

Non-Hellenized Jews in the Semi-Hellenized East

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For Nathan Spiegel in his ninetieth year

I propose to argue in this paper for the need to re-evaluate the evidence for the apparent part-hellenization of early rabbinic Judaism in the Graeco-Roman period.¹ What has often been taken as evidence for strong hellenistic influence on the early Rabbis and on rabbinic Jewry as a whole is, in my view, to be explained differently, more economically and more in accordance with the full context of historical reality. In the Near East there had existed for centuries before Hellenism appeared on the scene another supra-national civilisation, that of the various Aramaic-speaking peoples and indeed of others who, though not using Aramaic in their daily speech, had other uses for it such as employing it as the chancery language of multi-national (and hence multi-lingual) empires; cf. *Reichsaramäisch*, the quasi-official language of the Persian empire; and Aramaic had been used as such much earlier in the Assyrian empire. This, it is true, was not as all-encompassing and as easily definable as the hellenistic civilization. It was more pluralistic than hellenism and more preservative of existing different local cultures. It was not a sudden importation in the wake of an overwhelming influx of foreign conquerors. In particular, it had existed for many centuries; it was certainly more than merely a language community; its diverse components shared more than a lingua franca. Its various constitutive elements, linguistic, social, political, administrative, had been formed, acquired, assimilated and retained over many centuries, in a large part of the Near East, the populations of which over the same period succeeded in preserving their own national, regional, religious cultures. The impact of hellenism, which came into being in the wake of the dramatic political and social changes following the conquests of Alexander, was sudden and pregnant with potentialities, destined, in the long run, to help shaping the history of western civilisation for more than two millennia; but, in spite of appearances, it was, in its time, not all pervasive, not destructive of local realities, of venerable traditions, of stubbornly surviving native structures. Hellenism took its place beside local aramaicised cultures; it did not supplant them.

Aramaic civilisation absorbed many elements of Greek culture in the centuries between the conquests of Alexander and the coming of Islam; but the nations making up this civilization succeeded, both in the hellenistic and in the Roman and Byzantine empires, in retaining their oriental character, not uniform, but plu-

¹ A shorter version of this paper was read at the tenth quinquennial congress of the Fédération Internationale des Études Classiques at Laval University, Québec, Canada, in August 1994.

ralistic and preservative of ancient traditions and of local diversity. The Jews in Palestine belonged to this group of peoples. They shared with them in the common Aramaic inheritance; and this civilisation, though it had absorbed many Greek elements, did not lose its native character and did not become fully hellenized. Still, within, or rather beside, the continuing existence of this diversity of oriental traditions, there grew up, in many parts of the Near East, springing up fast, growing sturdy and impressive, large Greek communities, the descendants of imported Greek immigrants and of hellenized local populations. Their culture, although itself absorbing oriental elements, was distinctly and aggressively hellenic. The Jews, too, both in their country and in the Diaspora were affected by what happened around them, in ways not always clear to the historian, but undoubtedly resulting in a new phenomenon in Jewish history. Migration, assimilation, as well as the consequences of proselytism, especially in the Diaspora, led to the emergence of hellenized Judaism, different, though not separated, from that which existed in the homeland and in Mesopotamia.

Hellenistic Jewry from the generation after Alexander down to the seventh century was numerous, often prosperous and for long periods widely spread around the countries of the Mediterranean seaboard and beyond. During that period of about a millennium Jews appear throughout the hellenistic and, later, the Roman and Byzantine empires both in the East and in the West.² We know of Jews in metropolitan Greece as well as in Ptolemaic Egypt as early as the third pre-Christian century.³ Not much later there were Jews in Italy and, at some stage, as far away as Spain and in Greek cities around the Black Sea, and there

² Even in the Latin West Greek seems to have been the language of most Jews for many generations, as we learn from the Jewish inscriptions not only in Italy but also in, e.g., Spain and even Germany: see Jean-Baptiste Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum*, vol. I, Europe, 1936 (reprinted as *Corpus of Jewish Inscriptions*, vol. I, Europe, with a Prolegomenon by Baruch Lifshitz, 1975).

³ For metropolitan Greece see M.Th. Mitsos, *ΕΠΙΓΡΑΦΑΙ ΕΞ ΑΜΦΙΑΡΕΙΟΥ*, 1955 (reprinted from *Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερίς*, 1952) no. 25, pp. 194-6; D.M. Lewis, "The First Greek Jew", *JSS* 2, 1957, 264ff. The contents of the inscription witness to the advanced stage of hellenization undergone by both father and son (as is rightly stressed by the late D.M. Lewis): the inscription is set up by Μόσχος Μοσχίωνος Ἰουδαῖος ἐνύπνιον ἰδὼν προστάξαντος τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἀμφιαράου καὶ τῆς Ὑγίειας, καθὰ συνέταξε ὁ Ἀμφιάραος καὶ ἡ Ὑγία ἐν στήνῃ γράψαντα ἀναθεῖναι πρὸς τῷ βωμῷ. For Ptolemaic Egypt see P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* I, 1972, 83ff. with notes in vol. II; V. Tcherikover, in *C.P.J.* I, 4; and id., *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 1959, 286-7. There had, of course, been some Jews in Egypt long before the Macedonian conquest. The Aramaic papyri from Elephantine testify to the presence of Jews there in the fifth century BC; these Jews claimed to have been there since before the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses in 525 BC (see A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century BC*, 1923, papyrus no. 30, lines 13-14). Some are indeed reported to have come there from Palestine even earlier in the train of Jeremiah after the murder of Gedalyah, the governor imposed by the Babylonians on Judah after 586 BC (see Jeremiah, chapters 41ff.; II Kings 25:26).

were also Greek-speaking Jewish communities in North Africa and in Asia Minor.⁴ It is a commonplace of writers on the emergence and spread of the early Church that the existence of hellenistic Jewry and of hellenistic synagogues provided not only the intellectual and moral background but the seeding fields for the Christian mission;⁵ and it must, of course, not be forgotten that the availability of the OT in Greek provided the early Christian propagandists and polemicists with a ready-made body of texts that enabled them to argue for the priority of Jewish-Christian Wisdom or, as they sometimes called it, philosophy,⁶ in comparison with the rise of the Greek philosophers: hence the argument that Greek philosophers learned their wisdom from the Jews: τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωυσῆς Ἀττικίζων, "what else is Plato but Moses speaking Attic Greek?"⁷

The claim implicit in this saying, as formulated or repeated by Numenius (second half of second century), had already in his time become one of the central arguments in early Christian propaganda for the priority of the Jewish-Christian revelation; for it was the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint or, as some would have it, an even older Greek translation, that made it

⁴ On Diaspora Jewry see E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.- A.D. 135)* (revised and edited by Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, Martin Goodman) volume III, part 1, 1986, 1-176, with abundant notes and bibliography.

⁵ See Adolf von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, 4th ed., 1924, reprint (no date), e.g. 5, 13f., 20.

⁶ On "philosophy" for the religion of the Old Testament see, e.g., Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1, 28; Theodoretus, *Graec. aff. cur.* 2; and, for Christian writers applying the word φιλοσοφία to their own religion, cf., e.g., Tatian, *or.* 31; Eusebius, *H. E.*, 2, 13, 6. They had, of course, in this as in so many other things, been preceded by Philo, who frequently refers to the teachings of the Hebrew Bible as a φιλοσοφία; see, e.g., *Leg.* 156; 245; *V.M.* II, 216; *de vita contemplativa*, 26; 28; *somn.* II, 127; *quod omnis prob.* 43; (Josephus refers to contemporary Jewish sects, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, as φιλοσοφίαι at *Ant.* XVIII, 11 and he uses the verb φιλοσοφεῖν with reference to these same sects at *Bellum* II, 119). On the *hebraica philosophia* in pagan authors, see J. H. Waszink, "Porphyrus und Numenius" in H. Dörrie et al., edd., *Porphyre* (Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique, XII), 1966, 35 - 83, and especially 53 - 62.

⁷ Numenius quoted by Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* I, 22, 150, 4; cf. Eusebius, *PE* IX, 6,9; id., *PE* XI, 10, 14; Theodoretus, *Graec. aff. cur.*, II, 114 (ed. Canivet, p. 169); Suda, s.v. Νομήμιος; see Schürer III, 1, pp. 696-7; M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* II, 1980, 206ff., especially nos. 363 a-e, where the sources are quoted and discussed. Numenius insists on the primeval wisdom of the oriental peoples; he mentions in this context especially the Βραχμᾶνες καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ Μάγοι καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι (fr. 9a - b and 32 Leemans = fr. 1a - c des Places, in *Numénios, Fragments*, ed. Édouard des Places, 1973, 42-44). See for this Waszink, *op. cit.*, 35ff., especially 45ff. with notes, and 49ff. with notes. See also H.-C. Puech, "Numénios d'Apamée et les théologies orientales au second siècle", in *Mélanges Bidez* (Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales II), 1934, 745-778.

possible to argue that this revelation had been accessible to Greek philosophers for centuries before the rise of Christianity.⁸ Christian apologists and polemicists are sometimes our only or our main source for such Jewish arguments, both about the antiquity of the Jews and about the alleged fact of the Greeks learning from them. Thus, we find Eusebius citing "the Hebrew philosopher" Aristobulus (said to have lived in the second century BC) as claiming that Plato was a follower of Mosaic legislation and that Pythagoras too had introduced much from Jewish sources into his doctrine.⁹ Antiquity and even more autochthony were highly prized throughout ancient times. Celsus had, in his anti-Christian polemic, denied the antiquity of Moses and claimed that he had plagiarized his doctrines from others.¹⁰ Celsus seems to have been reacting to Justin's claim for

⁸ For allusions to alleged pre-septuagintal translations in the *Letter of Aristeas*, see ed. Wendland, paragraphs 312ff. The claim to the high antiquity of the Jews, and the claim coupled to this that the Greeks had been early acquainted with them is found already in Jewish propaganda literature; cf. Philo, *de spec. leg.* IV 61 (Greek legislators learned from Moses); id., *de aeternitate mundi*, 19; id., *Quis heres*, 213-4; id., *de vita Mosis* II, 12; and see also id., *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, IV, 167 (transl. from Armenian by Ralph Marcus, 1961 [LCL], 452-3); cf. Josephus, *c. Ap.* I, 69ff., esp., e.g., 162 (Pythagoras); 176ff. (Aristotle quoted by Clearchus; see for this also Eusebius *PE*, IX.5); and see id., *op. cit.*, II 154; 168; 257; 281. There were, or there were said to have been, hellenistic Jewish apologists making similar claims before Philo and Josephus: cf. for priority of mosaic teaching, Demetrius (ca. 200 BC), *ap. Clem. Alex. Strom.*, I, 21; Eusebius *PE*, IX 21, 29; Artapanus (2nd century B.C.) *ap. Clem. Alex. Strom.* I, 23; Eus. *PE* IX 18, 23, 27; Eupolemus (2nd century BC) *ap. Clem. Alex. Strom.* I, 23; Eus. *PE* IX 17, 26, 30-4; Theophil. *adv. Autolyc.* 3, 16ff. Christian apologists continued in the same vein: cf. Justin Martyr, *Apol.* I, 44; Tatian, *or.* 31-41; cf. also Clem. Alex. *Strom.*, I, 25; id., *Strom.* V, 1, 10; Minucius Felix, *Octav.* 34, 5.

