [τῶν ἐν τῶι τῆς Ἰαμνείας] | [λιμένι Σιδ]ωνίων (i.e. a non-Greek group) ἐδόθη τὸ κατακεχωρισμέ[νον ὑπόμνημα]. The people of Samaria addressed the Seleucids in Jos. *AJ* 12, 260f. (if authentic).

[23] Mussies (n. 9), 1056.

[24] W. Ameling, 'Seleukidische Religionspolitik in Koile-Syrien und Phönizien nach der neuen Inschrift von Maresha', in: S. Kreuzer et al. (edd.), *Die Septuaginta — Entstehung, Sprache, Geschichte*, Tübingen 2012, 337ff.

[25] A. Kuhrt, S. Sherwin-White, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, London 1993, 38f. discuss the possibility of the use of non-Greek languages by the Seleucids; on the diffusion of Greek in Uruk s. B. Funk, *Uruk zur Seleukidenzeit*, Berlin 1984, 40ff.

[26] Capdetrey (n. 18) 344.

significant part of the population in the different poleis.[27] In fact, every native of Palestine who aspired to be employed as a mercenary had to join a Greek-speaking military force.[28]

The Zenon-papyri give us a first impression about the depth of this phenomenon. At Marisa alone they mention eight Greeks, six of them public functionaries working in different levels of the administration — while even at the level of villages there is a magistrate called Alexandros.[29] Let me only mention the existence of an ἐπὶ τῆς λιβανωτικῆς (*PSI* VI 628, 3f.) to give an idea of the degree of differentiation reached by members of the Greek-speaking Ptolemaic administration. Furthermore, there are also the κάτοικοι, semi-officials, living sometimes not only in Greek cities, but also in environments less immersed in that culture. We thus find a Cnidian and a Macedonian in the Ammanitis.[30]

Alongside local administration, we also encounter visiting/itinerant Greeks who were mostly private representatives or agents of the Ptolemaic upper classes — and in later times certainly also that under the Seleucids. — They oversaw transactions on behalf of their masters, inspecting and overseeing their properties in Palestine. Zenon is the best known example of this kind of man, representing the διοικητής Apollonios, who had a vineyard in Baitanata. The latter was inspected by a Greek Glaukias and managed by a Greek Melas.[31] However, on his journey, Zenon encountered Apollodoros and Dionysodoros, simply specified as οἱ παρὰ Καλλικράτους (*PCairZen* 59006). Moreover, this Callicrates is certainly the famous Samian while the former were his representatives in Palestine.

Greek spread because of the exceptional growth of Greek bureaucracy alongside the presence of Greek (and Greek-speaking) soldiers. Even people who were not native speakers had an incentive to use this language although some of them may have employed a Greek secretary of their own.[32] However this is not the account in its entirety, as shown by the famous story of Joseph, the Tobiad and Ptolemaic tax-farmer. There Joseph achieved his post because he had made a *bella figura* at the Alexandrian court so that we have to infer that those interested in making transactions with the state

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[27]   Let me quote, *honoris causa*, the funerary epigram *CIIP* III 2482 (Gaza), written at the end of the 3rd cent. B.C. (till today the oldest Greek epigram from Palestine): the father, Charmadas, was a Cretan mercenary, his son-in-law came from Aitolia, and both were in the service of the Ptolemies.

[28]   M. Launey, *Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques*, Paris 1950, 1232ff.; L. Grabbe, *A History of Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, Edinburgh 2008, II 195f.; 221f.

[29]   *PCairZen* 59015 with V. Tcherikover, *Mizraim* 4/5, 1937, 42ff; V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, Philadelphia 1966, 65f. – On the Zenon papyri and Palestine: Tcherikover 1937, 9ff.; *CPJ* I p. 115-8; X. Durand, *Des Grecs en Palestine au IIIe siècle av. J. C.*, Paris 1997.

[30]   *CPJ* I 1 with Tcherikover 1937, 52. The designation as Macedonian might be taken as a status description.

[31]   *PLond* VII 1948; *PSI* VI 554; 594.

[32]   Toubias, for instance, is thought to have had a Greek secretary, because the handwriting of some papyri points to a professionally-trained scribe. M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*, Tübingen 1973, 110 quotes especially *CPJ* I 2; 4; 5.

had to go to Alexandria itself.[33] For anyone who wished to profit from the enormous economic possibilities opened under the Hellenistic monarchies, knowledge of the Greek language was of paramount importance.

Marriages between Greeks and non-Greeks helped the language to spread. This phenomenon was common enough to be mentioned in one of the Ptolemaic decrees.[34] Even those with a Greek name and Greek patronymic venerated Hadad and Atargitis while the cults of Sarapis and Isis were introduced into Palestine by Greeks — so that all these cultic activities would have taken place in Greek.[35] Personal contacts with the administration, its officials, soldiery and merchants were also a reason to learn Greek. Although its use may have been confined to particular situations and spheres with Greek functioning only as a secondary language, but through marriages, *poleis* and Greek garrisons these all meant that Greek gradually became a primary language.

Aramaic was the dominant language in 4th century Idumaea as attested by hundreds of published (and even more unpublished) ostraka, [36] but Greek became visibly important from the 3rd century on.[37] Greek was used not only in communication within the Ptolemaic administration but also in contexts that were of a strictly private nature, in places not intended to be viewed by strangers and passers-by. The famous tombs of Marisa had paintings in Greek style with inscriptions in the Greek language[38] lacking inscriptions in Aramaic, Phoenician and other language. The personal names in these texts present a mixture of Greek and non-Greek, mostly Phoenician, names (some of them, e.g. Ptolemy, or Callicrates, point to Egypt). More important than these long-since published burials, is a complex of graves discovered at Kh. Zaʿaqūqa, comprising: loculi with 20 graffiti, naming 33 Greek names — and indicating a specific date (272/1 B.C).[39] Again, each inscription is in Greek and once more there are no non-Greek inscriptions — not even non-Greek personal names. Were these people Greek settlers? We have here at least one important proof that the use of Greek was not confined to the nuclear settlements and poleis, because these burials belonged to a village — or even to a great, single estate.

