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Post-biblical Hebrew in the Gospels

Jan Joosten

The Greek language of the gospels exhibits many features reflecting the Semitic milieu in which the narrative is set. There are Semitic words, such as αμην "amen," and phrases, such as ταλιθα κουμ "little girl, get up" (Mark 5:41), Semitic loanwords, such as πασχα "Passover," a plethora of Semitic proper names, and Greek phrases such as ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ "in the world to come" (Mark 10:30) whose meaning can be fully understood only in light of the Semitic expressions they correspond to.

The literary effect of these elements is paradoxical: on the one hand they bring the reader closer to the events and situations narrated, as if one were hearing the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus and his contemporaries. At the same time, they have a foreignizing effect: the reader realizes that the events and sayings of the gospel belong to a different world[1].

The philological study of Semitic elements in the Greek gospels is important for the correct understanding of the passages in which they occur, but it matters beyond questions of exegesis. In some instances, the features may be taken to bear witness to the authenticity of the gospel account[2]. Admittedly, many of them reflect the influence of the Hebrew Bible, usually mediated through the Septuagint. But other features do not occur in the Hebrew Bible. These appear to reflect a stage in the gospel tradition in which some accounts of Jesus' words and deeds circulated in a Semitic language.

Both Aramaic and Hebrew are relevant to the analysis of such Semitic elements[3], but their treatment has been unduly skewed in favour of Aramaic[4]. In

[1] See e.g. MUDROŇ, Hearer's Response to Jesus' Aramaic in Mark.

[2] See the discussion in STUCKENBRUCK, 'Semitic Influence on Greek.'

[3] For the state of the question, see BALTES, *Hebräisches Evangelium und synoptische Überlieferung*; BUTH – NOTLEY, *The Language Environment of First Century Judaea*; FASSBERG, Which Semitic Language Did Jesus and Other Contemporary Jews Speak?; PAZZINI, Ktorým jazykom hovoril Ježiš?

[4] This is not to diminish the work of scholars such as Gustav Dalman, Julius Wellhausen, Joachim Jeremias, Matthew Black, Maurice Casey or Bruce Chilton, who set out from the notion that Jesus and his disciples predominantly spoke Aramaic. The

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the present study, after some necessary prolegomena, a number of passages will be discussed where post-biblical Hebrew words and expressions seem to underly the Greek gospel text.

1 Prolegomena

Before discussing specific examples, it will be worthwhile to reflect on the status of Hebrew and Aramaic in Jewish Palestine during the Roman period, on the interaction between these two languages within the Jewish community, and on the position of Jesus within the multilingual and multicultural society of his time.

Hebrew in Jewish Palestine in the late Second Temple period

Hebrew was the national language of the kingdom of Judah until the fall of Jerusalem in 587/6 B.C.E. The loss of sovereignty weakened the nation, and the forced migration of a sizeable part of the population caused much upheaval. But the notion that Hebrew died out in the wake of those events is fanciful. The exile did not leave the Judean territory an empty land, and the local population naturally continued to speak the ancestral language. In exile, most Judeans probably did adopt Aramaic as their first language[5]. However, those who returned during the Persian period, out of a religiously inspired national fervor, did not impose this foreign language upon the citizen-temple community they

contribution of these scholars to the philology of the gospels is considerable. It is nevertheless one-sided and neglects the evidence for the use of post-Biblical Hebrew as a living language in the time of Jesus.

[5] The use of Aramaic is solidly attested for the western diaspora, for which we have the Elephantine papyri. The conditions of the Babylonian exile make it likely that the eastern diaspora too abandoned Hebrew as a spoken language after one or two generations, and adopted Aramaic in day-to-day speech. The tangible evidence to this effect is very meagre, but not inexistent. Some of the famous cuneiform documents involving Judean exiles, from Al Yahudu and other localities, have epigraphs written in alphabetic script. As André Lemaire pointed out, some of the earliest epigraphs are written in palaeo-Hebrew script and one of them includes the Hebrew noun *ben* "son." Later epigraphs of the same type are all written in Aramaic script and language. This indicates that "Judaean exiles in and around al-Yahudu kept their Hebrew culture, at least for several tens of years after the Exile, even though they might use more and more Aramaic for their daily life"; see LEMAIRE, *Levantine Epigraphy*, 43-45.

founded. They wrote religious literature in Hebrew—Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles—and no doubt spoke Hebrew in their families[6]. Hebrew remained a productive language throughout the Second Temple period. At the beginning of the second century BCE, the book of Ben Sira was composed in Hebrew. So were most of the writings of the Qumran community a century later[7]. The Mishna, which was codified around the year 200 CE but contains traditions reaching back to the first century BCE at least, is almost entirely written in Hebrew.

There is a remarkable dearth of epigraphic material for Persian and early Hellenistic Judea. What little there is suggests that, alongside Aramaic, Hebrew was alive and well[8]. Notably a few seals have come to light qualifying their owner as הכהן "the priest" or הפחה "the governor," with the Hebrew definite article. There is also a chit ordering "dough for 1000 loaves," with the Hebrew word בצק (*bāṣēq*) "dough" showing that its language is Hebrew[9]. More material has been preserved for the Roman period, and it fairly evenly divides up between Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek[10]. The documentary evidence, rare though it may be, shows that a distinct type of Hebrew was used in day-to-day communication. While the late Biblical books, Ben Sira and the writings of the Qumran community are mostly written in an idiom approaching Biblical Hebrew, the documentary texts hew more closely to Mishnaic Hebrew[11]. It appears that, after the exile, Hebrew bifurcated into a "high" language used in literature and a "low language" used in informal discourse[12].

The literary works themselves give evidence of this split. The late Biblical books, Ben Sira and the Qumran scrolls are mostly composed in a style modeled on the classical Hebrew of the Bible, but sporadic instances of the new Hebrew intrude here and there[13]. This happens already in the latest of Biblical books—

[6] See Neh 13:24.

[7] For the date of the Qumran writings, see WISE, Dating the Teacher of Righteousness.

[8] See HAMILTON, Paleo-Hebrew Texts.

[9] NAVEH, Hebrew and Aramaic Inscriptions, 9-10.

[10] See BALTES, The Use of Hebrew and Aramaic; WISE, *Language and Literacy*.