⁹ PE XIII. 11-12 ...παραθήσω δὲ πρώτου Ἀριστοβούλου, τοῦ ἐξ Ἑβραίων φιλοσόφου τὰς οὕτως ἐχούσας φωνάς: φανερόν ὅτι κατηκολούθησεν ὁ Πλάτων τῇ καθ' ἡμᾶς νομοθεσίᾳ, καὶ φανερός ἐστὶ περιειργασμένος ἕκαστα τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ. Διηρμήνευται γὰρ πρὸ Δημητρίου τοῦ Φαληρέως δι' ἐτέρων, πρὸ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ Περσῶν ἐπικρατήσεως, τὰ τε κατὰ τὴν ἐξαγωγήν τὴν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου τῶν Ἑβραίων, ἡμετέρων δὲ πολιτῶν, καὶ ἡ τῶν γεγονότων ἀπάντων αὐτοῖς ἐπιφάνεια, καὶ τῆς ὅλης νομοθεσίας ἐπεξηγήσεις, ὡς εὐδελον εἶναι τὸν προειρημένον φιλόσοφον εἰληφέναι πολλά· γέγονε γὰρ πολυμαθής· καθὼς καὶ Πυθαγόρας πολλὰ τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν μετενέγκας εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δογματοποίησιν κατεχώρισεν. Ἡ δ' ὅλη ἐρμηνεία τῶν διὰ τοῦ νόμου πάντων ἐπὶ τοῦ προσαγορευθέντος Φιλαδέλφου βασιλέως, σοῦ δὲ προγόνου, προσενεγκαμένου μείζονα φιλοτιμίαν, Δημητρίου τοῦ Φαληρέως πραγματευσαμένου τὰ περὶ τούτων. Cf. also id., *op. cit.* IX. 6; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* I, 21, 148-150; and Irenaeus *c. haer.* III, 21, 2.

¹⁰ Cf. Origen *c. Celsum*, I, 21; IV, 21; see Borret's note 3 ad loc. in *Origène, Contre Celse*, II (Sources Chrétiennes 136), 1968, 232-5; IV. 36, with Borret's note 1, p. 275; cf. also H. Chadwick, *Origen, Contra Celsum*, 1953 (reprint 1980), 211 n. 1 on Origen, *c. Celsum*, IV, 36, with abundant documentation of

Mosaic priority;¹¹ and, as Pépin notes, Justin will in his turn have been responding with his claim for Mosaic priority to earlier or contemporary pagan critics who accused the Jews and Christians of plagiarism. Porphyry was to modify the anti-Christian polemical motif of his pagan predecessors by conceding Moses' chronological priority; he did so by adopting and adapting the Jewish and Christian story of Ezra's restoration of the Torah.¹²

For the claim that the classical Greek philosophers had borrowed from the Jews to be acceptable there had to have been a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible earlier than that of the Seventy. It is thus evident what the *Christian* purpose in using the invention of a pre-LXX version is: the mention of the "Jewish philosopher Aristobulus"¹³ stands in the tradition of Jewish-hellenistic apologetics. One of the stock arguments of the Jewish and Christian apologetic tradition is the antiquity of the Jewish Law, and, intimately connected with this, especially for the Christians, the alleged fact of the Greeks learning from the He-

ancient sources, pagan and Christian, in Greek and Latin, relating to claims to autochthony.

¹¹ See Jean Pépin, "Porphyre, Exégète d'Homère", in H. Dörrie (supra, n. 6), 233; Carl Andresen, *Logos und Nomos: Die Polemik des Kelsos wider das Christentum* (Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 30), 1955, 350ff.

¹² See below (Appendix [c]) for the text of Porphyry *ap.* Macarius Magnes. For Porphyry on Mosaic priority being used by later, Muslim, writers, see Porphyry, fr. 204 (in *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta*, ed. A. Smith, 1993, 229, from al-Shahrastānī's *K. al-Milal wal-Niḥal*, 302 Cureton). For a related though not identical literary motif see M. L. Lang, "Lineage-boasting and the road not taken", in *CQ* (N.S.) 44, 1994, 1-6.

¹³ This is not the place to examine the reliability of the testimonia referring to such a person and the authenticity of the fragments ascribed to him. Suffice it to say here only that with one single exception "Aristobulus" is never mentioned before the second Christian century; the exception is II Macc. I, 10; the person addressed there is called Aristobulus. It seems to be generally accepted that this is an interpolation in II Macc. (see N. Walter, *Der Thorausleger Aristobulos*, 1964, 14ff. and esp. 17f. with the notes there; and Ch. Habicht, 2. *Makkabäerbuch* [Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit, Bd. I, 3, 1979, 201f.]); in any case, there is no certainty that the reference is in fact to the Aristobulus who is supposed to have written a work on the allegorical interpretation of the Law. Of all the fragments ascribed to Aristobulus only one, on the calendaric principle used for fixing the date of the Passover, is of any importance; and it is of a character markedly different from all the other "fragments". The calendaric fragment we know through Anatolius (see Eusebius HE VII, 32, 14-19). It is to be noted that Anatolius makes his Aristobulus, quite anachronistically, one of the Seventy; others (see above) put him into the second century and present him as the teacher of Ptolemy Philometor. In brief, I will say here only that, with the single exception of the calendaric fragment transmitted by Anatolius and cited by Eusebius, none of the alleged fragments of Aristobulus can, in my opinion, safely be regarded as anything but the product of Jewish and/or Christian forgers.

brews. This apologetic propaganda invention builds on the frequently encountered readiness of Greek historians and biographers to ascribe Greek discoveries *vel sim.* to oriental sources; we find constantly that men like Thales, or Pythagoras, or Plato, had "learned" their wisdom from Babylonians or Egyptians or other Orientals. Thus, Thales is said to have "philosophized" in Egypt; to have brought geometry from Egypt to Greece; to have learned his doctrine that water is the primary substance from the Egyptians. Pythagoras is said to have visited "Zaratas the Chaldaean". Democritus is reported as having travelled in Egypt to study geometry; he is also said to have visited Persia, the Red Sea, and, according to some, India and Ethiopia. About Plato we hear that he went to Egypt *παρὰ τοὺς προφῆτας* (allegedly in the company of Euripides!). Herodotus also tells us that the Greeks introduced from Babylon the celestial sphere, the gnomon and the duodecimal division of the day; and that they learned the doctrine of re-incarnation from the Egyptians. Porphyry adds that it was Pythagoras who first introduced this doctrine into Greece. Even poets, e.g. Aeschylus, are said to have borrowed some of their material from Egypt (cf. Herodotus, II. 156). It is clear that much of this originates in the biographers' imagination; from their inventions, in combination with some genuine historical facts, there grew the literary *topos* of Greeks learning their wisdom and their sciences from the East.¹⁴

The claim that the Greeks in the time of Plato and, before him, Pythagoras, had had access to the Hebrew Bible in Greek was the foundation for the whole structure of the doctrine of a providential *praeparatio evangelica* of mankind, and in particular of Greek-speaking mankind, before the coming of Christ. Thus hellenistic Jewry played an incalculably great and important role not only in the spiritual, cultural and social history of western mankind, but also in one of the components of the self-perception of the early Christians as the *Verus Israel*, inheritors of a revelation that had been accessible to, and that had been used by, good and wise pagans in the centuries before the Incarnation.

But this hellenistic Jewry, in spite of the importance of its universal historical role, disappeared from history, at least from Jewish history. Its remains and its most enduring legacy are part of the inheritance and of the history of the Christian Church: the Septuagint, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Philo, Josephus, and all the fragments (or alleged fragments) of other Jewish authors writing in Greek have, practically without exception, been preserved by Christians, only by Christians, and only for Christian purposes. One can safely leave out of account here the fragments of Greek versions of books of the Hebrew Bible that were found in the Dead Sea area, for these were not known to Jews

¹⁴ Thales: Herodotus I, 170; D.L. I.22; Aetius I, 3, 1; Herodotus II, 109; Proclus, *in Eucl.*, p.65 Friedl.; Plutarch, *de Is. et Osir.*, 34, 364 D. Pythagoras: Hippolytus, *Ref.* I, 2, 12 (on the authority of Diodorus of Eretria and of Aristoxenus). Democritus: D.L.IX, 35. Plato: D.L.III.6. Herodotus II, 109; II.123. Porphyry, *V.P.* 19. See, for the *mirage barbare* (or the *mirage oriental*) as well as for the high esteem accorded to antiquity and more generally to remoteness of sources and origins in time and in space, the marvellously well-organized, compact yet richly documented presentation of the evidence by A.J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* I, 1944, 19-44.

(or to anyone else) until very recently and thus had no influence on historical Judaism.

The Jews in Palestine itself, the ancient homeland of the Jews (and, of course, of the earliest Christians), were also affected in many different ways by Greek civilization after the Macedonian conquests in the East and for centuries thereafter well into the Graeco-Roman and Byzantine periods. This is made manifest by the archaeological evidence in architecture and in art; it is shown to be true by the traces of the adoption of Greek norms, institutions and terminology in the legal¹⁵ history of non-hellenized Palestinian Jewry, i.e. of those Jews who did not normally use Greek but Aramaic and to some extent Hebrew both in speech and in written works. Even these traditionalist Jews did not escape the influence of Hellenic and, later, Roman and Byzantine, rule, civilisation and law. Thus, there is abundant evidence for the existence and persistence of native local law in the Roman East; but there is no less impressive evidence of the intermingling of local, Jewish, Nabataean, Idumaeon, legal norms, procedures and institutions with Roman or with what was thought of as Greek law; the result was occasionally even called νόμος ἑλληνικός.¹⁶

It is an interesting fact that what may well be the first documented occurrence of a Greek loanword in any Aramaic dialect happens to be the word νόμος. The word appears in an Idumaeon-Aramaic marriage contract dated by the editors in 176 BC.¹⁷ Hellenistic influence appears most visibly in the sphere of language: post-biblical Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic contain vast numbers of Greek loanwords and "calques". It is not an exaggeration to say that the number of Greek loanwords in rabbinic literature of the Greco-Roman and early Byzantine period amounts to over two thousand, i.e. to about two and a half times the vocabulary of basic English, which is said to number about 800 words.

