

Volume 56: Numbers 2-3

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APRIL-JULY 1992

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Ind.

# The Linguistic Milieu of the Early Church

James W. Voelz

The New Testament is written in Greek, as virtually everyone knows. But what can we say about this language? What was it like? How many spoke it? Where was it spoken? Indeed, the whole matter is a complicated one. The earliest Christians were Jews, yet their canonical religious writings are not in Hebrew or Aramaic. The earliest Christians were from Palestine, yet the authoritative documents of their new testament were not in a language native to their land. How do we understand the language of the New Testament against the background of the early church? We will attempt to find some answers in the paragraphs which follow.

## I. The Language of the New Testament Socially Considered

### A. *The Mediterranean Milieu*

The New Testament, as previously said, is written in Greek. While that fact may surprise the casual observer, in reality it is not so odd. The key is Alexander the Great. In the fourth century B.C. he conquered the Persian empire, and the aftermath of this conquest unleashed upon the Mediterranean world an influence of things Hellenic—that is, of things Greek—which it is hard to overestimate. Indeed, it is not too much to say that, in an incredibly short period of time (not centuries but decades), a new civilization spanning nations and even continents was created—a new civilization which was simultaneously promoted and enforced by the conquerors, on the one hand, and eagerly embraced by the conquered, on the other. Now Greek law codes were enforced; Greek cities were established; and Greek education was made available. Inhabitants throughout the land of Greece flocked to new lands, ready to take advantage of new opportunities and eager to travel and to explore places until then unknown. On their own part, the conquered nations adopted eagerly Greek styles and habits of life, including Greek dress, Greek names, and Greek architecture, as vibrant and full of life.<sup>1</sup>

One element of this new civilization was the Greek language. Indeed, we should say the chief element! For, not only did Alexander and the rulers use Greek as the official language of diplomacy,<sup>2</sup> but the subjected, anxious to fit in and to acclimatize themselves to their new situation, both because they desired survival

and because they were attracted to things Greek, adopted Greek as an important means of communication. In the words of the noted historian Moses Hadas:

In the beginning natives may have learned [Greek] out of necessity for the uses of commerce or government, or by the compulsion of snobbery, but they continued to use it out of choice, and it soon became at least a second vernacular among a considerable proportion of the population. Upper-class natives . . . spoke to each other in Greek and were literate only in Greek . . . even books written by natives as propaganda for native values and intended mainly for a native audience were written in Greek, and . . . even books written in native languages were affected, in form and content, by Greek models.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the greatest testimony to the power of Hellenism in the ancient world in general, and of the Greek language in particular, is the Septuagint, involving the translation of the Old Testament into Greek.

### *B. The Palestinian Milieu*

The situation was no different in Palestine. There, too, Greek culture, including the Greek language, was promoted and absorbed. To be sure, all was not received with open arms. Enforced Hellenization by the Seleucid successors to Alexander in Syria, especially the efforts of Antiochus IV, engendered stiff resistance, most notably the Maccabean revolt—the revolt really of the Hasidim, the holy ones, the cultural and religious conservatives of the time, in the second century B.C. The march of things Greek continued nonetheless. Especially as far as language was concerned, Greek was alive and well in Palestine in the first century of the Christian era (and for many years before). For Greek had supplanted Aramaic as the *lingua franca* of the eastern Mediterranean, the Levant—which meant that Greek was the language of trade and commerce also for Palestine (which was within that geographical sphere), even as Aramaic had been for so many centuries before. Indeed, it was more than the language of commerce and trade. Research, especially by Liebermann,<sup>4</sup> Fitzmyer,<sup>5</sup> Lapidé,<sup>6</sup> Gundry,<sup>7</sup> and Sevenster,<sup>8</sup> has

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shown that Greek was in common use throughout Palestine in our Lord's time. Not only is this conclusion confirmed by rabbinic sources, but archaeology has brought to light wide use of Greek for inscriptions on monuments, on pottery, and on tombstones, as well as in letters and in official documents. If C. F. D. Moule is correct in his exegesis of Acts 6:1,<sup>9</sup> the *Hellenistai* of this important verse were Jews in Jerusalem and the surrounding countryside who habitually spoke Greek, to the virtual exclusion of Hebrew or Aramaic.