[11] See the thorough study of the language of Hebrew documents from the first and early second centuries CE in MOR, *Judean Hebrew*.

[12] WISE, Language, 288-317.

[13] See STEINER, Colloquialism, who lists earlier scholars sharing this view on pages 21-26; BARR, Hebrew, 84: "(Middle Hebrew) goes back to a colloquial register of Hebrew

Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles, Esther, Ecclesiastes and Daniel—but the process is particularly conspicuous in the Dead Sea Scrolls. For example, money is in these texts mostly referred to with the Biblical word הון (*hōn*), but a few times it is called ממון (*māmōn*), a synonym unknown from the Hebrew Bible. The adverb "now" is always עתה (*ʿattāh*) in the Qumran writings, as in the Bible, but in one instance we find the new-fangled עכשו (*ʿakšāw*) instead. The new words, ממון and עכשו, are the ones commonly used in Mishnaic Hebrew. Such occasional intrusions of a later type of vocabulary in literary works show that the author switches between the "high" language of literature and the "low" language of everyday conversation. Mishnaic Hebrew descends from the low language.

Alongside Hebrew, Aramaic had a strong presence in Judea. It was the language of the diaspora, with whom exchanges and mutual visits will have been frequent. An epistolary exchange between the Jews/Judeans in Elephantine, in Egypt, and the temple officials in Jerusalem at the end of the fifth century BCE was conducted in Aramaic[14]. Aramaic was also the language of administration in Judea throughout the Persian period. The literate elites in the cities would have been proficient in this language, in both speech and writing. In the Hellenistic period, Greek took over as the language of government, but the change was not immediate. Aramaic continued to be used in many official documents.

The Aramaic texts from Qumran may have been written in Palestine, some of them perhaps on the basis of earlier models circulating in the diaspora. These texts were obviously cherished by the Qumran community, but they hardly originated there[15]. They are the literature of unknown groups of Aramaic speaking Jews living in Palestine.

In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, Greek was the language of government and administration. It became a religious language in Judea under the influence of the western diaspora, where Jews had adopted the Septuagint as their Bible and Greek as their main language of worship. The Theodotus inscription, discovered in Jerusalem in 1913–1914 and probably to be dated to the first century CE, indicates both the presence of Greek-speaking Jews in

which overlapped with the Late Biblical Hebrew of the latest biblical books and which occasionally threw up within their text outcrops of Middle-Hebrew-like features"; BAR-ASHER, *Studies in Classical Hebrew*, 232.

[14] See COWLEY, *Aramaic Papyri*, 108-125 (Cowley 30, 31, 32).

[15] See for these texts the rich collection of studies in BERTHELOT – STÖKL BEN EZRA, *Aramaica Qumranica*.

Judea, and their connection to the diaspora[16]. If the Psalms of Solomon, composed in Jerusalem in the aftermath of Pompey's conquest in 63 BCE, were originally written in Greek, as several scholars have argued recently, they could represent the literature of a group of diaspora Jews settled in Jerusalem[17].

The simultaneous presence of different languages suggests that, by the first century CE, many Jews in the homeland were bi- or trilingual, switching languages depending on the occasion, the context and the addressees.

Aramaicized Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic

Hebrew and Aramaic are Semitic languages belonging to the same North-West Semitic branch. The two languages share a large part of their vocabularies and grammar. Even in classical Biblical Hebrew, it is not always easy to tell an Aramaic loanword from a Hebrew cognate. Among the Jewish community of the postexilic period, the two languages grew even closer than before[18].

While Hebrew had been resistant to excessive borrowing during the monarchic period, after the fall of Jerusalem there was an important influx of Aramaic loanwords. What is particularly striking is that the loanwords include not only content words, such as זְמָן (*z^{e}mān*) "time" (Neh 2:6), but also function words, such as כְּבָר (*k^{e}bār*) "already" (Eccl 1:10) or אִלּוּ (*'illū*) "if" (Esth 7:4; Eccl 6:6). There are even some morphological features from Aramaic that penetrated Hebrew, for instance the *piel* of middle weak verbs (e.g. לְקַיֵּם "to establish" in Esth 9:21). One may note also a number of "calques" ("loan-translations") such as חוּץ מִן (*ḥūṣ min*) "except" (Eccl 2:25), modelled on Aramaic בַּר מִן (literally "outside from"). The grammatical loans betray a period of intense contact between Hebrew and Aramaic. They do not indicate that Hebrew had become an artificial language, or was dying out[19].

[16] "Theodotos (…) built the assembly hall (*synagogē*) for the reading of the Law and for the teaching of the commandments, and the guest room, the chambers, and the water fittings, as an inn for those in need from foreign parts (…)." For the date, see KLOPPENBORG, Dating Theodotos.

[17] See JOOSTEN, Allusions to Scripture, 105-126.

[18] KISTER, Words and Formulae.

[19] See COOK, The Aramaic Influence, who argues that Mishnaic Hebrew came into being when a large group of Aramaic speakers switched to Hebrew for political reasons.

At the same time Hebrew was being Aramaicized, Aramaic, as spoken by Jews, was heavily influenced by Hebrew. The linguistic interpenetration flowed both ways. Yet the two processes were essentially different. Whereas Hebrew was Aramaicized "from below," so to speak, Aramaic was Hebraized "from above." The main observable changes are due to the influence of Jewish beliefs and traditions. The beginning of this process can be observed in the Elephantine papyri, where we find several words borrowed from Hebrew such as פסח (*pesaḥ*) "Passover" and שבה (*šabba*) "Sabbath." Biblical Aramaic, Qumran Aramaic and and the language of the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan reflect successive stages of this process, with an increasing amount of religious terms and expressions borrowed from Hebrew.

The historical setting of the Gospel narrative

It may well be that Aramaic was the main language of most Jews in Galilee[20]. The words Jesus speaks to the daughter of Yair, the leader of a synagogue in Galilee, are Aramaic: ταλιθα κουμ "little girl, get up" (Mark 5:41). The command to a deaf man, εφφαθα "be opened" (Mark 7:34), also in a Galilean setting, could be Aramaic or Hebrew. According to Mark 15:34 and Matt 27:46, Jesus said a few words from Psalm 22:2 in Aramaic as he was dying on the cross: λεμα σαβαχθανι; "why have you abandoned me." If this information were dependable, it would constitute strong evidence for Aramaic as his native language. Note, however, that the Codex Bezae in both passages, and a few Old Latin manuscripts in Matthew, give the words from Psalm 22 in Hebrew: λαμα ζαφθανι "why have you abandoned me."