¹⁵ See for many examples, D. Sperber, *A Dictionary of Greek and Latin Legal Terms in Rabbinic Literature*, 1984.

¹⁶ For the process of intermingling of Roman, Greek, and native eastern legal norms, procedures and institutions well into the Byzantine period see, e.g., L. Mitteis, *Reichsrecht und Volksrecht in den Östlichen Provinzen des Römischen Kaiserreichs*, 1891; F. Wieacker, *Vulgarismus und Klassizismus im Recht der Spätantike*, Sitz.-Ber. Heidelberg, Phil.-Hist. Kl., 1955, Heft 3, especially, e.g., 28ff.; K.-G. Bruns and E. Sachau, ed., *Syrisch-Römisches Rechtsbuch aus dem fünften Jahrhundert*, 1880 (reprinted Aalen, 1961); E. Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, 1-3, 1907-14; see also H.J. Wolff, "Römisches Provinzialrecht in der Provinz Arabia", *ANRW* II. 13, 1980, 763-806; id., "Der Byzantinische Urkundenstil Ägyptens im Lichte der Funde von Nessana und Dura", *RIDA* 8, 1061; W. Selb, *Orientalisches Kirchenrecht*, 1981, 208ff.; id., *Antike Rechte im Mittelmeerraum*, 1993; and A. Wasserstein, "A Marriage Contract from the Province of Arabia Nova: Notes on Papyrus Yadin 18", in *JQR* 80, 1989, 93-130, esp. 117ff.; for more on this see *ibid.*, *passim* in notes.

¹⁷ See E. Eshel and A. Kloner, "An Aramaic Ostrakon of an Edomite Marriage Document from Maresha", forthcoming, in *Tarbiz* (Hebrew). For the early process of hellenization in the Idumaeon region, especially at Maresha (Marisa), see Schürer, II, 2ff.

However, the situation in Palestine, though similar in some respects, was not identical with that in the Diaspora. In Palestine, as in the whole region, there were, indeed, Greek cities¹⁸ where Greek was spoken, by both Jews and non-Jews. Some of these were ancient cities known to us from the Hebrew Bible, like Philistine Gaza;¹⁹ Askalon, another hellenized early Philistine city which had in the first Christian century a large Jewish population, of whom 2 500 are said to have been killed by the Greek inhabitants during the great revolt; Azotus, also an old Philistine city, hellenized, of course, but with apparently a considerable Jewish element in the population; Yamnia (Yabne) seems to have had, at times, a Jewish majority; Jaffa, an old harbour city, at times under Jewish rule and with a numerous Jewish population; and later foundations like Caesarea, a hellenistic city (Strato's Tower) which became particularly important after being rebuilt by Herod the Great; it too had a considerable number of Jewish inhabitants; at the beginning of the great revolt 20 000 Jews are said to have been massacred there by their Greek fellow-citizens;²⁰ Ptolemais (Akko); Sepphoris; and Tiberias, founded in the first cent. (ca. 26 AD) by Herodes Antipas.²¹ The last mentioned two and Caesarea became centres of rabbinic learning, as Yabne had been before them. We have evidence that Greek was used by some Jews in the service of the Synagogue, e.g. in Caesarea;²² and we hear of Greek-speaking congregations of Jews in first century Jerusalem.²³

There is evidence of some early steps towards assimilation to Greek ways among the native Jewish population, sometimes in surprising quarters: witness the fact that from the first generation onwards we find Greek names given to practically all the descendants of the founders of the Hasmonaean dynasty, which had come to power through its leadership of the anti-Seleucid struggle for the

¹⁸ On these see Schürer, II, 1979, 85ff. with bibliography (and, for a *liste raisonnée*, 97ff.). V. Tchirikow, *Hellenistische Städtegründungen von Alexander dem Grossen bis auf die Römerzeit* (Philologus, Supplementband XIX, Heft 1), 1927, especially 69 - 81; id., (-ver), *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 1959, 90f; A.H.M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 1971, 226-294 and index; F.-M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine*, II, 1967, index; id., *Histoire de la Palestine depuis la conquête d'Alexandre jusqu'à l'invasion Arabe*, I-II, 1952, *passim*.

¹⁹ Aramaic was still spoken there, alongside Greek, as late as AD 400; see Schürer, II, p. 75 with n. 252 and p. 103. One would certainly assume, even without explicit documentation, that Aramaic was spoken in the countryside around Greek-speaking cities.

²⁰ Caesarea became the residence of the procurator of Judaea: Schürer, I, 361 with n. 37.

²¹ See for all these cities, and more, Schürer, II, 97ff.

²² PT Sotā 21b; for more see S. Lieberman, *G.J.P.*, 30.

²³ Acts VI, 9; cf. also *ibid.*, IX, 29; Harnack, *op. cit.*, 4th ed. 1924, reprint, 55; H. Conzelmann, *Geschichte des Urchristentums*, 1969, 42f. See Schürer, II, 76 with n. 256; he cites, *inter alia*, TMegilla 3, 6 Zuckermann, 224; and cf. PT Megilla 73 d. See also Schürer II, 428 n. 8.

preservation of ancestral custom and against hellenism.²⁴ This is less surprising than one might think: it may well be that this represents the endeavour by a newly established dynasty to present its outward credentials as one of a number of hellenised or semi-hellenised ruling houses in the area. And, to take a rather different example: Josephus, even though he was a man of Pharisaic background and upbringing, must have had some substantial education in Greek.²⁵ Indeed, even though he calls himself a Pharisee he may well be counted among hellenised Jews, both because of his social background and because of his ambiguous character and sympathies. The case of Paul of Tarsus, different in many ways, may yet be similarly ambiguous; in any case, though he tells us (Acts 22, 3) that he had been a student of Rabban Gamaliel in Palestine, he was by birth and upbringing a Diaspora Jew.

It is also true that comparable phenomena are to be found even in rabbinic circles. Thus some of the earliest teachers in the rabbinic tradition bear Greek names (e.g. Antigonos of Socho ca. 200 BC, a direct pupil of Simon Justus; later such names become commonplace among the Rabbis: e.g., Abtalyon (P[er]tollion?), Abtolmos (Ptolemaeus), Alexander, Horknos (Hyrkanus, a Greek name derived from the geographical name Hyrcania, apparently attested only among Jews), Pappos, Symmachos, Tarphon (Tryphon)).

We find some curious paradoxes here that lead us to unexpected and unlooked for conclusions. It is a remarkable fact that the Dead Sea Scrolls contain practically no Greek loanwords.²⁶ There can be no doubt that this is due to deliberate avoidance. This testifies not to the Rabbis being more familiar with Greek than the sectarian authors of the Qumran scrolls, but rather to the very opposite: the deliberate avoidance of Greek loanwords in the Dead Sea Scrolls tes-

²⁴ Simon, the son of Matityahu and brother of Judah and Jonathan (all Hebrew names), named his son and successor Hyrkanos, whose son was Aristoboulos. These and other Greek names (such as Alexander and Antigonos) were given to members of that family in every generation, until their dynasty was superseded by the usurper of Idumaeen descent. They all, of course, bore Hebrew names as well. See for genealogical table of the Hasmonean rulers Schürer, I, 779.

²⁵ I would go further and say, on the evidence of his writings, that he knew more than merely the Greek language: for, whatever help he may have had from his *synergoi* (cf. *c. Ap.*, I, 50), it is manifest that his acquaintance with Greek went not only beyond a very respectable knowledge of the language but also included acquaintance with Greek historiography and indeed some knowledge of or acquaintance with Greek literature, e.g. tragedy. Professor Jonas Greenfield has drawn my attention to the learned and enlightening discussion of this question by Tessa Rajak in her *Josephus, The Historian and his Society*, 1984, especially 46-64 and 233-236.

²⁶ The few exceptions in the so-called Copper Scroll are not relevant to our purpose; see for this J. Allegro, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert V, Qumrān Cave 4*, 1968, 88f. See also E. Y. Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language*, 1982, 100; and A. Wasserstein, "Die Hellenisierung des Frühjudentums: Die Rabbinen und die Griechische Philosophie", *Max Webers Sicht des Antiken Judentums*, ed. W. Schluchter, 1985, 281ff., especially 288 with nn. 33-5.

tifies to their writers, i.e. the Qumran sectarians, knowing what to avoid, i.e. they knew that these words were, by origin, not Hebrew or Aramaic but Greek; and they took great care to avoid using them. The Rabbis, when they used Aramaic words that were originally Greek, possibly were not even aware of what they were doing. On the other hand they may here and there have been aware of the Greek origin of some of their Aramaic vocabulary; they do not seem to have cared one way or the other. They were indeed in all their Aramaic and Hebrew certitudes and selfconfidence open to the world, even the Greek world. However that may be, we have here incidental evidence that suggests that the Qumran sectarians were not dissident rabbinic Jews but Jews of another kind, probably more different from the rabbinic Jews than were the earliest Christians. Both the latter and their contemporary fellow Jews were part of a world Aramaic in speech and tradition, and they seem to have had no wish to be separated from it except, of course, in matters of religious faith and ritual.