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[33]   Bagnall (n. 18), 230.

[34]   *COrdPtol* 22, 49ff.: τῶν δὲ στρατευομένων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν κατοικούντων ἐν Συρίαι καὶ Φοινίκηι, ὅσοι συνοικοῦσιν γυναιξὶ λαικαῖς, [ἃς] ἀνειλήφασιν, μὴ ἀπογραφέσθωσαν.

[35]   *SEG* 18, 622 (Ptolemais): [Ἀ]δάδωι καὶ Ἀταργάτει θεοῖς ἐπηκόοις Διόδοτος Νεοπτολέμου ὑπὲρ αὑτοῦ καὶ Φιλίστας τῆς γυναικὸς καὶ τῶν τέκνων τὸν βωμὸν κατ’ εὐχήν. Jeanne et Louis Robert, *Bulletin Épigraphique*. 1970, 400 date the text to the first half of the 2nd cent. B.C — *SEG* 8, 95 (Samaria): Ἡγήσανδρος, Ξεναρχὶς καὶ τὰ παιδία Σαράπι, Ἴσι.

[36]   Cf. the short summary by A. Kloner, in: Grabbe, Lipschits (n. 14) 158ff.

[37]   A. Kloner, in: P. McKechnie, Ph. Guillaume (edd.), *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World*, Leiden 2008, 181: ‘Greek presumably reached Marissa directly from Alexandria, and it is amazing how quickly it became the dominant language used in the daily life of Idumaea.’

[38]   Most famously *OGIS* 593: Ἀπολλοφάνης Σεσμαίου ἄρξας τῶν ἐν Μαρίσῃ Σιδωνίων ἔτη τριάκοντα καὶ τρία καὶ νομισθεὶς πάντων τῶν καθ’ αὑτὸν χρηστότατος καὶ φιλοικειότατος ἀπέθανεν δὲ βιώσας ἔτη ἑβδομήκοντα καὶ τέσσαρα ΕΤ -. Cf. in general: J. Peters, H. Thiersch, *Painted Tombs in the Necropolis of Marissa (Marēshah)*, London 1905, 37ff. (new edition by D.M. Jacobson, London 2007).

[39]   Kloner (n. 37) 179ff.

Roughly two generations after Alexander, the private use of Greek was not only first witnessed in burials. It is perhaps significant that the first datable Greek inscription from Palestine is a Greek-Edomite bilingual text from around the same time, i.e. 277 B.C.[40] It is an ostrakon belonging to an Edomite banker, Kos-yada‘ bin Hanna’, also supplying us with the first Greek loanword in Aramaic: κάπηλος, here not in the sense of 'merchant', but of 'money-lender'.[41] The obligee is named Nikeratos, son of Sobbathos, incidentally with a Semitic patronymic though himself bearing a Greek name (or, at least, used a Greek name). This Nikeratos must have been born around 300 B.C.

Bilingual texts are — with the exception of the Jerusalem ossuaries — relatively rare before the Christian era. I will therefore at least mention the Greco-Aramaean text from Tel Dan from the late 3rd or early 2nd century.[42] It does not come from Idumaea, but from a sanctuary far from the nearest Greek or even semi-Greek city. We do not know whether the dedicant originally spoke Aramaic or Greek — but at least he assumed a readership conversant with both languages,[43] which would in fact be true whether his native tongue was Greek or Aramaic.

Interestingly, the use of Greek was not confined to cities,[44] and this makes it much easier to understand, how Greek gained an influence even where it was not the native language. The existence of loan-words, not only the case of κάπηλος, but perhaps even the pre-Alexandrian στατήρ (*CIIP* I 1, 615) presupposes the novelty of their use since the designation was simply adopted into their own language. The same is the case with the musical instruments that had come with the Greeks and whose names were transferred into Aramaic (Dan 3, 5).[45] The use of coins and musical-instruments was not limited to cities. It is unfortunate that we have no idea how and when most of the loan words entered Hebrew and Aramaic, but a very large number can be found in the Talmud and Mishnah.[46]

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[40]   L.T. Geraty, *BASOR* 220, 1975, 55ff. (Khirbet el-Kom).

[41]   A bit differently is A. Wasserstein, *SCI* 14, 1995, 117: 'It is an interesting fact that what may well be the first documented occurence of a Greek loanword in any Aramaic dialect happens to be the word νόμος. The word appears in an Idumaean-Aramaic marriage contract dated by the editors in 176 B.C.'

[42]   *SEG* 26 1684: Θεῶι | τῶι ἐν Δανοις | Ζώϊλος εὐχήν. ndr zyls l.

[43]   F. Millar, *Rome, the Greek World and the East* III, Chapel Hill 2006, 31 on the confusing possibilities.

[44]   The contrary was considered by Rosén (n. 9) 237 in a very guarded way: 'Es ist daher nicht ausgeschlossen, daß die Vermutung nicht ganz unzutreffend ist, bei der Beurteilung der Verbreitungsbedingungen des Griechischen und Aramäischen sei eine Unterscheidung zwischen der städtischen und ländlichen Bevölkerung in Erwägung zu ziehen.'

[45]   Fitzmyer (n. 9) 509.— Cf. Hengel (n. 32) 112f. n. 17 (these designations belong to the Aramaic part of *Daniel*, which means that they need not have been adopted in Palestine).