Even if Jesus' mother tongue was Aramaic, this would in no way preclude that he, and his disciples, also conversed in Hebrew on certain occasions. Luke reports that Jesus read a prophecy of Isaiah from a scroll (Luke 4:17), which suggests that he knew the higher, literary language. Otherwise, his use of Hebrew would have been mostly in the vernacular, an early form of Mishnaic Hebrew. That Jesus occasionally did use spoken Hebrew is suggested by the type of discourses attributed to him. In the Mishna, discussions on Jewish law are reported exclusively in Hebrew. It is highly likely therefore that if Jesus engaged in such discussions—on the washing of the hands, divorce, or the application of sabbath laws, as reported in the synoptic Gospels—he would have done so in

[20] See, however, the study of TURNAGE, The Linguistic Ethos of the Galilee.

Hebrew. Parables are another genre where the use of Hebrew is likely considering Rabbinic parallels[21].

If Jesus was bilingual, or trilingual, this would be in complete agreement with the language situation in first-century CE Palestine.

2 Case Studies

Although Jesus and his disciples—or some of them—may have known Greek, with one another and with other Jews they likely conversed most often in other languages. Early and authentic traditions about Jesus and his followers must in most instances have gone through a process of translation before they could be integrated into the canonical gospels[22]. It is no surprise, therefore, to find that the Greek text of the gospels contains Semitisms that are due to this translation process. Positively identifying such Semitisms requires observing a few rules of thumb[23].

- If an expression, or a grammatical construction, is attested in natural, non-translated Greek, it must not be regarded as a Semitism, even if it also resembles Semitic features. "Natural Greek" should not be limited to literary works but take in documentary sources as well.
- A feature that is clearly not native in Greek, should still bracketed out if it occurs in the Septuagint. The gospel writers—and before them those who transmitted early traditions in a Greek-speaking milieu—were intimately familiar with the Septuagint and may well have drawn expressions from there to express what they had to say.

Once a Semitism has tentatively been identified, and duly screened against natural and Septuagint Greek, the most difficult step remains to be taken: to distinguish Hebrew from Aramaic. We will first consider some possible instances of Hebrew words transcribed in the Gospel text, then some instances of Hebrew idioms potentially underlying the Greek.

[21] See GRINTZ, Hebrew as the Spoken and Written Language, 36.

[22] See the cautious reflections of STUCKENBRUCK, 'Semitic Influence on Greek.'

[23] See JOOSTEN, The Ingredients of New Testament Greek.

2.1 Hebrew words transcribed in the Greek text of the Gospels

Several of the Semitic words and phrases contained in the gospels are Aramaic, as indicated above. Some others could be Aramaic or Hebrew. Some, however, can with confidence be attributed to Hebrew.

2.1.1 κορβᾶν "offering, holy gift" as used in vows

This transcription of a Semitic word is found once in Mark, in a discourse Jesus addresses to the Pharisees and Scribes:

> You say that if anyone tells father or mother, "Whatever benefit you might have derived from me is Qorban" (that is, an offering to God)—then you no longer permit doing anything for a father or mother. (Mark 7:11-12)

Qorban (קָרְבָּן) is a well-known Hebrew word, attested 80 times in the Hebrew Bible as a general term for various kinds of gifts offered to God. It is attested in Aramaic as well, with the same meaning.

Its use in Mark 7:11 is to be understood in the context of a well-known but hard-to-grasp Jewish custom of the time, in which someone vowed to abstain from something, or to withhold something from someone else, by declaring it *qorban* "an offering to God."[24] Although in most cases nothing was really offered to God, the use of religious vocabulary made it difficult to go back on a declaration of this type, even if, as must have happened often, it was made in a fit of rage. This use of the word *qorban* is not found in the Hebrew Bible, but it is attested in the Mishna, notably in tractate Nedarim.

In an extension of the original usage, the formula was used also to scare away thieves from taking what wasn't theirs[25]. In this function, the word occurs in various grave inscriptions: "Whatever benefit a man would derive from this ossuary is *qorban.*"[26] The inscriptions are nearly contemporary with the events narrated in the Gospels[27]. One of them is in Hebrew, three in Aramaic.

[24] See, e.g., SCHUMANN, Gelübde Im Antiken Judentum.

[25] Mishna Nedarim 3:2 mentions a man "who saw others eating [his] figs and said, 'May they be Korban to you!'"

[26] ZISSU – GANOR, A *Qorbân*-Vow Inscription.

[27] The practice is almost certainly much older. Josephus (Apion 1:167 [1.22]) reports that Theophrastus (*372-†288 BCE) enumerated the *qorban* oath among foreign oaths that were forbidden by the laws of the Tyrians.

The context in Mark 7 is much closer to Mishna Nedarim, where various issues related to vows are discussed, including the question of whether all of them are necessarily binding[28]. As is well-known, practically the entire Mishna is composed in Hebrew, and so is all of Tractate Nedarim. As was pointed out above, this conforms to the general picture of halakhic discussions in late Second Temple times, as documented in the Mishna and early midrashim. It is reasonable to infer that not only the word *qorban*, but the whole discussion about the washing of hands reported in Mark 7 supposes an exchange in Hebrew. While the Semitic word in question is attested in both Aramaic and Hebrew, and while vows of the *qorban* type could be formed in both languages as shown by the grave inscriptions, the speech situation evoked in Mark 7 is not congenial to the notion that the speakers expressed themselves in Aramaic.

The same Semitic word occurs in a different meaning and a different Greek form in Matt 27:6, where the chief priests decide that the 30 pieces of silver that Judas had returned should not be put into the "temple treasury" (εἰς τὸν κορβανᾶν).[29] The grammatical ending may reflect the Aramaic article (suffixed -*ā*) and thus incline us to accept that the usage in this case is Aramaic[30].