This openness to the world²⁷ in which the Rabbis lived is exemplified by the famous story told of Rabban Gamaliel II (who officiated as Nasi, i.e. as spiritual leader of rabbinic Jewry and as head of the Academy of Yabne, from ca. AD 80 onwards), that there were a thousand children, **ילדים** (!), in his house: five hundred studied Torah, i.e. Holy Scripture and its traditional interpretation, and the other five hundred studied **חכמה יוונית**, "Greek Wisdom" or "the Wisdom of Greek", an expression that must mean at the very least something like Greek lan-

²⁷ That there was also some not insignificant resistance in rabbinic circles to hellenistic influence in the education of the young is well known: see Wasserstein *ap. Schluchter, op. cit.*, 290, with nn. 48-54. But this did not express the dominant tendency. I may here mention, only by the way, that the modern Israeli derogatory Hebrew designation **מתינים**, derived, of course, from **יין** = Greece, for "hellenizers", is not really a Hebrew word; it is an invention, not, I believe, found before the modern age, used mainly, nowadays, by fundamentalists, as a term of abuse to denigrate their europeanised secular or non-orthodox fellow Jews, and to accuse them of abandoning the ways of their fathers by trying to assimilate to the non-Jewish world. The Rabbis do not, as far as I know, have a word for "hellenizer". It is ironical that while the Hebrew equivalents of **Ἕλλην**, **ἑλληνικός**, **ἑλληνίζω**, **ἑλληνίστης**, do not have derogatory meanings in Hebrew, they tend to be less than complimentary, occasionally, in Greek written by Greek-speaking Christians: **Ἕλλην** = "pagan" in Christian Greek; and even Syriac-speaking Christians, who often use **ארמא** instead of **חנפא** for "pagan", will sometimes also use **יוניא** and **גאעיתא** (Graecus and Graecitas) for "pagan" and "paganism" and occasionally even transcribe or borrow the Greek words **Ἕλλην(ικός)** and **ἑλληνισμός** for pagan and paganism: **אליניס, אלהניס** = **Ἕλλην** and **ἑλληνικός**, and also **מסמס**, **הלניסמוס**, or **הלניסמוס**, for **ἑλληνισμός**. The only Jewish writer cited by LSJ who uses **ἑλληνικός** and **ἑλληνισμός** in the sense of "pagan" or "Hellenism" (= aping the Greeks) is, in fact, the Greek-speaking author or epitomator of II Macc. (4, 10 and 4, 13; in the latter case **ἑλληνισμός** is paraphrased as **πρόσβασις ἁλλοφυλισμοῦ**).

guage, but possibly much more, perhaps, even, including Greek philosophy.²⁸ This story is manifestly not an historical account but the expression of oriental fantasy, formulated in hyperbolic language, that, *ipso facto*, indicates that it is in no way to be taken literally. Nonetheless, the story reflects elements of a historical reality, the general intermingling of cultures in this area and the specific openness of Aramaic-speaking Jews and of their leadership to the other major culture, Hellenism, in their environment;²⁹ but, of course, it cannot be imagined that the numbers mentioned here are (or are really meant to be) anything like a basis for conclusions about educational or institutional reality. As a curiosity I will mention here only the fact that in some of the parallel texts³⁰ the numbers are vastly inflated, while keeping their elegant proportions; in one of the sources the number is given as 250 000, in another as 64 000 000! Though S. Lieberman, perhaps the most learned scholar working in this field in the last two centuries, draws the line at the higher numbers of 250 000 and 64 000 000 and calls them legendary, he thinks that the passage in the text of BT BQ 83a and Soṭa 49b where only one thousand students are mentioned "has all the marks of reliability". Indeed he goes further and argues that "we have here explicit testimony to the effect that the young men³¹ belonging to the house of the Patriarch who

²⁸ BT BQ 83a: אֵלֶּף יְלִידִים הָיוּ בְּבֵית אַבָּא חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת מֵרֶם לַמְּדוּ תוֹרָה חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת לַמְּדוּ חֻכְמָה; for parallel see BT Soṭa 49b; and for similar, indeed vastly larger, hyperbolic numbers of students (though not of Greek) see in text below and note 31. For a similar expression in Christian writers of the fourth century (Ephrem and Athanasius), both in Syriac and in Greek, cf. *hekmta d-yawnaye* and ἡ σοφία τῶν Ἑλλήνων, both quoted by Sebastian Brock in "From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning", *Synkretismus im syrisch-persischen Kulturgebiet*, ed. A. Dietrich, 1975, 19 with nn. 12-13 and 21 with n. 31. This is reprinted in Sebastian Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*, 1984, same pagination.

²⁹ How pervasive this tendency of partial but nevertheless deep penetration of Greek elements into the non-hellenized population of the area was can be seen from the fact that the Greek I Macc. (a translation of a Hebrew or Aramaic original now lost) shows clear and unmistakable signs of the presence of Greek literary, rhetorical and historiographical motifs in the linguistic reservoir of speakers of a Semitic language towards the end of the second century BC. See for this the learned and enlightening discussion by D. Gera of I Macc. chapter 6, 33-47 in Menahem Stern Memorial volume, forthcoming.

³⁰ These, as we shall see below, are texts that tell a different story but use the same motifs, e.g. impossibly large numbers of very young students (the Hebrew words used refer to very young *children*), all attributed to the same *Tradent*.

³¹ The texts explicitly describe them as children, יְלִידִים, and, in the parallel stories where the same motif is used, as babies, חִינוּקָה! See Gittin 58a (64 000 000); PT Ta'anot 69a (250 000); Lam. R. III. 51 p.138 Buber (250 000) all obviously, indeed explicitly, from the same original source. See on all this S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, 1962, 104f. with n. 33; Wasserstein, *apud* Schluchter, *op. cit.*, 281ff. especially 289-90 with nn. 44-47. What seems to me remarkable and not entirely clear is that in all these sources we hear of *chil-*

studied Greek Wisdom were numerically at least approximately equal to those who studied Torah". Elsewhere³² he uses this passage as a proof-text for the assertion that we have here "first-hand evidence that an academy of Greek Wisdom existed in Jewish Palestine [at the beginning of the second century] under the auspices of the Patriarch".

There is no proper foundation for these far-reaching conclusions nor for such generalisations as that by the same scholar (*G.J.P.*, p. 2) "The Greek of the Palestinian Rabbis is mainly the Greek of the middle-class man of Palestine." We simply do not have the material, documentary, epigraphic, or even anecdotal, on which to base this sort of generalisation.³³

The picture that emerges from the examination of the linguistic evidence is not as simple as one might think: we do find Greek things, language, law, ideas, everywhere; but these need to be examined with care and weighed exactly for their true significance.

Some rabbinic (non-hellenised) Jews may indeed have known Greek with varying degrees of proficiency. There were, it is also true, things in the air, words, expressions, ideas, even philosophical ideas,³⁴ images, proverbs, quotations;³⁵ all

dren or even *infants* who study, not explicitly of *pupils, students* (חלמידים). The sources that mention the study of Greek (BQ 83a and Sota 49b) have ילדים (children); the others have תינוקות (babies). PT Ta'anivot 69a: תני רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר חמש מאות בתי סופרים היו בביהר והקטן שבהן אין פחות מחמש מאות תינוקות... (well over 500 x 500 = 250 000); Lam. R. III. 51: חמש מאות בתי סופרים היו בביהר: הקטן לא היה פחות מחמש מאות תינוקות... (as above: well over 500 x 500 = 250 000); Gittin 58a: ארבע מאות בתי כנסיות היו בכרך ביהר ובכל אחת ואחת היו בה ארבע מאות... (400 x 400 = 64 000 000). It is clear that we have here two variants of the same tradition, both deriving ultimately from Rabban Shim'on b. Gamaliel; the mention of Beitar dates the last three passages after AD 135. For other, similarly impossible, hyperbolic numbers cf. PT Ta'anivot 68d: eight hundred million people killed at Beitar; BT Gittin 57a: King Yannai had six hundred thousand towns with a total population of more than three hundred and sixty billion (sic!) inhabitants.

³² *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, 1942, 1; see also p. 20: "five hundred young men connected with the house of the Jewish Patriarch devoted their time to the study of Greek literature".

³³ In a later paper, "How much Greek in Jewish Palestine?" *Biblical and Other Studies*, ed. A. Altmann, 1963, 123 ff., dealing primarily with traces of Greek philosophy in rabbinic thought, Lieberman expresses himself somewhat more cautiously.

³⁴ See Lieberman *ap. Altmann, op. cit.*, 123ff.; Wasserstein, *ap. Schlachter, op. cit.*, 289 and n. 43; and 290-300 with nn. 55-106.

³⁵ See, e.g. S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, 1942, 37f. with notes; 144-160. For similar and even more far-reaching developments in Christian Aramaic see Brock, *op. cit.*, *passim*; note especially, e.g., 27 with n. 113. Brock rightly points not only to the co-habitation of the Greek and Aramaic cultures but to the role of Aramaic culture over long periods of time in ensuring the survival (or

this does not mean that non-hellenised Palestinian Jews, or a significant proportion of them, or even a substantial number of the educated class of rabbinic Jews or, indeed, of the Rabbis themselves, knew Greek language or literature.

Further, it is also true that at times non-hellenised Jews in Palestine, even those who did not know Greek, used Greek institutions, had recourse to what they called Greek Law, wrote, or caused to be written on their behalf, in Greek, documents, not only deeds of sale, petitions, land registrations, receipts, mortgage loans, promissory notes, etc. but even such intimately familial documents as marriage contracts.³⁶

serving as the conduit for the transmission) of ancient Mesopotamian wisdom literature. One may add that the common Aramaic civilisation performed undoubtedly a similar function in preserving and transmitting ancient Mesopotamian legal norms and procedures as well as astronomical knowledge and calendaric procedures.

³⁶ See for instance the collection of Greek documents from the so-called Babatha Archive published by Naphtali Lewis ed., *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters* (Judean Desert Studies), 1989. See also my paper "A Marriage Contract from the Province of Arabia Nova: Notes on Papyrus Yadin 18", *JQR* 80, 1989, 93-130. On legal norms and procedures among the non-hellenized population of Judaea and the Provincia Arabia between ca. 100 and 132 AD see also H. Cotton, "The Guardianship of Jesus Son of Babatha: Roman and Local Law in the Province of Arabia", *JRS* 83, 1993, 94-108; *ead.*, "Rent or Tax Receipt from Maoza", *ZPE* 100, 1994, 547-557; *ead.*, "Loan with Hypothec: Another Papyrus from the Cave of Letters?" *ZPE* 101, 1994, 53-60; *ead.*, "A Cancelled Marriage Contract from the Judaean Desert", forthcoming in *JRS* 84, 1994; H. Cotton and J. Greenfield, "Babatha's Property and the Law of Succession in the Babatha Archive", forthcoming in *ZPE* 104, 1994. Many of these documents may have been written in Greek in order to make them enforceable in the provincial courts; nevertheless it is striking that they contain provisions that are in conformity with Jewish law which, e.g. in the matter of marriage contracts, included elements of ancient Mesopotamian law; see, e.g., my paper in *JQR* 80, 1989, especially 105ff. with notes 42ff. It is further to be noted that the Babatha archive includes some Aramaic documents such as sales contracts, certificates of deposit, and most important of all, a bequest of property. In the latter case certainly, and in the others probably, it seems reasonable to assume that enforceability in a provincial court would also have been in the mind of the testator, and it is therefore remarkable that the language used is not Greek but Aramaic. Most important of all is P. Yadin 10, a marriage contract (Ketubba), recently published by Y. Yadin, J.C. Greenfield and A. Yardeni, conforming in all respects to rabbinic Law as laid down in the Mishna, the redaction of which is to be dated ca. three generations after the date of the Ketubba: see Y. Yadin, J.C. Greenfield and A. Yardeni, "Babatha's Ketubba", *Israel Exploration Journal* 44, 1994, 75-99. It is to be hoped that the other Aramaic (including Nabatean) documents, too, will soon be published. They are listed in N. Lewis, *op. cit.*, 29 under nn. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, (10), 36.