This spread and use of Greek made the language situation in Palestine much more complex than is normally supposed. The common approach, common since the 1890's, is to assume quite simply that Aramaic was the dominant language of the land, and that Jesus spoke in Aramaic when He taught. Julius Wellhausen, for example, said:

Jesus selber sprach aramäisch, und seine Worte sowie die Erzählungen über ihn liefen in der jerusalemischen Gemeinde um, die gleichfalls aramäischer Zunge war. Die mündliche Überlieferung des Evangeliums war also von Haus aus aramäisch, und wenn sie uns nur in griechischer Niederschrift erhalten ist, so hat sie einen Sprachwechsel durchgemacht. Das steht historisch fest . . .<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, the sainted Martin Scharlemann often said in class: "The New Testament is in Greek; Jesus spoke Aramaic." But, not only was Greek a living language for the early believers in our Lord (Aramaic was also a living language, of course, having been so in Palestine for some six hundred years), but Hebrew was a living language as well. Research, again, has shown that Hebrew was a flourishing language in Palestine in the first century A.D. From the evidence presented by Birkeland,<sup>11</sup> Grntz,<sup>12</sup> Segal,<sup>13</sup> Lapide,<sup>14</sup> Fitzmyer,<sup>15</sup> Milik,<sup>16</sup> and Emerton,<sup>17</sup> we can see that Hebrew was both written and spoken extensively at the time of Christ. These are the words of J. T. Milik:

The copper rolls and the documents from the Second Revolt prove beyond reasonable doubt that Mishnaic Hebrew was the normal language of the Judaeen population in the

Roman period. Some Jewish scholars . . . had already suggested this on the basis of Talmudic anecdotes; additional evidence can be found in the inscriptions on contemporary ossuaries. The presence of Hebrew, beside Greek and Aramaic, on the ossuaries (which represent the use of the middle classes) surely attests that this was a natural language in that milieu. . . .<sup>18</sup>

It is probable that many, if not most, of the inhabitants of the land of Israel were trilingual. More precisely, to follow the analysis of Pinchas Lapide in his outstanding study, "Insights from Qumran into the Language of Jesus,"<sup>19</sup> it is probable that the inhabitants of the land of Israel were triglossic. That is to say, they spoke three languages, not interchangeably, but for discrete purposes—using Greek for political purposes and for converse, either with Gentiles or with Jews of the Diaspora; Hebrew for "religion, education, and other aspects of high culture"; and Aramaic, for "hearth, home, and livelihood."

These thoughts are interesting and important in themselves. But they are of special importance when one proceeds to a linguistic analysis of the language of the New Testament as we have it, for the complicated social juxtaposition and interrelationship of three languages, as we have described it (in this case, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek) complicate an analysis of a single language (in this case, Greek), since many cross-cultural influences occur. Indeed, the history of the discussion of the language of the New Testament is bedeviled by the problem of the influence or lack thereof of the two Semitic languages (Hebrew and Aramaic) on the focus language (Greek).<sup>20</sup> Yet such an analysis must be done, and to this analysis we now turn.