2.1.2 ὡσαννά "please save"

Hosanna is the cry of the crowds welcoming Jesus as he enters Jerusalem on a donkey on "Palm Sunday."[31] The expression goes back to Psalm 118 as is seen clearly in Mark 11:9:

[28] See, e.g., Ned 3:2. Some of the Hebrew vocabulary used in the Mishna corresponds precisely to the Greek of Mark 7:11, note in particular the verb נֶהֱנָה "to derive benefit" which corresponds to ὠφελέω. A later feature in the Mishna, not attested in the gospel passage, is the use of substitutes (*kinnuyim*) instead of the term *qorban*.

[29] Nearly the same term (κορβωνᾶς) with the same meaning is found in Josephus, War 2.175. The usage is unattested in Hebrew and Aramaic texts, see StrBill I, 1028.

[30] It is also possible, however, that the ending was added in Greek so as to incorporate the word into the Greek language: while κορβᾶν is a foreign word reported in a Greek text (note that it is accompanied by a translation), κορβανᾶς/κορβωνᾶς is a Semitic loanword in Greek. If the ending is Greek, the donor language could be Hebrew or Aramaic.

[31] Much scholarship has been devoted to this expression, see e.g. LOHSE, ὡσαννά; FITZMYER, Aramaic Evidence; KISTER, Lexicographical Problems, 252-263.

> Those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,
> "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Psalm 118:25a + 26a)[32]

But it is also used more freely:

> Hosanna in the highest heaven! (Mark 11:10)

> Hosanna to the Son of David! (…) Hosanna in the highest heaven! (Matt 21:9)

While *hosanna* echoes an expression in Psalm 118:25, there is a small but striking formal difference. The wording of Psalm 118 as it has been transmitted in the Masoretic text, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא "save please," should have been transcribed as *ωσιαννα*, not *ωσαννα*[33]. The difference is not due to influence from Aramaic, nor to ignorance on the side of the gospel writers. Instead, it reflects linguistic updating in Hebrew. Masoretic הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא is the "lengthened imperative"—the 2ms imperative with a suffix *-ah* expressing movement toward the speaker(s)—followed by a modal particle whose approximate meaning is "please."[34] The lengthened imperative is frequent in Classical Biblical Hebrew, rare in Late Biblical Hebrew, and all but absent from Mishnaic Hebrew, occurring only in quotations of Psalm 118. The eclipse of the lengthened imperative in post-biblical Hebrew explains the transcription in the Gospel text: *ὡσαννά* does not reflect biblical הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא but post-biblical הוֹשַׁע נָא (*hōša'-nā*), with the regular, "short," imperative. The short form הוֹשַׁע is not exclusively late (it is attested in Jer 31:7 and Psalm 86:2), but it is the only one that survived in Mishnaic Hebrew. The particle נָּא also becomes rare in later Hebrew, but it does not disappear entirely and is still found in independent use in the Mishna (see Yoma 3:8; 4:2; Taan 4:8). In other words, the transcription in the Gospels is the supplication in Psalm 118:25, transposed into a later type of Hebrew. The transcription in the gospels illustrates the "linguistic updating" of the biblical text in the post-biblical period[35].

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[32] Similarly, John 12:13.

[33] In his commentary on Matthew, Origen transcribes the expression from the Psalm as *ὀσιαννά* (GCS 40.541-42).

[34] For the lengthened imperative, see FASSBERG, The Lengthened Imperative קָטְלָה.

[35] A good overview of this phenomenon can be found in KUTSCHER, *The Language*, 77-89. For a more recent study of linguistic updating, see TAL, Do the Samaritan Pentateuch and 1QIsa[a] Follow the Same Model?, particularly 244-249.

The transcription of a single word or phrase in a biblical quotation otherwise following the Septuagint is surprising. As has been recognized, it reflects a semantic development in which *hosanna* was reinterpreted as a doxological expression[36]. Because the verses from Psalm 118 were said at the Succoth festival and other holidays, the initial words "please save" came to refer to the saying of these verses—somewhat in the way שְׁמַע "hear" came to refer the *shema'*, the saying of Deut 6:4-5. The Psalm, of course, was recited in acclamation of God. Thus *hosanna* in "hosanna in the highest" does not mean "save please" but "a saying of Psalm 118:25-26a."[37] The Greek rendering of the Septuagint, σῶσον δή "save now" could not express this derived meaning. This explains why the Hebrew wording was retained.

The root ישע "to save" is not representative of Aramaic. It does occur once in Qumran Aramaic (4QpsDan[a] 16:2) and a few times in Samaritan Aramaic, in both dialects clearly as a loan from Hebrew. No argument can be made on this basis for deriving *hosanna* in the gospel text from Aramaic[38].

Admittedly, some of the later nominal usages were borrowed into Aramaic[39]. Nevertheless, the occurrences of *hosanna* in the gospels are likely to reflect a Hebrew expression, as is clear from the explicit reference to Psalm 118:25-26a. An Aramaic rendering of this passage would not have contained anything resembling the transcribed expression. Neither the Targums nor the Syriac Peshitta ever render Hebrew *yš'* "to save" with the same root[40]. The gospel text depicts the crowds as referring to the Bible verse in an "updated," post-biblical Hebrew, version.

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[36] See LOHSE, ὡσαννά, and KISTER, Lexicographical Problems. The Hebrew phrase, in its post-biblical form הוֹשַׁעְנָה (written as one word), was used also in reference to the branches one shook while saying the Psalm, to the seventh day of Succoth during which the Psalm verses were said most prominently, and to liturgical poems said during the festival.

[37] Note the parallel in Luke 19:38: δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις "glory in the highest."

[38] For extensive discussion, see BUTH, The Riddle of Jesus' Cry from the Cross, 407-408.

[39] In Jewish Aramaic, *hōša'nā* refers to branches carried in procession on the Feast of Booths or to the seventh day of the same festival, see JASTROW, *Dictionary*, 341. In Syriac, the noun *'ōša'nā* is found with the meanings "palm branch," "Palm Sunday" and "praise," see SOKOLOFF, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 23.

[40] Both the Peshitta and the Targum of Psalms render הוֹשִׁיעָה in Psalm 118:25 with the Aramaic verb פרק "to deliver."

Both *qorban* and *hosanna* reflect Hebrew usage attested exclusively in post-biblical texts. They cannot be derived from the Hebrew Bible, nor from the Septuagint. The most likely way they came to the gospel writers is through a tradition reaching back to the milieu of Jesus and his disciples.