But all this does not point to direct acquaintance with the Greek sources. In common English speech to-day there are many expressions or even quotations drawn from the Bible: so far from testifying to acquaintance with Scripture, they do not even show that their users know the English translation. The speaker (and, one suspects, the writer) may sometimes not know either what the source is or even that he is quoting from a scriptural text. Similarly, expressions or quotations from Shakespeare in modern English texts do not necessarily show that their user has ever read a Shakespearean text. These expressions have become part of the verbal and figurative storehouse of the English language and imagination. *Mutatis mutandis* the same is true of the native inhabitants of Palestine and the surrounding regions, Jews and Gentiles alike.

Thus when one notes the existence of very large numbers of Greek loanwords in rabbinic Hebrew and in Jewish Aramaic one must at once add that these too have to be examined carefully before they are used as an argument for the assertion that the Jews using these languages knew Greek: we must not be tempted to hasty generalisation. The fact is that a very high proportion of Greek loanwords in rabbinic Hebrew and in Jewish Aramaic are found also in other Aramaic dialects, especially, of course, but not only, in Syriac, the best documented of all non-Jewish Aramaic dialects. (For a selection of Greek loanwords in Jewish Aramaic and in Syriac see Appendix [a].)

It is in this context interesting to observe that Aramaic borrows not only nouns but also verbs: cf. Gk. *κατηγορεῖν* and *קטרי* with metathesis of *rho* and *gamma*, both in Syriac and in Jewish Aramaic, reflecting the fact that both these Aramaic dialects derive this from the common Aramaic source, i.e. the Aramaic *koinē*.³⁷

The large extent of the overlap of loanwords in Jewish Aramaic and in Syriac is significant; no less significant is the fact that both these Aramaic dialects also share the results of certain internal Aramaic developments in the case of these Greek loanwords. This suggests, not that the Rabbis had borrowed these words directly from Greek, but rather that they found them ready-made, readily available, in the Aramaic *koinē*, which they shared with their non-Jewish, non-hellenised, non-Greek-speaking, neighbours not only in Palestine but in the whole region both before and after the Christian period. Such Greek influences as are clearly visible in the high number of Greek loan-words in post-biblical³⁸ Hebrew and in Jewish Aramaic must, of course, cause us to think; but they need not be seen necessarily (or mainly) as the result of direct Jewish borrowing from Greek. Rather we may explain them as the outcome, and in a sense as the natural and not even very surprising outcome, of the contact between two supra-national civilisations, Hellenistic and Aramaic. The non-hellenized Jews of Palestine were part of the civilisation of Aramaic-speaking populations of the Near East. It was

³⁷ My son David Wasserstein points out to me that my conclusion may be somewhat rash and too radical: the metathesis may occur independently in the two semitic speech-forms in accordance with common or similar developmental tendencies in these two closely related dialects. In either case the proximate source for the borrowing would be the Aramaic *koinē*.

³⁸ For Greek loan-words in late biblical Aramaic see Appendix [b].

the common Aramaic inheritance, the common Aramaic language, that served as the principal conduit for hellenistic influences on non-hellenized Jewry. Thus, hellenistic elements in non-hellenized Palestinian Judaism can, paradoxically, be seen not as deliberate and conscious adoption of foreign, Greek, ways, but, on the contrary, as a sign of belonging to the home-grown culture of the Aramaic East within the Empire as well as outside its borders. This supra-national, non-hellenic culture was partly, but only partly, influenced and shaped by its contact with hellenism in its various forms through many centuries of the common life of many various ethnic groups in the whole area.

How widespread the intermingling of the various ethnic elements was throughout the centuries in the region of Syria and Palestine even beyond the thickly-settled areas of these and neighbouring countries can be seen not only from literary references, but from actual documentation, e.g. from the Idumaeen marriage contract dated 176 BC mentioned above;³⁹ from the Babatha archive coming from the region south of the Dead Sea and dating from ca AD 95 to AD 132;⁴⁰ it is also observable elsewhere, over long periods, e.g. in the excavations by the North Sinai Expedition of the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, headed by E.D. Oren, and their predecessors earlier in the century. They worked on the remains of the once prosperous Nabataean city of Qaşrawet, which existed until, at least, the fourth Christian century, in the dunes of the northwestern part of Sinai, on the caravan route from Syria to Egypt. There they found buildings in hellenistic, Roman, Egyptian and Nabataean styles, pottery, coins and other objects of Jewish, Christian and pagan provenance, e.g. a Greek ostrakon, a Jewish coin from the Bar-Kokhba revolt, lamps with a seven-branched Menorah, and others with the Christian cross, both the latter from the fourth century.⁴¹

The common language of these many diverse groups was Aramaic. One remembers in this context the terrifying words of Jesus on the Cross (Psalm 22, 2: *אלי אלי, למה עזבתני*, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?), words that are quoted in the Greek New Testament in Greek transliteration but in the original language in which Jesus spoke: (Mt. 27, 46; Mk. 15, 34): 'Ηλί, 'Ηλί, λαμὰ σαβαχθανί;⁴² Thus it appears in the Greek NT, both in Matthew and in Mark,

³⁹ See above, note 17.

⁴⁰ See above, note 36.

⁴¹ See E. Stern ed., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* IV, 1993, 1213-1218.

⁴² For the sake of convenience I quote from Souter's text of the NT (2nd ed. 1947, repr. 1953); from his apparatus it appears that there are variants in the manuscript tradition, mainly in the vocalisation, that seem to suggest that there are text traditions that have the saying in a somewhat more aramaicised form as far as the vowels are concerned; the other variants, those that concern the consonants, are either mis-spellings (e.g. ζαφθανεί in D, a fifth century Greco-Latin MS and in the *Vetus Latina*; this may be an unsuccessful attempt to re-hebraize the text by restoring *עִזְבֹתִי* and transliterating it by <ā>ζαφθάνει) of the traditionally received reading, or variant transcriptions of σαβαχθανί in which the aspirated consonants -χθ- have been replaced by their unaspirated (and mutually assimilated) correlatives -κτ- (e.g., σαβακτανει, in MS B, quoted by

and in the Peshitta in both places, as well as in the Peshitta version of Psalms; so also, with a slight variation (*sabacthani*), in Jerome's Vulgate of the NT, both in Mt 27, 46 and in Mk 15, 34.⁴³

We come here as near to the actual words spoken by Jesus as anywhere in the New Testament. Jesus spoke, like other Jews of his time and of his class, the Palestinian form of the Aramaic *koinē*.

Rabbinic Judaism which came into being in the same period as the other claimant to the succession of ancient Hebrew (i.e. biblical) religion, Christianity, remained, if not unaffected by hellenism, certainly unvanquished by it. This is of some importance for the student of ancient history; it is particularly important for those who study the survival of that sort of Judaism whose basic documents in antiquity are all, without exception, written in Hebrew, of course, but also very largely in Aramaic, and in no other language.

The Aramaic tendency (in fact, one might say: the Aramaic element, the Aramaic sentiment) in rabbinic Judaism was so strong that it was possible to claim that Ezra the Scribe was the recipient of the revelation of the Torah in the Aramaic language: "In the beginning, the Torah was given to Israel in "Hebrew" (i.e. old Hebrew) script and in the Holy Tongue; later it was given to them again in the time of Ezra in the "Assyrian" script (i.e. in what we now call the "square" characters derived from the Aramaic alphabet) and in the Aramaic language; Israel chose the Assyrian script and the Holy Tongue".⁴⁴ It was, in any case, not unnatural to connect Ezra's name with the oral pre-history of the Aramaic Targum of the Pentateuch for the Rabbis could rely on scriptural authority (which may well contain a kernel of historical fact): we are told that Ezra "...opened the Book in the sight of all the people...<and> so they read in the Book in the Law of God *distinctly*, and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading" (AV).⁴⁵ The Hebrew word translated here as "*distinctly*"⁴⁶ was understood by the ancient Rabbis to be a reference to the

Kautzsch, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen*, 1884, 11); but there is one really significant deviation from the Psalmist's Hebrew text quoted by Jesus in either Aramaic or, not less significantly, in partly aramaicised Hebrew: the Hebrew עֲזַרְיָה has been replaced by the Aramaicised עֲזַרְיָה. The Aramaic root עֲזַר in the sense of "forsake" appears frequently in Palestinian Jewish Aramaic: see M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, 1992, s.v.

43 The AV has *sabach'thani* in both Matthew and Mark; I know of only one modern version, Luther's German translation, that has *asabthani*. The N(ova) V(ulgata) has, at Mt 27, 46: *Eli, Eli, lema sabacthani,....Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti me?* At Mk 15, 34: *...lema sabacthani etc*; at Ps 22, 2 the NV has: *Deus, Deus meus, quare me dereliquisti*.

44 BT Sanhedrin 21b; see below, note 52.

45 Neh 8, 5-8 (LXX 2 Esdras 18, 5-8).

46 עֲזַרְיָה is paraphrased and enlarged in the LXX (together with the rest of the sentence): καὶ ἐδίδασκεν Εσδρας καὶ διέστελλεν ἐν ἐπιστήμῃ κυρίου, καὶ συνῆκεν ὁ λαὸς ἐν τῇ ἀναγνώσει, and is translated in the Vulgate as *distincte*, by Luther as *klärllich*, and in the Authorised Version as "*distinctly*". The NV has:

Targum, the Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch, thus establishing Ezra's connection with it.⁴⁷ The apparent scriptural connection of Ezra with the oral tradition of the Aramaic translation made it possible for the claim to be made that he was the author of the Targum. But more than that: that claim was made or fabricated in order to emphasize the greatness of Ezra, his similarity to Moses. Throughout rabbinic literature of antiquity we find the Aramaic dimension of post-exilic Judaism intimately linked to the memory of Ezra. Thus, if Moses had not received the revelation of the Law, Ezra would have been worthy of receiving it; and, although the Torah had not been given to Israel by Ezra, yet it was he who had been privileged to give them (Aramaic) script and language. The famous Rabbi Judah ha-Nassi (d. ca. 220 AD) is even reported as having said that the Torah had originally been revealed to Israel in the "Assyrian script", i.e. the Aramaic alphabet, but when they sinned the text of the Torah changed into the

et legebant in libro Legis Dei *distincte* et aperierunt sensum et explicaverunt lectionem.