[46]   S. Krauss, *Griechische und Lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum*, Hildesheim 1898/9 (esp. II 623ff.); S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Life and Manners of Jewish Palestine in the II-IV centuries C.E.*, New York 1942; Schürer (n. 14) II 53-74; D. Sperber, *Greek in Talmudic Palestine*, Ramat Gan 2012. Cf. Hengel (n. 32) 113 commenting on the areas of especially numerous loan words: 'Es handelte sich um das Militärwesen, die staatliche Verwaltung und Rechtsprechung, Handel und Gewerbe, Kleidung und Hausgeräte und nicht zuletzt um den Bausektor.' Rosén (n. 9) 233.

More interesting is another phenomenon: Aramaic ceases to be used in writing.[47] Instead, we find first traces of Greek literature, mostly in the coastal cities: Ascalon will have been the most important one, and Antiochos of Ascalon was easily the most important intellectual from Palestine.[48] This, of course, reflects more the habits of writing than the spoken language — and we cannot conclude that Aramaic ceased to be spoken: but it would be astonishing if the habits of the written language had not invaded the realms of the spoken one — the practical use of Greek writing was at least one more reason to learn the language, rather than to continue with Aramaic.

For the 3rd century B.C., there are some indications of a widespread, growing use of the Greek language. However, these are — and always will be — mere indications. We have almost no papyri belonging to this period, Zenon being merely a chance find. Even when it became more important to write in Greek rather than in Aramaic, this did not change the fact that Hellenistic cities produced far less inscriptions than the cities of imperial or late antiquity, while the rural regions always produce less inscriptions than cities and towns. The survival of any Greek texts is therefore more astonishing than the fact that they are relatively few.

3. 1. *Judaea*

The question of the use of Greek language in Palestine is most frequently identified with the question of the Greek language in Judaea, even though Judaea is just a small part of Palestine. Apparently, this is still a much contested point that linguistic change did not spread in Judaea. Until ca. 300, Hebrew was still a spoken language, but it was gradually replaced by Aramaic, only retaining its value as a language of ritual and religious texts. If we express it differently: following the year 300, the spoken language ceased to be an important identity marker.[49] An Aramaic-speaking Jew who by metamorphosis became a Greek-speaking Jew did not necessarily change his religious beliefs nor necessarily adopt every kind of Greco-Hellenistic identity.[50] On the other hand, it seems that Greek did not establish itself as a language of religious discourse — even if some books were written in it and others were translated for religious use.

Being part of the Ptolemaic kingdom meant for the Jews of Judaea that the means of exchange with Egypt was easier so that many Jews emigrated to Egypt. There they may have found fellow Jews, even though there are no longer sources attesting to a Jewish presence in 4th century Egypt possibly due to the simple result of their loss. A Greek-speaking diaspora did develop with some Jews remigrating to Palestine.[51] Others

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47   Hengel (n. 32) 110.
48   Hengel (n. 32) 158f. with the pertinent sources— but we should note that the Phoenician cities and Gadara were much more productive in this regard.
49   S. Schwartz, in: C. Bakhos (ed.), *Ancient Judaism in its Hellenistic Context*, Leiden 2005, 53ff.
50   One might remember the apocalyptic writings from Egypt, which were more often than not written in Greek, even though they wanted Greek rule (and culture) in Egypt to end.
51   Simon the Cyrenian is the most prominent example, at least among Christians conversant with the gospels (*Mk* 15, 21); the Jerusalem ossuaries provide a large number of further examples, inter alia another Cyrenian, *CIIP* I 1, 170.

migrated to the west, for instance to Delos,[52] to mainland Greece, and Italy, where knowledge of Greek was paramount.

For almost two centuries Judaea was part of a state with a Greek-speaking upper class and a Greek administration. The same set of circumstances applied to them as to other peoples in Palestine, viz. the need to work and function in a Greek world.[53] I have no doubts that the Ptolemies and the Seleucids corresponded in Greek with the dignitaries in the city, and that not only the Hellenized group of people favouring an education in the gymnasium was able to reply. There was some kind of self-hellenization which resulted in Greek names and the experiment to convert the inhabitants of Jerusalem into Ἀντιοχεῖς, i.e. the citizens of a Greek polis.[54] Even some time after Antiochus IV, at least a part of the Jewish upper class, perhaps even the majority of the Sanhedrin, were pro-Greek.[55]

Accordingly, Greek did not vanish under the early Hasmonaeans: it stayed even during the times which were — at least in the Jewish tradition[56] — devoted to anti-pagan, anti-Greek politics. There seems to be some evidence for both languages and alphabets being used and understood by a large group of people. We know of a series of boundary stones from Gezer/Gazara: nine with a Hebrew or Aramaic text — 'land of Gezer' (גזר תחם); eight with the Greek Ἀλκίου, another with the name of Archelaos in the genitive, and one with the name Alexas.[57] The Jews defined their new settlement at Gezer in their own language, but for the surrounding territory belonging to Greeks (?), Greek was used — sometimes on the same boundary-stone. It was evidently expected that both sides understood both alphabets and languages. Even Pompey still found cities, that he identified as Greek and whose freedom he restored.[58]

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[52]   We have Samaritans in Delos — with their well known inscriptions (L. Boffo, *Iscrizioni greche e latine per lo studio della Bibbia*, Florence 1987, 47ff. no. 2/3), but also non-Jews, e.g. from Ascalon, *IDélos* 2305: Διὶ Οὐρίωι καὶ Ἀστάρτηι Παλαιστινῆι Ἀφροδίτηι Οὐρανίαι, θεοῖς ἐπηκόοις, Δάμων Δημητρίου Ἀσκαλωνίτης σωθεὶς ἀπὸ πειρατῶν, εὐχήν. οὐ θεμιτὸν δὲ προσάγειν αἴγειον, ὑικόν, βοὸς θηλείας.

[53]   Hengel (n. 32) 111 thought that the high priest and the financial administration of the temple at Jerusalem had 'einwandfrei griechischsprechende und -schreibende Sekretäre'.