2.2 Greek expressions reflecting Hebrew idioms

As the words discussed above indicate, the Greek gospels may partially go back to earlier sources, oral or written, whose language was Hebrew. Additional evidence of such sources comes from Greek expressions echoing Hebrew idioms. As was stated at the outset of this paper, it is hard to distinguish Hebrew diction from Aramaic diction in a Greek translation. An expression like "in the world to come" (ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ) could reflect Hebrew בָּעוֹלָם הַבָּא, but Aramaic בְּעָלְמָא דְאָתֵה is also attested. Nevertheless, some expressions have a distinct Hebrew flavour, and some are not, or hardly, attested in Aramaic.

I will first list some examples that have been pointed out earlier and then add a few new examples.

2.2.1 "Flesh and blood" — human beings in contrast to God

As Jehoshua Grintz has argued, the occurrence of this expression in Matthew may reflect an early source formulated in Hebrew:[41]

> Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood (σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα) has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. (Matt 16:17)

The expression "flesh and blood" specifically in reference to humans in contradistinction to God is not natural in Greek. Nor is it found in the Hebrew Bible. It is, however, a well-known idiom of post-Biblical Hebrew. Its first occurrence is in Ben Sira:

> As the bud grows on a green tree, this one withers another sprouts,
> So are the generations of flesh and blood (בשר ודם): one dies, and one ripens. (Sir 14:18A)[42]

[41] GRINTZ, Hebrew as the Spoken and Written Language, 36.

[42] The second line is written in the margin of manuscript A, but it is confirmed by the Greek and Syriac versions and is likely original.

The expression is found also in the Greek and Syriac renderings of Sir 17:31, where the Hebrew text is not attested. It is common in Mishnaic Hebrew (e.g. Nazir 9:5; Sotah 8:1), but dwindlingly rare in Aramaic[43].

Paul uses the expression in 1 Cor 15:20 and Gal 1:16 (cf. Eph 6:12), which may indicate that it had entered Jewish Greek phraseology[44]. Theoretically, this possibility might provide a plank for the hypothesis that Matt 16:17 was formulated in Greek from the start—by Jesus, or an early tradent, or Matthew. On balance, this seems unlikely, however. Although verses 17-19 do occur in Matthew only, they probably reflect an early tradition originally formulated in Hebrew[45].

2.2.2 "The bosom of Abraham"

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus uses this expression as a picturesque reference to the afterlife of the beggar:

> And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom (εἰς τὸν κόλπον Ἀβραάμ). (Luke 16:22)[46]

Steven Notley noted that the expression "in the bosom of Abraham," attested several times in Rabbinic literature in reference to the afterlife, is always in Hebrew. Note, in the following example, how the text of the Talmud switches from Aramaic to Hebrew:

> אַקְרָא דְאַגְמָא אִיכָּא בְּבָבֶל – אַדָּא בַּר אַהֲבָה יֵשׁ בָּהּ הַיּוֹם יוֹשֵׁב בְּחֵיקוֹ שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם
> (TB Qiddushin 72b)

There is a place called Akra DeAgma in Babylonia (Aramaic). There is a man named Adda bar Ahava there. Today he is sitting in the lap of Abraham (Hebrew).

In his commentary on the Talmud, Rashi reports that it is debated whether the expression here implies that the man in question has died, or that he has been

[43] In addition to the examples from the Syriac version of Ben Sira, see the Targum of Esther 1:4.

[44] Note also Testament of Abraham B 13:7 "You (death) are a high spirit while I am flesh and blood." Note also Heb 2:14, although the usage there is different.

[45] For detailed argumentation see DAVIES – ALLISON, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Vol. II, 605. Note also BIVIN, Jesus' *Petros-petra* Wordplay.

[46] See also the following verse.

circumcised and is thus promised to an afterlife with Abraham. Later Midrashim offer several more attestations of the motif[47].

The Rabbinic attestations are all much later than the gospel of Luke, but the origin of the motif is surely Jewish[48]. The Rabbis did not borrow it from the gospel. The most logical conclusion is that the expression was found in a source used by Luke. In light of the extant Jewish attestations, this source would appear to go back to a Hebrew original[49].

2.2.3 "I do not know what you are saying" — "I reject your accusation"

When Peter is accused, in the house of the high priest, of being a follower of Jesus, he strenuously denies this:

> But (Peter) denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about (οὐκ οἶδα τί λέγεις)." (Matt 26:70 // Mark 14:68; Luke 22:60)

Eran Shuali has pointed out that Mishnaic Hebrew uses the phrase "I do not know what you are saying (אֵינִי יוֹדֵעַ מָה אַתָּה סָח)" in the meaning "I reject your accusation."[50] This is exactly the implication required in the gospel passage. The usage is not found in Aramaic texts[51].

As Shuali indicates, the formulaic use of the phrase occurs also in the Testament of Joseph[52]. Although the Testaments of the Patriarchs have come down to us in Greek, several lines of argument show that they go back to a Hebrew text of the Second Temple period[53]. In the gospels as in the Testament of Joseph, the phrase indicates use, directly or indirectly, of a Hebrew source.

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[47] See NOTLEY, Non-Septuagintal Hebraisms, 341-342.

[48] Jubilees 22:26 and 23:2 recount that when Abraham died, Jacob was sleeping in his bosom. If this is an early echo of the motif used in Luke 16:22, it confirms the Hebrew origin of the expression.

[49] A confused mention of the "bosom of Abraham" is found in Testament of Abraham A 20:14, but this may well go back to the verses in Luke.

[50] See Shebuot 8:3, 6.

[51] SHUALI, Did Peter Speak Hebrew. Before Shuali, this usage was pointed out—without discussion, and without conclusion as to the source language—by SMITH, Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels, 35.

[52] See T.Jos. 13:2.