⁴⁷ See BT Megillah 3a where we are told that it was Onkelos who translated the Torah into Aramaic; later in the same passage R. Iq̄a b. Abin is cited as having said (in the name of R. Ḥananel in the name of Rav) that Neh 8, 8 מפרש ("distinctly") is to be understood as referring to the Aramaic Targum.

The Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch is usually referred to as the Targum Onkelos. Onkelos is said to have been a second century proselyte who is often confused with his contemporary Aquila who revised the Greek version of the OT. Both are said to have been proselytes; and this fact, in conjunction with the similarity of their names, may well have led to the ascription of the Targum to Onkelos. It is, on the other hand, not at all certain that there ever was such a person as Onkelos. The similarity of the names may perhaps suggest that the name Onkelos is simply a variant (or corruption) of the name Ἀκυλας. It seems to be the consensus of scholarly opinion that the Targum of the Pentateuch, in its present form, must be later than Onkelos-Aquila. In any case, it seems that Onkelos was credited with it only because of the confusion with Aquila. Thus, where the Babylonian Talmud (Megillah 3a) mentions Onkelos as the translator of the Aramaic Targum, a passage in the Palestinian Talmud (Megillah 71c) cites Aquila as the author of a Greek translation. These are parallel passages derived from a common source; and it is clear which of the two is the more faithful to this source. That Aquila really translated the (or revised a) Greek translation is a well known fact documented in a number of different sources; indeed our main and most reliable source for Aquila is not the rabbinic tradition but that of Christian criticism of the OT text, especially, of course, the Hexapla of Origen. The association of Onkelos with the Aramaic Targum is documented only in the one passage quoted above; later references to the association of Onkelos with the Targum bearing his name in later rabbinic tradition are all derived from Megillah 3a (or from the source of that report). See for this the excellent presentation of the facts in the old *Jewish Encyclopedia* of 1907, vol. XII, s.v. *Targum*, especially pp. 58-9.

“old Hebrew” alphabet, רועץ;⁴⁸ and, when the Israelites had in the Babylonian exile atoned for their sins, the Torah was returned to them in the days of Ezra the Torah in the “Assyrian”, i.e. Aramaic, script.⁴⁹ That Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian know the traditions according to which Ezra restored the Torah bears testimony to the relatively early documentation of the rabbinic traditions concerning Ezra’s role in restoring the Torah to Israel, reported by R. Judah ha-Nassi, for there can be no doubt that both Clement and Tertullian report here a Jewish source, which is no less likely to have been a rabbinic source than the apocryphal IV Esdras.⁵⁰

That the highlighting of Ezra’s role functions to magnify the Aramaic dimension of post-exilic Judaism is manifest. Even the legend in which the Targum is connected in another tradition not with Ezra but with Onkelos, this too serves to celebrate the Aramaic character of Judaism in the post-exilic period. This surely is what is emphasized when it is asserted that the Targum, like the Hebrew text itself, was revealed on Mt Sinai. Like the Hebrew text, it was forgotten and had to be restored.⁵¹

This legend of the previously revealed and then forgotten and then again restored Targum, whether it refers to Ezra or to Onkelos, is an exact parallel to the story that the restoration of the forgotten original *Hebrew* text of the OT was ascribed to Ezra; it reflects the rabbinic Jews’ awareness of the importance for them of the Aramaic strand in their tradition and of their part in the Aramaic-speaking world.⁵²

Such stories are clearly of the same kind as the well-known legend of the miracle connected with the Greek translation of the Seventy; in both instances the translation is represented as more than merely authorised; it appears as in-

48 This old Hebrew alphabet is used to this days by the Samaritans. There is a self-explanatory scribal variant רועץ.

49 This is all the more remarkable since it is the same Rabbi who is reported as having asked the provocative question: What need is there in Palestine for the Syrian language? Here we should use the Holy Tongue or Greek! See BT BQ 82b-83a: The name לשון סורסי for “Syrian language” seems here to be used slightly.

50 See Appendix [c].

51 There is a late tradition (based, of course, on the Ezra tradition) according to which the revealed Targum was forgotten, and was then *restored* by Onkelos: cf. Rashi (and Tossafot) to BT Kiddushin 49a: אלא שנשתכח וחזר בסניי יתן [החרגום] אלא שנשתכח וחזר. And cf. Megillah 3a. The miraculous element in the story connecting Onkelos with the Targum is found mentioned in the geonic period by the Gaon Mar R. Sar Shalom of Sura in the mid-ninth century; see *Sepher Sha’arey Teshuva*, ed. Yeruham Fischel, 1858, 29c.

52 See Sanh. 21b: The Jews were first given the Torah in the Holy Tongue (=Hebrew) and in the Hebrew [i.e. old Hebrew] script; later, in the time of Ezra, they were given the Torah again in the Aramaic language and in the Assyrian (=Aramaic, i.e. what we call square) script; Israel then chose the Assyrian script and the Holy Tongue: חזרה וניתנה חזרה ולשון הקודש; בתחלה ניתנה תורה לישראל בכתב עברי ולשון הקודש; ביררו להן לישראל כתב אשורית ולשון הקודש להם בימי עזרא בכתב אשורית ובלשון ארמי; ביררו להן לישראל כתב אשורית ולשון הקודש.

spired and revealed. In any case the extraordinary, even canonical, position accorded to Ezra and to the Aramaic translation of the OT in the rabbinic imagination concerning the Judaism of the period immediately preceding the hellenistic period is in itself a demonstration of the aramaizing tendency in rabbinic Judaism. This tendency had a wider sweep, at least in its effect on the imagination of the Rabbis, than all the glory of the Greeks and the grandeur of the Romans that surrounded them. Thus when the Rabbis asked themselves the question that has presented itself throughout history to men faced with the multiplicity of human languages, "what is the original language of man?" they answered: Aramaic.⁵³ Obviously it was the overarching age-old Aramaic language community rather than the hellenism of their day that impressed them as having a universal and universalising character.

It may be that there was a tendency in some parts of the Second Commonwealth period, perhaps down to the Hasmonean revolt and again later after the disaster of AD 70, for some Jews to shut themselves off from the rest of the world that surrounded them. They may have tried to achieve this separation by ordinances newly made and interpretations of Scripture newly proclaimed. These were thought of and represented as having been revealed at Mt Sinai and orally transmitted in uninterrupted tradition. Indeed the foundation legend of rabbinic Judaism⁵⁴ is based precisely on this claim of a direct uninterrupted succession

⁵³ See BT Sanhedrin 38 b: R. Judah said in the name of Rav: Adam the first man spoke in Aramaic. This is especially remarkable since the prevailing view was that God had used Hebrew when he created the world: Gen R. 18, 4 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, pp. 164-5); Tanḥuma, Noah, 19; Tanḥuma (Buber) Noah 28; and the Targum Jonathan translates Gen 11, 1: **והוה כל ארעא לישן חד וממלל חד ועיטא** (quoted, in part, by Buber, *op.cit.*, 56 n. 307): the [inhabitants of the] whole earth had one language, one tongue, and [were of] one mind; and they spoke the Holy Tongue with which the world was created at the beginning: it is clear that the Aramaic translator means us to understand both that the Hebrew language was used (**בלישן קודשא הוה ממלל**) by all mankind from the creation to the building of the tower of Babel and that the same language was used by God in His creative utterance (**דאחבריא ביה עלמה**). Barhebraeus also cites various writers on the question of the original language of mankind: see Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj* I, 1932, 8; see also R. H. Charles on *Jubilees*, III, 28 with much additional material concerning differing views throughout the centuries on the primitive language of man; and see also L. Ginzberg, *Die Haggada bei den Kirchenvätern und in der apokryphischen Litteratur*, 1900, 91-4.

⁵⁴ Aboth I, 1: "Moses received the Torah from Sinai and handed it on to Joshua, and Joshua to the Elders, and the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets to the Men of the Great Synagogue". We note here two peculiarities; (a) one of substance and (b) one of form:

(a) the complete and obviously deliberate, purposeful, exclusion of the priesthood from this chain of tradition; this signals, signifies, the demonstrative turning away of the new, rabbinic, Judaism from the sacrificial religion of the Temple; that in the sentence immediately following that quoted above Simon

from Mt Sinai to the contemporary Rabbis. The truth is that we do not really know enough of the history of the period between the return from the Babylonian exile and the destruction of the Second Commonwealth to be certain about any such matters. However, it does seem to be clear that throughout the post-exilic period, even after the Hasmonean revolt against Seleucid rule and after the catastrophes of AD 70, 117 and 135 there was another and finally prevailing tendency, one of adaptation, of trying to find a *modus vivendi* with the world of which the Jewish people was *nolens volens* a part, a part that in many ways acted and reacted very much like other parts of the whole near eastern civilisation. That there were many Greek elements in that civilisation cannot be denied. But it was not a hellenistic civilisation of which we speak here. For alongside that, and sometimes intermingling with it, there existed another supra-national civilisation, influenced indeed by the encounter with the Greeks (and, later, with the Romans), but formed, and informed and characterised by the common Aramaic inheritance that had existed for many centuries before then as an international and supra-national bond for people of many nations, not all of them Semitic, of the Near East.⁵⁵

Justus is mentioned as one of the last surviving representatives of the Great Synagogue strengthens the impression of deliberate suppression of any mention of the priesthood as carriers of the tradition from Sinai: for he was himself a priest, indeed a high priest, and yet that fact is here not mentioned. Elsewhere in the Talmud his high-priestly status is not suppressed; cf. BT Menahoth 109b; BT Yoma 39a-b; PT Yoma 43c. For other references to his priestly status, including references to non-rabbinic sources see Hyman, *Toledot III* (Jerusalem reprint 1987), 1217ff.; and

(b) the hellenistic historiographical genre of "successions", διαδοχαί, in recounting the history of philosophical schools. See for more on this A. Wasserstein, *ap. Schluchter, op. cit.*, 293 with n. 69. See also A. Wasserstein, "Greek Elements in Ancient Jewish Literature", *Isac Leo Seeligmann Volume: Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World II*, ed. A. Rofé and Y. Zakovitch, 1983, 483-498, 490 with note 14 there (Hebrew).