[54]   W. Ameling, *BZ* 47, 2003, 117ff. on the Ἀντιοχεῖς — 2 *Macc* 6, 7 talks about the cult of Dionysius in Jerusalem: the Jews were forced κίσσους ἔχοντες πομπεύειν τῷ Διονύσῳ. This was elucidated by a mostly forgotten article by O. Kern, *Archiv f. Religionsgeschichte* 22, 1923/4, 198f., who referred to Lydus, *de mensibus* 4, 53 and to Hippolytos, *de Christo et Antichristo* 49: ἔγραψε (scil. Antiochus IV) ψήφισμα βωμοὺς πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν τιθέντας ἐπιθύσειν καὶ κισσοῖς ἐστεφανωμένους πομπεύειν τῷ Διονύσῳ, τοὺς δὲ μὴ βουλομένους ὑποτάσσεσθαι ... Kern associates this detail, which need not be doubted, with Iason of Cyrene, which would explain the resemblance with 2 *Macc*.

[55]   E.g. Schürer (n. 14) I 177.

[56]   T. Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome*, Leiden 2001, 75f. remarks that the Greeks and Romans did not share this memory.

[57]   R. Reich, *EJ* 31, 1981, 48ff.; R. Reich, *IEJ* 40, 1990, 43ff.; Boffo (n. 52) 1987, 122f. Cf. http://www.bpnews.net/BPnews.asp?ID=37929.

[58]   Perhaps Schürer (n. 14) II 12 ('in the Hellenistic cities Greek culture was restored by Pompey and Gabinius') is a bit off the mark: Greek culture was not destroyed in the Hellenistic cities, and was therefore not to be restored.

Most of the Hasmonean (and Herodian) soldiers spoke Greek, so that their officers had to speak that language too. It is thus no surprise to find Greek on many sling bullets.[59] This presupposes a distribution of Greek speakers in the country and not only in the residences of the respective dynasties. Everywhere we look, we find everyday objects associated with the Greek language: ceramics with incised or painted Greek graffiti, sling bullets with Greek inscriptions, game counters which not only carried pictures, but also short Greek inscriptions to explain them.[60] Games with Greek counters are as basic as it gets — short of names, of course.

We find Greek names in the Judaean population from the earliest times of the Hasmoneans both in their family and among their supporters.[61] The corpus of personal names compiled by Tal Ilan gives us some possibilities to follow onomastic changes among Jews.[62] According to Ilan, 11.8 % of the male population and 15.9 % of the female population carried names connected with Alexander, the Ptolemies or the Seleucids — but this is, of course, more a proof of political or cultural influence than of linguistic proficiency. The total number of Greek names is far larger: 29.6 % of known names are Greek carried by 14.5 % of known people. These numbers lead Ilan to two superficially conflicting conclusions: 'This indicates a broad, rather than a superficial knowledge of Greek personal names'; and: 'obviously these figures also indicate the relatively small influence Greek names had on the entire population.' However, since Greek names did not usually reflect family tradition or the traditions of the environment, their choice of such a name is more significant than the choice of a traditional name. The use of translated names — Dositheos, Theodoros, etc. — is a further indication of the benefits expected from the use of the Greek.

3. 2. Jerusalem

Let us look, lastly, at Jerusalem. It is presupposed by Martin Hengel that there were Greek schools — viz. private schools — in Jerusalem (and elsewhere) from Ptolemaic times on.[63] He had no basis in the sources for this argument, but there is certainly some probability for this,[64] since Greek was widely used in Jerusalem. Moreover, Hengel

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[59]   e. g. *CIIP* II 2137; III 2274-8.

[60]   e. g. *CIIP* I 2, 1115; II 2145; III 2396.

[61]   Wasserstein (n. 41) 118.

[62]   While it is true that the chronological limit of Ilan's work is 200 A.D., most of her onomastic material comes from earlier times (especially the Jerusalem ossuaries and Josephus), and the most important developments were completed by the 1st cent. A.D., Hengel 1973, 114ff. — On Ilan's numbers and interpretation, see her *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity* I, Tübingen 2002, 10f.

[63]   Hengel (n. 7), 31. Much more explicit is S. Kreuzer, in: M. Karrer, W. Kraus (edd.), *Septuaginta Deutsch. Erläuterungen* I, Stuttgart 2010, 12 A. 24: 'Für Jerusalem wird man nicht nur die Kenntnis homerischer und anderer griechischer Traditionen sowie verschiedener Philosophen annehmen müssen, sondern — nicht zuletzt als Voraussetzung für diese Kenntnis – auch einen ähnlichen Büchermarkt, wie er für die vom Hellenismus erfassten Städte bezeugt ist.'

[64]   His argument hinges on the idea of a large part of the Septuagint having been translated in Jerusalem — and a large part of the Greek OT works having been written in Palestine.

guessed that 10-15 % of the population of Jerusalem and its surroundings were native Greek speakers, and that an even larger was number were bilingual.[65] While these numbers are only an educated guess (and one might argue not only for a lower, but also for a higher percentage), they give at least an indication — and we have to look for the reasons behind Hengel's suggestion, using either literary or epigraphical sources.[66]