[53] See e.g. KUGEL, Some Translation and Copying Mistakes (with references to earlier publications). The fragments of the Testament of Naphtali that have been recovered

2.2.4 "The 'owners' of the colt"

Jesus sends two of his disciples to bring him a colt from a nearby village, but when they do so the disciples are met by an objection:

> As they were untying the colt, its owners asked (εἶπαν οἱ κύριοι αὐτοῦ) them, "Why are you untying the colt?" (Luke 19:33)

The Greek phrasing in Luke is slightly odd in that it looks as if the colt had several owners who all spoke at once[54]. The text is not devoid of sense (cf. Acts 16:6.9); the plural might potentially refer to a man and wife. But it would be easier if the noun "owners" could be interpreted as a singular. As has been recognized, this is possible if we suppose a Semitism[55]. In Hebrew as in Aramaic, words for "master, owner" tend to figure in the plural even when referring to a single person, e.g.:

> The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib (אֲבוּס בְּעָלָיו lit. "its masters' crib") (Isa 1:3)

> What was given in pledge he does not return *to its owner* (ܡܪܝܗ lit. "its masters")[56] (Ezek 18:12 Peshitta)

In natural Greek, this usage is not attested. It is nevertheless found a few times in Jewish writings, probably reflecting a translation error. Here are two examples:

> Where did you get this goat? It is not stolen, is it? Return it to the owners (τοῖς κυρίοις) (Tob 2:13)

As in the case of the colt, there is no real objection to the goat having belonged to a plurality of owners, but the plural is still remarkable. Since Tobit is certain to have been translated from a Semitic text, it may be submitted that the plural is due to excessively literal translation from Aramaic or Hebrew. Unfortunately, the source text has not been preserved in this passage.

> You see that out of my humility and long-suffering I took to wife the daughter of my master (κυρίων μου). (T.Jos. 18:3)

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from Qumran (4Q215) correspond closely to part of the Greek text that has come down to us. They are written in a language that is modelled on Biblical Hebrew but exhibits some late traits.

[54] In Mark 11:4, instead of "the owners" the ones speaking are "some of the bystanders."

[55] See BUTH, Luke 19:31-34.

[56] The words "to its owner" are an addition in the Peshitta.

Here too, no Semitic source text is available, although translation from Hebrew is plausible[57]. Moreover, in this case the reference of the plural to a single person is certain: Joseph had only one father-in-law, who was also, according to the Testament of Joseph, his owner[58].

These examples show that in Luke 19:33 the reference may be to a single owner. They do not allow a decision as to the language of the source standing at the back of Luke's account. A further detail, however, inclines the scales to Hebrew: in addition to the noun, the verb "they said" too is in the plural. In a perceptive study, Randall Buth has pointed out that in Mishnaic Hebrew—in contradistinction to both biblical Hebrew and Aramaic[59]—the plural number is applied also to verbs and suffixes referring to the noun "owner, master" even when it designates a single person, e.g.:

> If the owner knew neither (לֹא יָדְעוּ הַבְּעָלִים, lit. "the owners didn't know") of its theft nor of its return… (Baba Qamma 10:8)

The earliest attestation of this peculiar usage is found in Ben Sira:

> A wicked soul shall destroy him that hath it (בעליה, literally "its possessors") and shall make him to be laughed to scorn of his enemies (ושמחת שונא תשיגם, literally: "and the joy of their enemy will overtake *them*").[60] (Sir 6:4)

The conclusion, again, is that Luke here probably used a source going back to a tradition formulated in Hebrew.

2.2.5 "Evil eye" — stinginess

In the parable of the laborers of the eleventh hour, the ones who worked in the vineyard all day protest when their colleagues receive the same amount as they. The master of the vineyard replies:

> Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity (ἢ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου πονηρός ἐστιν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἀγαθός εἰμι, lit. "is your eye evil because I am good")? (Matt 20:15)

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[57] See above, note 49.

[58] Joseph's father-in-law, Potiphera (Gen 41:45), and the man who acquired him as a slave, Potiphar (Gen 37:36), are identified in the Testament of Joseph. The same identification is attested in TB Sotah 13b and later Rabbinic sources.

[59] See, however, Exod 22:7 in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan.

[60] KJV.

The meaning of the Greek expression "is your eye evil (or bad)?" is not immediately apparent[61]. In classical and Hellenistic Greek, "evil eye" is not a standing expression. As has widely been recognized, however, the combination of "evil/to be evil" with "eye" does have an idiomatic meaning in Biblical Hebrew:

> Be careful that you do not entertain a mean thought, thinking, "The seventh year, the year of remission, is near," and therefore view your needy neighbour with hostility (וְרָעָה עֵינְךָ בְּאָחִיךָ הָאֶבְיוֹן, lit. "and your eye be evil against your poor brother") and give nothing. (Deut 15:9)

If the Israelite's eye is evil, he gives nothing. Although the meaning of the expression is sometimes glossed as "being envious" or "begrudging" (note "hostility" in the NRSV quoted above) the context clearly indicates that the point at issue is selfishness and lack of generosity. Saadia Gaon renders "your eye be evil" as "so that you become stingy (*fa-taḥušš*)."[62] Stinginess is the issue also in other occurrences of the expression, both in the Hebrew Bible and in post-biblical works[63].

The opposite of the "evil eye" is the "good eye," which connotes generosity and charitableness:

> Those who are generous (טוֹב־עַיִן "good of eye") are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor.[64] (Prov 22:9)

Both expressions are frequent, with the same meanings, in Rabbinic literature, e.g:[65]

> *Rabbi Akiva holds that one who sells, sells generously* (בְּעַיִן יָפָה "with a good eye"), so that whatever is not explicitly excluded from the sale is assumed to be sold, *while the Rabbis hold that one who sells, sells*

[61] See DAVIES – ALLISON, *Matthew*, Vol. III, 75.

[62] Saadia's Arabic version can be conveniently consulted online at https://mg.alhatorah.org/Full/Devarim/15.9#e0n6.

[63] See Deut 28:54, 56; and with the adjective instead of the verb: Prov 23:6; 28:22; Sir 14:3, 10; 31:13; 4Q424 f1:10.

[64] LXX "He who has compassion on the poor will himself be nourished." See also Sir 14:10; 35:12.

[65] Alongside עין טובה MH also uses עין יפה in the same meaning.