55 The role of Aramaic as an imperial chancery language reflects, indeed relies upon, a fairly widespread knowledge of the language among educated classes of the polyphone language groups of the empire; but there can also be no doubt that the official use of the language encouraged its further spread among other sections of the population. It is well known that for a very long time Aramaic had played an important role as a tool of communication all over the Near East in Persia, Mesopotamia, the Syrian-Palestinian region and Egypt; and certainly from not later than the third century B.C. "the ubiquitous Aramaean element functioned as the carrier of intensive intercommunication over the entire region" (quoted from L. A. Oppenheim, *Letters from Mesopotamia*, 1967, 51). My friend Jonas Greenfield (private communication) has drawn my attention to Professor Joseph Naveh's argument that with the fall of the Persian empire two things happened: (a) the local languages came into use and Greek took the place of Aramaic in the West; and (b) the script ceased to be unitary and local variation began to be seen. As to (a) I would say that Greek took its place *beside*

The title and the subject of this paper include elements both negative and, one might say, halfhearted. This reflects the components of a historical reality. The extraordinary vigour and expansion of hellenism in the East from the fertile crescent to central Asia and the Indian sub-continent did not succeed (as romanisation had, almost totally, succeeded in Gaul, on the Iberian peninsula, and in parts of the Balkans) in vanquishing and eradicating the native civilisations. Though the people of the Orient were in many ways, to various degrees, massively and profoundly affected by western languages, ways of thought, intellectual fashions and moral values, they survived the impact of hellenistic power and civilisation and the no less strong hellenistic dominance in the Graeco-Roman and Byzantine periods. Deeply influenced as they were by the West, they yet were not completely hellenised.

This incompleteness of the hellenisation of the East in its most exposed area, in the Middle East, is no less a historical marvel than the profound transformation of even the non-hellenised East (or parts of it) by the irruption of western power, civilisation, and values. The meeting and mingling of East and West resulted in developments of universal historical significance: Christianity, an offshoot of a small and until then insignificant oriental tribal religion, and the moral dimensions of two millennia of European history, even into what is nowadays with some pardonable exaggeration called by some Christians the post-Christian age, bear witness to this significant — and fortunate — failure of the West completely to vanquish and westernise the East. For Christianity in the East largely remained a religion of Aramaic-speaking peoples, even though Greek-speaking Christianity had obvious political advantages over the other Eastern churches down to the seventh century. But, in any case, one must not forget that Christianity in all its forms, Greek and Latin no less than Aramaic and Coptic, had come from the Orient and had conquered and thus, in a sense, “orientalised” the West. Thus, in the end, it was not *Graecia capta* but *Iudaea capta* that *ferum victorem cepit* and civilized his rude barbarian lands.

the continuing widespread use of Aramaic rather than replacing it: and, further, that this very fact may well have contributed to the strengthening of the tendency to pluralism and thus encouraged also the wider use of local languages. These, of course, could not have come into use *ex nihilo*; they had existed before; their wider use now was probably more a reaction to hellenistic power and cultural influence than to the continuing vitality of Aramaic: it has, in fact, been possible to talk of a “Semitic reaction” to the process of hellenization in the Middle East. As for (b) Professor Greenfield’s objection is, of course, based on undeniable facts. But the emergence and divergence of local varieties of what may have been a more or less unitary script and uniform language are to be explained as the natural consequence of the disappearance of the political structure that had before that period ensured the unitary, because official character of script and language. The emergence and divergence of local dialects testify to the *popular* use of Aramaic more than anything else.

APPENDIX

[a] GREEK LOAN-WORDS IN JEWISH ARAMAIC AND IN SYRIAC

The following is a short list of selected Greek loanwords that appear in Jewish Aramaic and other Aramaic dialects, principally in Syriac, the best documented of all non-Jewish Aramaic dialects. In order to make the list as varied, but also as short, as possible I have chosen two words for each of the letters of the *Greek* alphabet. As will be seen from the list following an arrangement according to the Hebrew or Syriac alphabet would have been inconvenient since most words could be spelt in more ways than one.

ἀγορά	JA: אורא	Syr: אורא
ἄγων	JA: און	Syr: און
βαλανεῖον	JA: בלי	Syr: בלוא
βουλή	JA: בולי	Syr: בולא (cf. also
βουλευτής sometimes transcribed as בולהוטים)		
γεωμετρία	JA: גימטריא	Syr: גאומטריא
γύψος	JA: גיפסוס	Syr: גופסין
διαθήκη	JA: דיאחיקי	Syr: דיאחיקא
δωρεά	JA: דוריה	Syr: דורא, דוראא et sim.
εἰκόνιον	JA: איקונין	Syr: איקוניון, איקוניה
ἐπαρχος	JA: הפרכוס	Syr: הפרכא
ζημία	JA: זימיה	Syr: זימיה
ζήτημα	JA: זיטמא	Syr: זיטמא et al. sim.
ἡγεμών	JA: הגמון	Syr: הגמונא
ἥμισυ	JA: המיסו	Syr: אימיסו
θέατρον	JA: תיאטרון / טיאטרון	Syr: תהאטרון
θρόνος	JA: תרונוס	Syr: תרונוס or variants.
ιδιώτης	JA: הדיוט	Syr: הדיוטא
ἱππίατρος	JA: אפיטרוס	Syr: איפפיאטרוס (merely a transliteration.)

κάλαμος	JA: קולמוס	Syr: קלומא
κοιλία	JA: כליא	Syr: קוליון
λεγεών (Lat. legio)	JA: ליגיון	Syr: ליגיונא
λόγχη	JA: לונכי	Syr: לונכי (לונכדיא)
μηλόμελι	JA: מילומילה	Syr: מילומהלי
μηλοπέπων	JA: מילפפון	Syr: מלפפונא
ναύτης	JA: נווטא	Syr: נוטא
νόμος	JA: ניםוס (נומוס)	Syr: ניםוסא
ξενία	JA: אכסניא	Syr: אכסניא
ξένος	JA: אכסנאי	Syr: אכסנאי vel sim.
οικονόμος	JA: איקונומוס	Syr: איקונומוס (translit.?)
οινόμελι	JA: אינומילין	Syr: אונומהלי
παρρησία	JA: פרהסיא	Syr: פריסיא, פרהסיא
πραγματεία	JA: פרגמטיא, פרקמטיא	Syr: פרגומטיא, פראגמטיא
ῥευμα<τικός>	JA: ראומ [טיקוס]	Syr: רומא, רומתא
ῥήτωρ	JA: (ליטור)	Syr: רהטור, ריטור
σάνδαλον	JA: סנדל	Syr: סנדלא
συνέδριον	JA: סנהדרין	Syr: סנדרין
τόμος	JA: טימוס (טומוס) (cf. ניםוס : נומוס for νόμος)	Syr: טומסא
τύπος	JA: טופס	Syr: טופסא
ὑπηρέτης	JA: אפיריטוס	Syr: הופירטא
ὑποθήκη	JA: אפוחיקי	Syr: אופוטיקי
φамиλία (Lat. familia)	JA: פמליא	Syr: פמליא (cf. famulus)
φανός	JA: פוס	Syr: פוס
χαλινός	JA: כליוס	Syr: כאליוס
χολή	JA: כליחא, כלו	Syr: כולי
ψαλτήριον	JA: פסנטרין vel פסנחרין	Syr: פסלטיר; cf. Arabic سنطور سنطير
ψηφός	JA: פסיפס	Syr: פספסא, פסבסא

ῥκεανός	JA: אוקיאנוס	Syr: אוקינוס
ῥρολόγιον	JA: אורלוגין	Syr: אורולוגיקן ⁵⁶

These examples have been chosen out of many hundreds almost at random. Departure from randomness of choice has been dictated only by the need to verify the documentation in Jewish Aramaic and in other Aramaic dialects (principally, of course, Syriac).

I have included a few examples that illustrate certain common intra-Aramaic developments: e.g. cf. Gk. νόμος represented in Jewish Aramaic as well as in Syriac both by נִימוֹס and by נומוס.⁵⁷ I have also included a few originally Latin words that were borrowed by the Aramaic *koinē* through the mediation of Greek, e.g. legio, familia. I have, on the whole, excluded examples where the connection of the loanword with the Greek original is not immediately transparent. On the other hand, I have included a few examples that might, at first sight, mislead the unwary reader: words that seem to begin with, or to contain internally, a Semitic representation of a Greek aspiration: e.g., in the list above, ἑπαρχος (ἐπαρχεία); θέατρον; μηλόμελι; οἰνόμελι; παρρησία.

ἑπαρχος	JA: הפרכוס	Syr: הפרכא
θέατρον	JA: תיאטרון	Syr: תהאטרון
μηλόμελι	JA: מילומילה	Syr: מילומהלי
οἰνόμελι	JA: אינומילין	Syr: אונומהלי
παρρησία	JA: פרהסיא	Syr: פריסיא, פרהסיא

The use of the fifth letter of the Hebrew and Syriac alphabets (the aspiration ה = h) to represent in loanwords from Greek or in the *transliteration* of Greek words

⁵⁶ For many more examples see Krauss, *Lehnwörter, passim*; for further discussion see Schürer, II, especially pp. 52-78; A. Wasserstein, "Greek Elements in Ancient Jewish Literature", *Isac Leo Seeligmann Volume: Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World II*, edd. A. Rofé and Y. Zakovitch, 1983, 483-498, especially 483-5 (Hebrew); A. Wasserstein in Schluchter, *op. cit.*, especially p. 288 with notes 30-35; D. Sperber, *Essays on Greek and Latin in the Mishna, Talmud and Midrashic Literature*, 1982; id., *Greek and Latin Legal Terms*, 1984; id., *Nautica Talmudica*, 1986, *passim* and especially pp. 129-58. I understand that Professor Sperber is working on a new dictionary to replace Krauss (see Sperber, 1984, p. 150).

⁵⁷ Although the usual form in rabbinic Aramaic is נִימוֹס we also, occasionally, find the form נומוס, (but in PT RH 57 נומוס is not a loanword: it is part of a transliterated Greek phrase). Cf. also, above, n. 17.

the fifth letter of the Greek alphabet, ϵ , is very frequent in Syriac and is found occasionally in Jewish Aramaic.⁵⁸

It is to be noted that both in Jewish Aramaic and in Syriac the spelling of many words, in particular loanwords, varies. I have not mentioned here the variant spellings.