Literary sources tell us about pilgrimages made by diaspora Jews to Jerusalem. Literary sources tell us about the temple tax, which was brought by delegations having been collected at pre-arranged centres in the administrative districts where diaspora Jews lived.[67] Josephus tells us that strangers were banned from entering the balustrade and forecourt surrounding the sacred precinct warned by inscriptions set into the balustrade itself (*BJ* 5,194, cf. 6,126; *AJ* 15,417, cf. 12,145). Two of these have been found (*CIIP* I 1, 2) and both are in Greek. Literary sources tell us about the fact that some diaspora Jews stayed long enough for synagogues to be established for their use (*Acts* 2, 9ff.). This, too, is reflected in the inscriptions: the famous Theodotus inscription (*CIIP* I 1, 9) recording the building of a synagogue: εἰς ἀνά[γ]νωσ[ι]ν νόμου καὶ εἰς [δ]ιδαχ[ὴ]ν ἐντολῶν, καὶ τ[ὸ]ν ξενῶνα, κα[ὶ τὰ] δώματα καὶ τὰ χρησ[τ]ήρια τῶν ὑδάτων, εἰς καταλύμα τοῖς [χ]ρήζουσιν ἀπὸ τῆς ξέ[ν]ης. Theodotus expected foreign pilgrims, for whose use a synagogue had to be built, and I firmly believe that he envisaged the ἀνάγνωσις νόμου καὶ διδαχὴ ἐντολῶν in Greek — and not in any other language.[68]

But the interest of this last text goes beyond the confirmation of something we already know. The founder of the synagogue was Theodotus, son of Vettenus: he had a Greek name, his father had a Latin name, and he records that he was an ἀρχισυναγωγός in the third generation. The fact that the reference to his family background and synagogal foundation, *ad maiorem gloriam Theodoti*, as it were, were all inscribed in Greek, show us that Theodotus not only expected his community to be able to read his text in Greek, but had also composed it according to the custom with which his community was acquainted.

Did Theodotus act in accordance with the exigencies of Greek epigraphic customs, as an individual acting alone and singly? Or could others like Theodotus have resided in Jerusalem? Or, to put it differently: can we compare the use of Greek inscriptions in Jerusalem with their public use in other Greek cities?

At first glance this seems to be much too optimistic, in the absence of inscriptional evidence. In my own opinion, the two Seleucid documents preserved by Josephus, for instance, are (for the most part) genuine, although I do not believe that any fragment of them will ever be found. This is not because the Maccabees or Hasmonaeans might have demolished them, but because they took charge of a Jerusalem notably lacking in

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[65]   Hengel (n. 7) 18f.; Hengel, *Judaica, Hellenistica et Christiana*, Tübingen 1999, 147.

[66]   We must not forget that at least part of the population of Jerusalem was non-Jewish, and I do not think that this part was made up only of courtiers (and even though Jerusalem was a *famosa urbs*, the number of non-Jewish "tourists" will have been much smaller than today).

[67]   In the Roman province of Asia, the Jews collected the temple tax in the conventus-cities, W. Ameling, *EpAnat* 12, 1988, 11ff.

[68]   If I am right, at least this place needed Greek translations of the Pentateuch to function in the way intended by Theodotus.

epigraphic use. Such documents would have been read, copied and presumably deposited in an archive but not publically displayed on stone.

This idea is certainly not astonishing for anyone interested in the corpus of the Jerusalem inscriptions (*CIIP* I), where the total number of public inscriptions in Greek is exceedingly small so that the number of epigraphical genres to be found are correspondingly not large either.[69] Let us look briefly at the number of examples recorded in *CIIP* I 1, where all the inscriptions from before 70 A.D are collected. The latter include six Greek inscriptions of religious or public character, two of which originated with the Romans (I 1, 14f.), but were not inscribed on stone and were meant to have only a short (in one case, very short) life span. Next, we have the two addressed to strangers, warning them not to enter within the balustrade and forecourt of the sacred precinct, one small donor inscription mentioning a pavement on the temple mount, the Theodotos-inscription, and finally an enigmatic oath.[70] Can we then still argue that epigraphy, Greek epigraphy at that, played any communicative role in the society of Jerusalem?

There are reasons for the dearth of epigraphic evidence: many inscriptions would have been destroyed by the Romans, or in the subsequent re-building and re-founding of the city. Even more will have been destroyed in the course of the continuous settlement history of the city through the millenia. What kind of consequences this had for the survival of inscriptions on stone can be seen by a comparing the Roman, pre-Constantinian city of Jerusalem and Aelia Capitolina.

The Roman period from the year 70 to the reign of Constantine is attested by less than 80 inscriptions (*CIIP* I 2, 705-783). This number includes funerary inscriptions of military people, other funerary inscriptions, *instrumentum domesticum*, *varia* and fragments (732-83). There are, then, in total 23 public or religious inscriptions ascribed to a period of more than two centuries,[71] some of them too fragmentary to be of any use.[72] The presence of the Roman troops, even the presence of units only temporarily

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[69]   The ossuaries are another matter: since they are important for the question of languages spoken and used, I shall return to them, but I believe that they have no important contribution to make to the question of epigraphic habit — at least of public epigraphic habit.

[70]   *CIIP* I 1, 1, 'Greek Oath of Ares the Flute Player, 3-2 c. BCE' (the letter forms are certainly compatible with an earlier date, but this seems quite improbable in Jerusalem); Lupu ad loc. reminds us that it is far from certain that this stone was actually found in Jerusalem. M. Ricl, *SCI* 25, 2006, 51ff. believes it to resemble a confession stele, 'perhaps one of several inscribed on the same stone, with the opening words serving as a heading for this particular text … as such, the very personal nature of the text alongside its miserable state of preservation seem to preclude a definitive restoration of the narrative it contains' (Lupu).

[71]   *CIIP* I 2, 712; 722 (Abu Ghosh) have to be excluded; on 724 see the commentary: 'Meshorer, Israel Museum Catalogue 3, 44 suggests: "The stone, according to the traces of soil still attached to it, must have come from the vicinity of Jerusalem." But without further evidence, Jerusalem or its vicinity remains merely a possibility.'—The Latin funerary inscription I 2, 735 was found in Abu Ghosh, too.