## II. The Language of the New Testament Linguistically Considered

Given our historical-social survey, what is the language of the New Testament like? That is to say, what can we say about it linguistically? The answer to this inquiry is in some ways "simple"; it has Hellenic (that is, Greek) characteristics and it has Semitic (in this case, Hebrew, Aramaic, or both) characteristics. But things are

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really not as simple as they seem. Two problems exist. First, what are these characteristics exactly—these Hellenic and Semitic characteristics? Secondly, how do these characteristics relate one to another? It may be noted that these are problems which have haunted scholarship, at least since the time of the Reformation<sup>21</sup> (and even, in a tangentially related way, before<sup>22</sup>), and no easy answers exist. Scholars differ, and this difference is often extreme—as is proper for me to admit at the outset of this section, before my own views are made known. But I will hazard an analysis of my own, giving my own personal viewpoint on the matter, always recognizing that new evidence and, therefore, new formulations may lie just around the corner.<sup>23</sup>

#### A. Hellenic (Greek) Characteristics

The language of the New Testament is Greek. But what sort of Greek is it? It is perhaps a truism, but it is worth saying, nonetheless, that it is not Attic Greek—what is usually called Classical Greek—the Greek of Athens in the fifth century B.C., the Greek of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripedes, Lysias, and Thucydides. Rather, the Greek of the New Testament is Koine Greek, the Greek of Hellenistic times. That is to say, it is the Greek of the time coinciding with and following after the rise of Philip of Macedon and especially of his son, Alexander the Great—the Greek of the late fourth century B.C. and beyond, the Greek spread by the great conqueror and his soldiers drawn from every quarter of the Greek-speaking world. For this insight we are indebted principally to Adolf Deissmann.<sup>24</sup> How may this Greek be described? In some ways, its nature is quite surprising. One might expect, given the historical circumstances, that it would be a ragged thing, a motley collection of various dialects (e.g., Ionian, Aeolic, Doric, and Arcadian), with no unifying characteristics at all. But such is not the case. One surprisingly unified language was in widespread use, called by the Greeks themselves the *koine dialektos*—and it is generally seen as a development of Attic (the Athenian sub-dialect of Ionian),<sup>25</sup> flavored in large measure by broader Ionian influence.<sup>26</sup> The spoken version of the Koine, a development, not of the language of the great literature of Athens but of the spoken Greek of that city, which itself had absorbed many foreign words and adopted many

constructions found in the later Koine,<sup>27</sup> exhibited the following characteristics, when compared to Classical Greek.<sup>28</sup> (1.) There are a multiplicity of new words, with new meanings attached to many old words. (2.) There is a tendency toward explicit expression. Lexically (as far as vocabulary is concerned), this tendency meant the preference for "fuller" and phonetically stronger forms. Syntactically it is seen chiefly in the increased frequency of prepositions (both proper and improper) and pronouns, and in the preference for direct, as opposed to indirect, discourse. (3.) There is a strong tendency toward simplicity. This tendency manifested itself in two ways. On the one hand, a firm movement toward uniformity is evident. Morphologically, this tendency meant elimination or modification of unusual forms of all parts of speech and the assimilation of potentially ambiguous forms to those more easily recognizable. On the other hand, the loss of fine distinctions is also apparent. Lexically, this tendency is seen in the free use of compound and diminutive vocables with no specifically compounded or diminutive meaning. Syntactically—and syntax is really more important (in fact, in many ways it is the most important item to discuss)—it is seen in the decline of the optative mood, the decline in the use of the present tense in moods other than the indicative, the decline in the number and rich combinations of particles, the increasing restriction of the middle voice to deponent usage, the expansion of the use of *hina*, and the frequency of parataxis<sup>29</sup> (i.e., linked coordinate clauses) in place of hypotaxis (subordinate clauses dependent upon another). Examples from the New Testament would include the following:

- (1.) With regard to vocabulary changes:
  - (a.) *grēgoreō*, meaning "keep watch," in Mark 13:35, and *romphaia*, meaning "sword," in Revelation 1:16, which are new, Koine Greek, words.
  - (b.) *phthanō*, meaning "arrive" instead of "anticipate," in 1 Thessalonians 2:16, and *egkoptō*, meaning "hinder" instead of "cut," in Galatians 5:7, which are old words with new, Koine Greek, meanings attached.