It is also to be noted that in all lists such as the one given above, there are likely to be found a certain number of words that cannot strictly be called loanwords, because they may, in fact, be no more than transliterations of the original Greek. This will often be the case with names; but not only with names.

[b] GREEK LOAN-WORDS IN LATE BIBLICAL ARAMAIC

Occasionally we find Greek loan-words even in late biblical Aramaic cf. Dan 3, 5: סומפניה, פסותרין, קיתרס, [שבכא], (cf. also with some variations, e.g. in the spelling of פסותרין, פסותרין: 3, 7; 3, 10; 3, 15); סומפניה, פסותרין are, of course, ultimately derived from Greek [συμφωνία, ψαλτήριον, κιθάρα [ις]]. The LXX in 3, 5 has, in one version, κιθάρα, σαμβύκη, ψαλτήριον, συμφωνία; another version has these words in all four passages. It is worth noting that the Peshitta has (unlike the Aramaic text in the Hebrew Bible) in all four passages an identical text: קיתרא וכנורא וצפוניא; omitting in each case שבכא and פסותרין and substituting כנורא, the Aramaic form of Hebrew כנור = Greek κινύρα (in LXX and Josephus), a string instrument (in modern Hebrew = violin). For צפוניא in Peshitta see Payne Smith (col 3430) s.v., with a wealth of relevant material; in Syriac we elsewhere find סומפני. The words סומפניה, קיתרס, with some variant spellings, are also found in rabbinic literature: סומפוניא: MKelim 11, 6; 16, 8; TKelim BM 1,7 (Zuckerman, p. 579); קיתרס: Targum Isaiah 5, 12; Targum Eccl 2, 8.

For Syriac פסלטרין = ψαλτήρ, ψαλτήριον = Psalter see Payne Smith, col. 3190. Arabic has سنطير (or, with different vocalisation, سنطور).⁵⁹ This, i.e. the Arabic سنطير or سنطور is more than likely to be derived from Greek φαλτήρ(ιον); but it is not likely that it is derived directly from Greek. If the word existed in Syriac, the conduit would be either Syriac or, just conceivably, Nabataean. But in spite of the rich documentation of Syriac over a period of many centuries the

⁵⁸ See for this A. Wasserstein, "A Note on the Phonetic and Graphic Representation of Greek Vowels and of the Spiritus Asper in the Aramaic Transcription of Greek Loanwords", *Scripta Classica Israelica* XII, 1993, 200ff., especially 203 - 6. Note also that in the case of Greek παρόρσις, Jewish Aramaic, as far as I know, invariably conforms to the pattern mentioned above, with the qualification that in פרהסיא the *he* represents not the Greek *epsilon* but its close quasi-equivalent *eta*; the same phenomenon is found also in Syriac פרהסיא; however, Syriac also knows the variant form פריסיא, in which the *yod* represents the italicized *eta*.

⁵⁹ See R. Dozy, *Supplément aux Dictionnaires arabes* I, 1881, 694.

word never seems to occur in that language: the citation in Payne Smith's *Thesaurus* mentioned above is, of course, a mere transliteration, not a real loan-word in Syriac. Nabataean is too poorly attested for a conjecture about it serving as the conduit to be really plausible.

For the representation (in Arabic **سنطير** or **سنطور**) of the Greek *lambda* of *ψαλτήριον* by *nun*: this is not uncommon in Aramaic dialects: cf. **פסוטרין** above, and, for a similar representation of a Semitic liquid consonant (*resh*) by *nun* Aramaic **מדנחא** and Hebrew **מורח**. For Aramaic **שנכא** (also spelled **סנכא**) cf. Greek *σαμβύκη*, also *σάμβυξ*, for which see LSJ s.vv. Latin: *sambuca*. It may be an originally Semitic word (but see LSJ s.v. *σαμβύκη*). The context in which **שנכא** occurs in Dan 3, 5 suggests the possibility that it, like its two neighbours, is there a loanword; if so, and if it is indeed borrowed from Greek, and if it is originally a Semitic word, this would be an illustration of the interesting phenomenon of a word borrowed from one language into another returning as a loan-word to its original home;⁶⁰ but there are too many "ifs" here to enable us to arrive at any plausible conclusion. (Payne Smith knows the word **סנכא** but he does not note the meaning *sambuca* or anything like it; he connects it with the Hebrew root **סנך** and quotes for it the meaning *velum reticulatum*, like Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic **סנכה** (**שנכה**) = net, *vel sim.*).

[c] On Ezra the Scribe (see above, note 50)

On Ezra being worthy to receive the revelation and to give the Torah to Israel had it not been given to Moses cf. Tosefta Sanhedrin 4, 7, Zuckerman, p. 421f.: **ראוי היה עזרא שתינתן תורה על ידו אלמלא קידמו משה... אף הוא נתן בידיו**; **רבי אומר בכתב אשורי ויתנה** (Zuckerman, p. 422) **כתב ולשון** **תורה לישראל וכשחשאו והפכה להן לרועץ וכשוכו בימי עזרא חזרה להן אשוריה**. See *ibid.* for further comparison of Ezra with Moses; and cf. BT Sanhedrin 21b-22a; PT Megillah 71b; Yalqut Ezra 7 (**התרטט**). Tertullian, *de cultu feminarum* (ed. Marie Turcan, Sources Chrétiennes, no. 173), I, 3, 2: ... Hierosolymis Babylonia expugnatione deletis omne instrumentum Iudaicae litteraturae per Esdram constat restauratum; similarly Jerome, *de perpetua virginitate Beatae Mariae adv. Helvid.*, 7 (PL vol. XXIII, p. 190: ... sive Moysen dicere volueris auctorem Penta-teuchi, sive Ezram eiusdem instauratorem operis...). On Ezra restoring the Torah after it had been forgotten, see also Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* I, 21, 149: [έν] τῇ <ἐπὶ> Ναβουχοδόνσορ αἰχμαλωσίᾳ διαφθαρειῶν τῶν γραφῶν κατὰ τοῦ Ἀρταξέρχου τοῦ Περσῶν βασιλέως χρόνους ἐπίπνους Ἐσδρας ὁ Λευίτης ὁ ἱερεὺς γενόμενος πάσας τὰς παλαιὰς αὐθις ἀνανεοῦμενος προεφήτευσεν γραφάς. Cf. also Irenaeus *c. haer.* III, 21, 2 (fragm. gr. 31); cf. Sifre Deut., 48 (ed. Finkelstein-Horovitz, 1939; reprint New

⁶⁰ Cf. modern Greek *σινεμά* from French *cinéma* originally from Greek *κίνημα*; modern Greek *σενاريو* borrowed from French *scénario*, Italian *scenario*, from a postulated but non-attested Greek *σκηναρίον*.

York 1969): ... לא עמד שפן בשעתו צורא בשעתו רבי עקיבה בשעתו לא היה תורה ... *משנכתח* had it not been for Shaphan in his time, for Ezra in his time, for R. Aqiba in his time, would not the Torah have been forgotten? See for this also Sukka 20a: Ezra restored the Torah which had been forgotten; see also Sanhedrin 21b. Cf. IV Esdras 14, 19-50: see the English translation with the commentary by Michael E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 1990, 425-442. Note, by the way, that the whole chapter is full of motifs that are taken from the biblical reports about Moses. In the Qur'ān (9, 30) we read "The Jews say that 'Uzair [=Ezra] is the son of Allah, the Christians say that the Messiah [Jesus] is the son of Allah; that is what they say with their mouths, conforming to what was formerly said by those who disbelieve; Allah fight them for they are involved in lies" (tr. Richard Bell, vol. I, 1937). It may well be that this accusation is founded upon some misunderstanding, as L. Ginzberg suggests (*Legends of the Jews*, VI, 1968, 432); on the other hand it is no less conceivable that this testifies to the high regard in which the Jews held Ezra.

Pagan critics of Christianity in antiquity were aware of the importance ascribed to Ezra in the recovery and transmission of Holy Scripture. Thus Porphyry, who, unlike some other pagan opponents of Christianity, admitted the priority of Moses in comparison to Homer (he places him more than a thousand years before the poet) yet repeats the story of the loss of the Torah at the destruction of the first temple and its (as he claimed, imperfect) restoration by Ezra. Similarly, Julian the Apostate, though also dating Moses before Homer, nevertheless denies that the latter borrowed from the Hebrew revelation; he regards the biblical accounts and the Homeric parallels as mutually independent mythical developments. Even so, Julian, too, repeats the report that Ezra had added to the Mosaic narrative. Cf. Cyril Al., c. *Iulianum* IV, PG 76, p. 705 d ff. (Iul. c. *Christianos* I ed. Neumann, 181,10 - 183,6; Cyril Al. c. *Iul.* V, PG 76, p. 757 a (Iul. c. *Christianos*, fr. 15): "Εσδραν ἀπὸ γνώμης ἰδίας προσενεγκεῖν τινα. See also, for Porphyry, Macarius Magnes, *Ἀποκριτικός* (ed. C. Blondel, 1876, 54), III, 3: ἔτι δὲ πολλῆς μοι γέμον τῆς ἀβελτερίας φαίνεται τὸ λεχθέν (John, 5, 46) εἰ ἐπιστεύετε Μωσεῖ, ἐπιστεύετε ἂν ἐμοί. Περὶ γὰρ ἐμοῦ ἐκεῖνος ἔγραψεν. "Ἐλεγεν· ὁμως δὲ Μωσέως οὐδὲν ἀποσώζεται. Συγγράμματα γὰρ πάντα συνεμπεπρήσθαι τῷ ναῷ λέγεται. "Ὅσα δὲ ἐπ' ὀνόματι Μωσέως ἐγράφη μετὰ ταῦτα μετὰ χίλια καὶ ἑκατὸν καὶ ὀγδοήκοντα τῆς Μωσέως τελευτῆς ὑπὸ "Εσδρα καὶ τῶν ἀμφ' αὐτὸν συνεγράφη. Εἰ δὲ καὶ Μωσέως δοίη τις εἶναι τὸ γράμμα οὐ δυνατόν δειχθῆναι ὡς θεὸν που λελέχθαι ἢ θεὸν λόγον τὸν Χριστὸν ἢ δημιουργόν. "Ὅλως δὲ Χριστὸν σταυροῦσθαι τίς εἶρηκεν (= Porphyry, fr. 68: A. v. Harnack, *Porphyrius "Gegen die Christen", 15 Bücher, Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referate* in *Abhandlungen der königl. preuss. Ak. d. Wiss., Phil.-Hist. Kl.*, no. 1, 1916, 87). See on this Jean Pépin, *op. cit.*, 232-234.