[72]   *CIIP* I 2, 714; 729 with the comment by W. Eck: 'Hence, the context could have been a public building or an impressive mausoleum.' I 2, 773 might come from an honorary

present in Jerusalem, explains many of the known public inscriptions.[73] We know of statue bases of emperors, perhaps even bases for equestrian statues (cf. I 2, 718 with *Itinerarium Burdigalense* 591, 4), and honorary arches for emperors (708; 715f.; 719f.).[74] Military personnel were also present: there is a series of building inscriptions mentioning the *legio X Fretensis*,[75] attesting the work of the soldiers in the building of a wall and a military (?) building, but we know of almost no texts referring to a *legatus legionis* (only I 2, 721), or the governor of the province. The institutions of the *colonia* are rarely mentioned,[76] and no magistrate of Aelia Capitolina appears in our inscriptions. On the other hand, a Roman *colonia* was certainly a place where a totally different kind public display is to be expected and where the people of the *colonia* imported epigraphic customs from other *coloniae*. Therefore, I am inclined to believe that the dearth of public inscriptions in the pre-70 — and in post-70 period of Jerusalem's history is due to a common factor. The latter cannot therefore be sought in the absence of epigraphic usage during the pre-70s themselves.

We should take a new look at the inscriptions in Jerusalem — and notice that public inscriptions in Greek or Latin seem to have started with Herod, who took his inspiration from his personalacquaintance with Rome and Greek cities. He had seen the statues of the nations conquered by Pompey in Pompey's theatre at Rome — and when he himself built a theatre at Jerusalem, he added trophies which bore the names of the nations vanquished by Caesar's heir.[77] When Agrippa had made a lavish sacrifice in the temple (then just or almost completed), Herod inscribed his name ἐπὶ τῆς πυλῆς (Jos. *BJ* 1, 416).

In line with the Hellenistic kings, Herod did not shy away from self-representation, but employed a different strategy, not so much for manifesting his own independence, power and wealth,[78] but for advertising his admiration of the rulers of the world and intimacy with them. The inscriptions are his way of proving this and simultaneously can be compared to the manner in which writing was used publicly elsewhere, but especially in Rome. Herod might have sought to emulate what was displayed in Rome, or he might have thought of visiting strangers as potential readers. However, the only reaction mentioned by Josephus refers to the Jewish public (*AJ* 15, 277ff.). It seems as if Herod could count on his display being noticed with his inscriptions read and their language understood.

Comparable expectations can be found in a small tablet with a Greek background (*CIIP* I 1, 3): Paris (?), son of Akesines, most probably from Rhodes, had paid a sum for the pavement of the temple mount, commemorated by a short inscription. This text is

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monument; I 2, 778: 'Since the letters are relatively large, the monument must have been an important one, but the type cannot be determined.'

[73]   Temporarily present: I 2, 705.

[74]   Cf. in general C. Arnoud, *Les arcs romains de Jérusalem*, Göttingen 1997.

[75]   *CIIP* I 2, 723; 725-7.

[76]   I 2, 728: +[--] | A̲E̲[--] | Co[l(onia)] Ael(ia) Cap(itolina) d(ecurionum) d(ecreto); 719 — the arch for the Severan family — is restored as follows: col(onia) Ael]ia Kap(itolina) Commo|[diana -- prop]rio sumptu | [fecit, dedicante(?) -- leg(ato) Augg(ustorum) pro] pr(aetore) curante | [--]. This text seems unique in using 'proprio sumptu' not for an individual, but for the expenditure of a city.

[77]   Jos. *AJ* 15, 272 (for this and the next example see W. Ameling, *ZPE* 193, 2015, 193ff.).

[78]   Cf. R. Haensch, *SCI* 33, 2014, 99ff. on Herodian inscriptions outside his own territory.

preserved by chance and almost certainly is not unique, but part of a series of similar texts.[79]   This sole piece of evidence represents an entire category of numerous inscriptions in the heart of the city. The temple was a project not only funded by Herod, but by many others, who came from all over the world, donating sums for this undertaking. In return, they expected to be epigraphically named as donors, as was the custom of Greek cities and sanctuaries since time immemorial. On the other hand, the lack of genuinely Herodian building inscriptions may indicate that Herod consciously waived this type of self-advertisement, considering the fact that there are no surviving building inscriptions set up by the Hasmonaeans, or any other rulers of Palestine.[80]

Then there is the often despised *instrumentum domesticum*, especially weights.[81] We have stone moulds for casting small weights (I 1, 658), official weights with Greek inscriptions (659-673; starting well before Herod), one of them carrying — for dating purposes — the titulature of king Herod (666); and a whole series dated to 40/1, year 5 of king Agrippa. Again I want to argue that the existence of this body of evidence shows that the authorities thought it not only important, but perfectly feasible to make such "public utterances" in Greek.

So far we have examined the public use of Greek as attested in inscriptions from Jerusalem,[82] providing an argument for a widespread knowledge of the Greek language there. Private use of Greek is documented by ossuaries originating in family tombs and thus not intended for public display. Ossuaries most probably document one further foreign influence in Jerusalem, if it is true that this custom started in Herodian times as an imitation of Roman urns with their own inscriptions.[83] Since not everybody was afforded the kind of treatment and burial furnished by an ossuary, it is safe to assume, in my opinion, that they are testimony to the customs of the upper classes.[84] This is in special regard to the Jerusalem upper class, some of whose families, whose burials have come to light, did not originally come from there,[85] although they may well have lived

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[79]   B. Isaac, *IEJ* 33, 1983, 86ff; Price, in his edition and e.g. S. Schwartz, in: H. Cotton et al. (eds.), *From Hellenism to Islam*, Cambridge 2009, 77.

[80]   Haensch (n. 78) 101.

[81]   See also *CIIP* I 1, 650; 652f.; 656f. for ceramics with Greek texts.

[82]   Some kinds of inscriptions were of course impossible in Palestine: cursus-inscriptions, even municipal cursus inscriptions (and the status enjoyed by membership in, e.g., the Sanhedrin, was not made public by inscriptions).