> *sparingly* (בְּעַיִן רָעָה "with an evil eye"), so that whatever is not explicitly included in the sale is assumed to be unsold.[66] (Baba Batra 64b)

Generosity is also the issue in the parable of the workers of the eleventh hour. The owner of the vineyard is generous, but the workers of the first hour are not. The way in which selfishness is attributed to the complainer is paralleled in the Mishna:

> There are four approaches to almsgiving:
>
> 'let me give but let others not give': his eye is evil with regard to others;
> 'let others give, but not I': his eye is evil with regard to himself;
> 'let me give and others too': the pious;
> 'neither I nor others shall give': the wicked. (Avoth 5:13)

Marcus Jastrow glosses the explanation of the first approach as: "he is *illiberal* with regard to other people's money (begrudges them the privilege of giving charity)."[67] This is precisely the reproach the owner makes to the complainer of the parable.

While the pertinence of the biblical expression to the interpretation of Matt 20:15 is noted in most commentaries, it has not sufficiently been observed that the relevant meaning is particular to Hebrew. All the passages illustrating the meanings "stinginess" and "generosity," in the Bible and in later writings, are in Hebrew. The phrases "evil eye" and "good eye" are found as literal translations in the Aramaic versions, and once or twice also in the Septuagint. They are not found in free compositions in these languages. In Greek, the expression "evil eye" is extremely rare and connotes, if anything, notions of envy and jealousy. In Aramaic, the "evil eye" is mostly a magical device by which one inflicts calamities on others[68].

The parable in Matt 20:1-15 thus appears to go back to a source first formulated in Hebrew[69].

2.2.6 The "fruit of the vine" — wine

After the last supper, Jesus makes a solemn declaration to his disciples:

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[66] The two statements in Hebrew come in a discussion that is otherwise mostly in Aramaic.

[67] JASTROW, *Dictionary*, 1071.

[68] See the on-line *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* [Accessed 17-03-2026], entry עין, definition 7.

[69] The same expression also occurs in Matt 6:22-23 and its parallel in Luke, for which see JOOSTEN, Aramaic or Hebrew.

> Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine (τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου) until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. (Mark 14:25 // Matt 26:29; Luke 22:18)

As far as I could ascertain, the expression "fruit (or 'product') of the vine" does not occur in non-biblical Greek. It is found in the Septuagint, but its meaning there is "grapes," not "wine":

> and beat your breasts, because of the pleasant field, and the fruit of the vine. (Isa 32:12)

As the parallel indicates, the concern here is with agricultural produce, not products of human labour[70].

Similarly in Aramaic, the expression פֵּירֵי גוּפְנַא "fruit of the vine" (where "fruit" is a plural) always refers to grapes, not wine[71].

In Hebrew, the poetic expression פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן "fruit (singular) of the vine" may originally have referred to grapes as well. However, in early texts, it is exclusively attested in various formulations of the well-known Jewish blessing on the wine: בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן, "(Blessed are you) creator of the fruit of the vine" (see Mishna Berakot 6:1). This blessing is, to this day, pronounced in Hebrew.

The expression "fruit of the vine" in Mark 14:25 and parallels clearly reflects the Hebrew phrase as attested in the blessing on the wine. As the meaning "wine" shows, the account of the institution of the Lord's supper would appear ultimately to go back to a tradition formulated at least partly in Hebrew.

2.3 Evaluation

Although absolute proof cannot be attained, the eight cases studied in the preceding section offer strong evidence for the use of Hebrew source materials in the redaction history of the gospels. It appears that some of the early traditions concerning the words and deeds of Jesus were formulated in Hebrew. To the extent such traditions reflect historical events, they suggest Jesus and his disciples spoke Hebrew on certain occasions. This conclusion agrees with what is known about the language situation in Roman Palestine.

At an early stage, those traditions were transposed into Greek rather literally: some characteristic expressions, like *qorban*, were left untranslated, and

[70] Similarly Hab 3:17 and Deut 22:9.

[71] See e.g. Targum Jonathan to Isa 36:16.

some, like the "evil eye," were rendered word-for-word in way that would have been difficult to understand for Greek speakers. Perhaps at this stage, the tradents belonged to a bilingual (or trilingual) group, able to switch from Greek to Aramaic and Hebrew.

The canonical gospels represent a later stage in which authors composed a full "life of Jesus" in Greek, based on Greek sources and for a Greek readership. The authors translated some of the Semitic expressions and eliminated some of the more egregious Semitisms, but also, as faithful wardens of tradition, kept much of the material in the form in which it had come down to them.

Looking at the eight cases as a group, a few additional observations may be formulated.

2.3.1 Post-biblical Hebrew

The elements discussed are for the most part not representative of biblical Hebrew, with two partial exceptions. *Qorban* is a biblical word, but its use in Mark 7:11 is distinctively post-biblical. The expression "bad eye" in reference to stinginess is attested in the Hebrew Bible, but it is more frequent in later texts and the notion of "being stingy with regard to someone else's money," as found in Matt 20:9, is parallelled only in the Mishna.

The focus on post-biblical Hebrew flows from the methodological strictures spelled out above. Many elements of biblical Hebrew are in the background of Greek expressions in the gospels, beginning with the "book of the generation" (βίβλος γενέσεως) of Matt 1:1, which reflects the biblical סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדֹת of Gen 5:1. But features like this do not necessarily reflect early and authentic tradition. They may have been taken from the Hebrew Bible to enhance the theological significance of the story. If so, they would likely not go back to Hebrew at all, but to the Septuagint version (note βίβλος γενέσεως in the Greek version of Gen 5:1). The probative value of post-biblical Hebrew elements is much higher. They are rooted in the time and place of the events they depict. They were not borrowed from literary texts, nor created by the evangelists in their effort to enhance the theological significance of their accounts.

Post-biblical elements also demonstrate that the knowledge and use of Hebrew described in the gospels was not limited to the recitation of the Hebrew Bible. When Jesus is reported to recite the *shma'*: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one…" (Mark 12:29-30), the understanding is that he said the words in Hebrew—the same way pious Jews will say them today, even if they are not Hebrew speakers. The Hebrew expressions listed above suggest

something different: not memorization of an old text, but active use of a contemporary idiom.

A downside of post-biblical Hebrew is the patchiness of its attestation. There is an ocean of Rabbinic literature in Hebrew, but almost none of it was put in writing before the Middle Ages. In several of our case studies, we found expressions used in the gospels whose Hebrew models are first attested hundreds of years later. Thus *hosanna* in the meaning "shout of acclamation" and the reference to the "bosom of Abraham" in speaking about the afterlife are found only in writings dating to the fifth century C.E. or later. Other expressions are first attested in the Mishna, which can be dated to around the year 200 CE: "fruit of the vine," "I don't know what you are saying." This is closer to the gospels in time, but still removed more than a century. Contemporary, or earlier, attestations are available for *qorban* (grave inscriptions of the first century CE), "flesh and blood" and the plural form and construction of the noun "master" (Ben Sira), and the "good and bad eye" (Hebrew Bible).