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- (2.) With regard to the move toward explicit expression:
- (a.) *probaton*, meaning "sheep," in place of *oīs* (the Classical Greek word), in John 21:16, and *akoloutheō*, meaning "follow," in place of *hepomai*, in Matthew 8:1, both of which are phonetically "stronger" forms.
  - (b.) *pros auton*, indicating indirect object ("to him"), in place of the dative form *autō(i)*, in John 3:4, which illustrates the increased use of prepositional constructions.
- (3.) With regard to the striving for simplicity:
- (a.) *deiknuō*, meaning "show," in place of *deiknumi* (the Classical Greek form) in John 2:18, which changes an unusual form, assimilating it to what is more recognizable.
  - (b.) *ananggellō* instead of *anggellō*, meaning "announce," in John 4:25, and *paidion*, instead of *pais*, meaning "child," in Matthew 14:21, which illustrate the use of compounds and diminutives with the loss of specifically compound or diminutive meaning.
  - (c.) *hina* clauses instead of infinitives in 1 John 1:9 and 1 Corinthians 1:10, and of *kai* and *de* linking coordinate clauses (parataxis) instead of participles subordinating one clause to another (hypotaxis), as in Mark's account of the crucifixion of our Lord in 15:23-26, all of which illustrate the streamlining and simplifying of syntactical structure.

We may say that the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel and Epistles of John are composed in vernacular Koine Greek, as well as major portions of most other New Testament books.

As far as the *written* Koine is concerned, it too was a development of the Greek dialect of Athens, but while it was always heavily



indebted to classical Attic, it often deviated quite markedly from it. In vocabulary especially it was influenced by the vernacular. Indeed, later Koine authors, notably Polybius, Epictetus, and Josephus, made considerable concessions to vernacular usage<sup>30</sup>—though their writings, taken together, exhibit great variety, since usage was not entirely standardized. Hence it may be said:

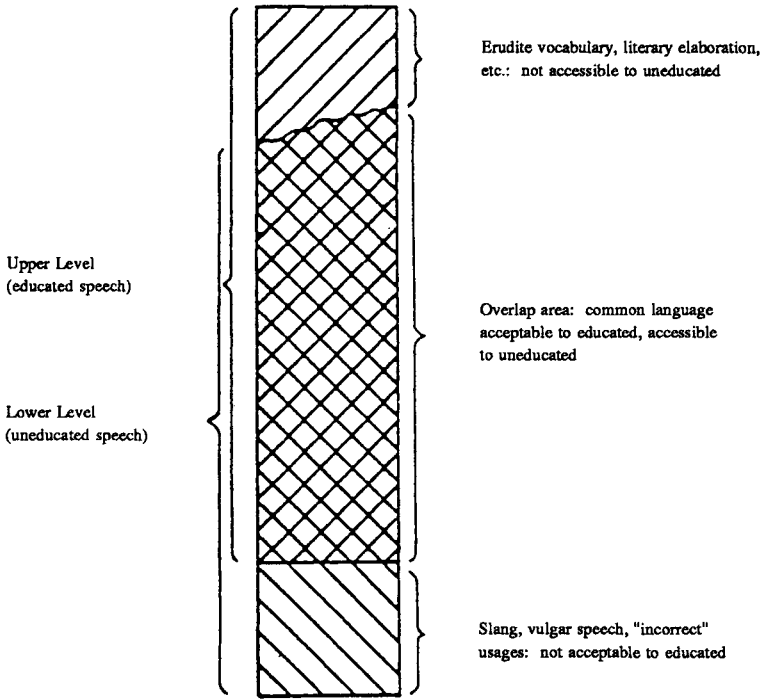
... die verschiedenen Formen der hellenistischen Literatursprache ... sind schliesslich nichts anders als fortwährende Compromisse zwischen der gesprochenen Sprache und älterer schriftlicher Überlieferung, zwischen Leben und Schule.<sup>31</sup>