[83]   J. Magness, *Stones and Dung, Oil and Spit*, Grand Rapids 2010, 151-155; J. Magness, in: S. White Crawford et al. (edd.), *'Up to the Gates of Ekron': Essays ... in Honor of Seymour Gitin*, Jerusalem 2007, 228-239, who tries to date the beginnings of this new burial custom in the middle-Herodian period (lit. and different ideas in 231 n. 10). T. Ilan, in: N. Kokkinos (ed.), *The World of the Herods* I, Stuttgart 2007, 61 does not want to be as precise: Herodian — I do not believe that any ossuaries post-date the destruction of Jerusalem; but see F. Millar, *SCI* 33, 2014, 140f. and J. Price, 'The Jewish Population of Jerusalem from the First Century B.C.E. to the Early Second Century C.E.: The Epigraphic Record', in: M. Popovic (ed.), *The Jewish Revolt against Rome*, Leiden 2011, 412f. For a different view: Price puts *CIIP* I 1, 181-183; 488 in the post-70 years.

[84]   Ilan (n. 83) 64. — On the ossuaries and their use in analyzing a part of Jerusalem's population, Price (n. 83) 399-418.

[85]   *CIIP* I 1, 288-311 (s. 304) may have come from Apameia, another group perhaps from Seleukeia (291).

there for a long time. Some may have died during a pilgrimage although the conscious choice of Jerusalem as a place of burial seems to belong to a later period with the exception of *CIIP* I 1, 225; 440[??].

Ossuaries were placed in separate burial chambers, usually belonging to an entire family. Since the relatives knew their dead, most ossuaries did not necessarily require an inscription,[86] but the few hundred that are inscribed carry for the most part only the name and patronymic of the dead (*CIIP* I 1, 18 – 608). References to the life of the deceased or to ideas about death are the exception.[87] Many languages and alphabets are exemplified in these cases: — Hebrew/Aramaic, Greek, Latin (41; 570), Palmyrene — sometimes bilingual and even trilingual texts. We cannot count on the inscriptions of the same grave to be inscribed in the same language. Aramaic is dominant, and Price counted 346 Aramaic ossuaries, 194 Greek ones, 44 Hebrew-Aramaic bilingual texts — and seven others.[88]

Aramaic is only moderately dominant,[89] and this remains true even if we consider that these texts do not reflect the linguistic preferences of the dead, but of their surviving relatives although these preferences may not have been radically different.[90] Even Aramaic inscriptions are not necessarily indicative of the linguistic usage of the family concerned, as Price remarked: it was simply the custom in Jerusalem to use this language more often than any other for ossuaries.[91] In some cases one person wrote more than one inscription in the same burial-complex;[92] in others a bilingual inscription was written by two different people. However, in every case the person who ordered an inscription in

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[86]   H. Misgav, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Inscriptions on Ossuaries from the End of the Second Temple Period*, Jerusalem 1991, 19f.

[87]   *CIIP* I 1, 395 (1st cent. B.C.): εὐφραίνεστε οἱ ζῶντες ἀδελφοὶ κ(αὶ) π(ι)εῖν ὄμα (i.e. ἄμα), ο(ὐδεὶς) ἀθάν[α](τος). I collected parallels to this formula in W. Ameling, *ZPE* 60, 1985, 35ff., trying to elucidate 1 *Cor* 15, 32; *Luke* 12, 18-20. This inscription was quoted on p. 39, but I did not realize its context: Paul did not need to go to the cities of Asia Minor or Greece to find this idea (and to contradict it): this is an example from Jerusalem itself.

[88]   Price (n. 83), 408. — I counted 45 Greco-Aramaic ossuaries (*CIIP* I 1, 29? 84? 88, 98 [the Aramaic text contains only the name and origin], 110, 174, 199, 211, 215, 266f., 279, 295, 304 [the Greek text contains only the name], 308f., 318f., 324, 339, 348f., 356, 358, 360, 366, 388, 398f., 402, 410-2, 421, 448, 451f., 456, 493, 500, 507, 526, 545, 587, 601); 194 in Greek language (20-24; 28, 35f., 38, 40f., 46, 48, 59, 64f., 74, 81, 89, 99, 104f., 112-4, 117f., 120, 124f., 127, 133f., 141, 150f., 153f., 158, 164f., 170f., 179, 181, 189, 200, 202, 205, 208, 210, 212-4, 216, 218-223, 227? 231f., 236, 241, 243, 247, 250, 254f., 261, 263, 269, 284, 290-4, 296-8, 300-2, 305, 307, 313, 315, 322f., 325f., 328-33, 350, 355, 361f., 365, 372f., 385, 387, 389-91, 400f., 408f., 414-9, 422-8, 431-3, 435f., 445, 447, 458, 469, 477, 479f., 484, 486f., 494, 497f., 508f., 511-3, 515, 517f., 523, 527, 529, 548, 550-6, 558f., 561f., 566, 568, 570, 573, 577-86, 588-94, 603, 606), but I counted every number only once, even those ossuaries with more than one inscription.

[89]   Millar (n. 83), 145.

[90]   Millar (n. 83), 142 toys with the idea that some of the ossuaries might have been inscribed by the relatives themselves.

[91]   How much the inscribed ossuaries depended on the habits of the day is shown by Ilan (n. 83) 66: only 25 % of them commemorated women.

[92]   Cf. Price (n. 83), 409.

Greek or in any other language expected the other visitors of this burial to comprehend the text.