The uneven attestation of the Hebrew expressions is connected to the essentially oral nature of post-Biblical Jewish traditions. It should not be exploited to suggest that the New Testament expression came first and that the Hebrew attestations are Jewish reappropriations.

2.3.2 Greek parallels

Some of the expressions listed do find parallels in other Greek texts. Most of these are probably due to translation from Hebrew, as can be proven in some cases:

- The expression σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα "flesh and blood" is attested in Sir 14:18, where the Hebrew text of manuscript A reads בשר ודם.
- The expression ὀφθαλμὸς πονηρός "evil eye" is found in Sir 31:13, where it renders Hebrew עין רעה as attested in manuscript B.
- The plural κύριοι "masters" for a single owner occurs in Tob 2:13. Although no Semitic text of this verse has been preserved, the fragmentary Aramaic and Hebrew versions of Tobit recovered from the Qumran caves show that the Greek text is a translation of a Semitic original.
- Plural κύριοι for a single owner and the expression "I do not know what you are saying" are both attested in the Testament of Joseph. Here, the

existence of a Hebrew original is likely, although it is not as well established as for Tobit.

Parallels of this type do not weaken the case defended in the present paper but strengthen it. If Greek expressions that are otherwise completely unattested occur in Greek texts due to literal translation from Hebrew, it is legitimate to suppose that the same process accounts for these expressions in the gospels, even if, for the gospels, no source text is available.

It is to be admitted that, in some cases, other scenarios may account for the use of Hebrew-like expressions in a Greek text. The expression "flesh and blood" is used by Paul in 1 Cor 15:50 and Gal 1:16.[72] In these passages, the use of a Hebrew source is unlikely. The usage may be due to Paul's being familiar with the expression from his knowledge of Hebrew and using it in Greek because it fitted what he was seeking to express. Alternatively, it may indicate that the expression had, to a limited extent, penetrated Jewish discourse in Greek—in the way many other Semitic locutions did, e.g. the use of εὐλογέω "to bless" for "saying grace" (1 Cor 10:16), or ἔθνη "nations" for non-Jews. This type of "loan-translation" of Semitic expressions in a Jewish sociolect probably accounts fort the use of "flesh and blood" in the Testament of Abraham, a text in all likelihood composed in Greek from the start. It is highly unlikely that this type of borrowing in the Jewish sociolect accounts for any of the Hebraizing expressions discussed in our case studies.

2.3.3 Nature of the Hebrew expressions

All the expressions listed are idiomatic usages that are not easy to translate into another language. Rendered literally, they may suggest a different meaning than the one intended. Out of eight cases, six are closely connected to religious matters:

- *Qorban* expresses a vow and occurs in the course of a halakhic argument.
- *Hosanna* is a doxological formula evoking the festival of Succoth.
- "Flesh and blood" is an expression stating the distinction between human beings and God.
- The "bosom of Abraham" is a picturesque reference to the afterlife of the righteous.

[72] See also Eph 6:12, where the order of the two elements is reversed. Whether Heb 2:14 belongs here is doubtful.

- The "evil eye" is a biblical expression with ethical implications.
- The "fruit of the vine" reflects a liturgical formula.

Only two have no connection to religious discourse. They represent everyday speech:

- "I do not know what you are saying," appears to be a locution used to reject various types of accusation or reproaches.
- The use of the grammatical plural in reference to a single owner is a curiosity of Hebrew that has no theological relevance.

The religious expressions could be interpreted to mean that Hebrew was mostly used in religious settings. The two secular locutions show, however, that this is not necessarily the case. The preponderance of religious connotations may simply reflect the subject matter of the gospels. Markedly Aramaic expressions, such as the phrase ταλιθα κουμ "little girl, get up" or the words from Psalm 22 said from the cross, also occur mostly in religious contexts. Based on the relatively few instances where a distinction can be made between Aramaic and Hebrew, it would seem both languages were used by Jesus and his followers. As was pointed out above, this conclusion is in keeping with what is known about the language situation among Jews in their homeland during the first century CE. The principles guiding the choice of this or that language are not always easy to define.

Most of the expressions are reported from the mouth of Jesus, but *hosanna* is attributed to the crowds and "I do not know what you are saying" to Peter; the peculiar use of κύριοι occurs in the words of the anonymous narrator.

3 Conclusions

The idea that Jesus and the disciples were Aramaic speakers is widespread and deeply rooted. In the present paper, I have tried to show that a more differentiated approach is called for: while Jesus and his followers did speak Aramaic, they were in fact bilingual and spoke post-biblical Hebrew as well. In this respect, they would have been like most other Jews in Roman Palestine.

Although some of the case studies are new, the central thesis of this study is not. Several scholars have argued extensively for a "Hebrew approach" to

complement the "Aramaic approach" to the gospels that dominates the field[73]. Their arguments have rarely been countered, but neither have they succeeded in altering the face of research.

The effect of taking post-biblical Hebrew into account is much like the effect of the Aramaic approach. The ramifications are neither earth-shattering nor paradigm changing. Instead, they permit, in certain instances, to understand the Greek text of the gospels better, both in its linguistic dimension and in regard to the contextual implication of the words. They also validate the antiquity of the passages in which they occur and their rootedness in a first-century Palestinian Jewish milieu.

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[73] See e.g. the publications of Grintz, Buth, Notley, Baltes, and Kister mentioned in the notes to this paper.

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Summary

The article collects old and new evidence showing that, alongside Aramaic, Jesus and his disciples also used a post-biblical variety of Hebrew as their spoken language.

Key words: Post-biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, early gospel traditions.

Zhrnutie

Článok zhromažďuje známe i nové dôkazy, ktoré ukazujú, že Ježiš a jeho učeníci popri aramejčine používali ako hovorený jazyk aj pobiblickú formu hebrejčiny.

Kľúčové slová: pobiblická hebrejčina, aramejčina, rané evanjeliové tradície.

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