It does not take much Greek to understand the texts on the ossuaries;[93] but the fact that a considerable number of inhabitants of Jerusalem chose the Greek alphabet and language in these circumstances where there was no external pressure to do so is surely indicative. We may deduce that at least the people who ordered the ossuaries were virtually bilingual,[94] which is further confirmed by the fact that a significant number of Greek names can be found transliterated into Aramaic.[95] 'Greek was not just the language of gentile outsiders or of the Roman administration, but had an established place, alongside Hebrew/Aramaic, as a language of ordinary life.'[96]

Finally, I will refer to evidence for an inscription to demonstrating the extent to which Greek had become important in Jerusalem, the *titulus crucis* (*CIIP* I 1, 15, here in the version given by *John* 19, 19f.):[97]

ἔγραψεν δὲ καὶ τίτλον ὁ Πιλᾶτος καὶ ἔθηκεν ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ· ἦν δὲ γεγραμμένον· Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων. τοῦτον οὖν τὸν τίτλον πολλοὶ ἀνέγνωσαν τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὅτι ἐγγὺς ἦν ὁ τόπος τῆς πόλεως ὅπου ἐσταυρώθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς· καὶ ἦν γεγραμμένον Ἑβραϊστί, Ῥωμαϊστί, Ἑλληνιστί.

These three languages were chosen in order to reach as many people as possible: Latin almost certainly for the Roman soldiers,[98] but Greek and Aramaic for the benefit of the population, John noting that many people read this inscription[99] showing that the reading of a Greek inscription had become quite usual the people of Jerusalem, thus re-inforcing Hengel's numbers.

4. Finis

Augustus changed the epigraphic world in the west,[100] but in some respects this change was already in the making during the last generation of the Roman Republic. Herod, who was acquainted with Rome and Roman customs, at least attempted to absorb something

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[93]   Schürer (n 14) II 80: 'The average ossuary inscription requires no more than an elementary knowledge of the language.'

[94]   L. Rahmani, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel*, Jerusalem 1994, 13 goes a bit too far: 'It can be concluded that in and around Jerusalem ... even the lower classes of the Jewish population knew some Greek.'

[95]   *CIIP* I 1, 47 (Kyria), 60 (Gaios Nanos), 109; 375f.; 496; 525 (Dositheos), 130?, 147 (Theophile), 176 (Lollia)? 209 (Theudion), 211 (Theodotion), 237 (Theudas), 249 (Krokos), 303 (Helena), 344; 457; 468 (Alexa), 367-71 (Kallon), 375f. (Dositheos), 392 (Iason), 407 (Euptolemos), 413 (Agathe), 495 (Doras), 496 (Dositheos), 525 (Dositheos), 534 (Theophilos), 560 (Kynoros?); 635 (Alexandros).

[96]   Millar (n. 83), 146.

[97]   The synoptic gospels do not mention the three languages explicitly (but they are mentioned in the Latin translation of *Luke*).

[98]   W. Eck, *ZDPV* 117, 2001, 1 n. 1—The *titulus crucis* it perhaps the earliest roughly datable Latin inscription whose text is known to us, about contemporary with *CIIP* II 1277.

[99]   The phrase καὶ ἦν γεγραμμένον begins with a καί *epexegeticum* resp. *explicativum*: it gives the explanation for the fact that many people read the text.

[100]   G. Alföldy, *Gymnasium* 98, 1991, 289ff.

of this new custom. Changes in Rome alongside changes brought about by the Hellenisation of Palestine resulted in a different use of inscriptions, more representative in form and adapted for memorials. There were two reasons for its success: 1. public writing in Aramaic had already declined during the last centuries (it is my guess that the (few) Hebrew and Aramaic inscriptions in pre-70 Jerusalem are a reaction to Greek usage; 2. the fact that Greek had become something more than the language of the political masters[101] (a problem Latin never overcame).[102]

Jews from all over Palestine encountered Greek culture in Jerusalem — if not previously in their part of Palestine although epigraphical testimony for this is usually later. Furthermore, we may note the scholarly discussion whether Jesus taught in Greek.[103] Unfortunately, we seem to lack the necessary epigraphic evidence for Hellenism in the Galilee[104] — but will still be able to assume that the long period of Ptolemaic and Seleucid administration must have left some mark there.

We have to remember that the divergence between the written and the spoken language is not necessarily true, but a possibility. The use of either language can have been dictated by the assessment of specific situations, i.e. by linguistic choice depending on the need. Greek was epigraphically the prevalent language in the surrounding world — and therefore was chosen more often for epigraphic purposes than any other language. However, linguistic choice in a particular situation envisages the possibility that all parties concerned understood more than one language. Linguistic choice in epigraphy implies that not only the prevalent epigraphic culture was Greek, but that the language of this culture was understood (and read!) — not only by the people erecting inscriptions, but by their intended public.

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[101]   That Greek was not connected with Roman rule is nicely exemplified by *PYadin* 52 in the interpretation of J. Price, S. Naveh, 'On the margins of culture: the practice of transcription in the ancient world' in: Cotton et al. (n. 79) 259f.

[102]   The two earliest Latin inscriptions, the *titulus crucis* and the Pilatus-inscription from Caesarea, were both intended for a local Roman readership — the exception in pre-70 Palestine.

[103]   Hengel (n. 7), 31f. enumerates the arguments; there is a huge literature with very different opinions on this question; cf. M. Janse, in: G. K. Giannakis (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics*, Brill Online, s. v. Bilingualism, Diglossia and Literacy in First-Century Jewish Palestine (first appeared online in 2013): 'It is now commonly accepted that Jesus must have known Greek ..., although we cannot possibly know which language was chosen on what occasion, e.g. the conversation with the "Greek Syrophoenician" woman near Tyre (*Mk* 7:24-30) or with people from the Decapolis (*Mk* 7:31-37), who are also mentioned among the followers of Jesus (*Mt* 4:25).'

[104]   Cf. e. g. S. Freyne in: J. Collins, G. Sterling (edd.), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, Notre Dame 2001, 182ff.