And the degree of this compromise depended upon "the education, the purpose, and the nature of the work of each individual writer."<sup>32</sup> Examples from the New Testament would include the following:

- (1.) The Classical Greek form *kreittōn*, meaning "better," appears in place of *kreissōn*, which is Koine Greek, in Hebrews 1:4.
- (2.) A hypotactic sentence structure, with complex subordination of phrases and clauses appears in place of simpler parataxis in Hebrews 6:4-6.
- (3.) The optative mood replaces the indicative in indirect discourse in a secondary sequence—a very classical usage—in Luke 1:29, *dielogizeto potapos eiē ho aspasmos houtos*.

In the New Testament Hebrews, 1 Peter, James, and, at times, the writings of St. Luke and St. Paul may be said to employ literary Koine Greek to a greater or lesser extent.

Thus, the Greek of the New Testament exhibits the full range of linguistic possibilities available to the writers of the first century A.D. Indeed, a useful diagram has been devised by W. L. Wonderly to portray the full range of speech in a society at large:<sup>33</sup>



In society at large some linguistic usages are inaccessible to the uneducated (top of diagram), even as others are unacceptable to the educated (bottom of diagram), while the large middle portion is acceptable to all and accessible to all. As far as the New Testament is concerned, the vast majority of its writers employ language in such a way that it falls into the large, common, overlap area—most notably St. Matthew and St. Paul—which is appropriate for writers who wish to proclaim the message of salvation to all sorts and conditions of men.

### *B. Semitic Characteristics*

As we noted at the beginning of this major section, the Greek of the New Testament, in addition to its Hellenic characteristics, possesses Semitic characteristics—almost inevitably, given the social and historical matrix of the early church. But what are these

characteristics? Again, as we have said, little agreement exists on these matters, but it is reasonable to assume Semitic interference in New Testament Koine in two substantial ways: (1.) lexically, both by the presence of foreign words and especially by the ascription of non-Greek meanings to Greek words and, (2.) syntactically, by constructions which are not congenial to basic forms of Greek.

- (1.) First, then, there is lexical interference. We find *pascha*, meaning "passover," in 1 Corinthians 5:7, and *rabbi* in John 1:38, which represent the importation of foreign words directly into Greek. More importantly, *doxa* means "glory" in Romans 15:27, instead of "opinion," and *eidōlon* means "idol" in 1 Corinthians 8:4, instead of "phantom" (the normal meaning in Koine), both of which represent the filling of Greek words with Hebrew-Aramaic meanings.
- (2.) Secondly, there is syntactical interference. Luke 20:11 contains the words *prosetheto heteron pemp-sai doulon*, meaning, "and again he sent another slave," which corresponds to the Hebrew construction using *hōsiph*. Mark 8:12 contains the words *ei dothēsetai tē genea tautē semeion*, meaning "surely a sign will not be given to this generation," which corresponds to the Hebrew construction using 'im. John 16:17 contains the words *ek tōn mathētōn autou*, meaning "some of His disciples," which corresponds to a Hebrew usage of *min*. All of these constructions are more Semitic than they are true Greek.

It is important to note, however, that the problem is much more subtle than is generally supposed—especially with regard to syntactical matters. For it is necessary to distinguish between what James Hope Moulton called "primary Semitisms," on the one hand, and "secondary Semitisms," on the other.<sup>34</sup> A primary Semitism is a construction which is unnatural Greek, something a native Greek speaker would never say. It is what we have described so far. A secondary Semitism is a construction which is not bad Greek *per se*,

but which corresponds to a construction in Hebrew or Aramaic and, therefore, makes one suspect that Semitic influence is at work. Here frequency is key. A frequent usage of such a construction is often uncommon with native speakers of Greek but common with those working with a Semitic tongue. Examples would be the following:

- (1.) The use of *en tō* with the infinitive in a temporal sense corresponds to the Hebrew *bēth*, as in Luke 5:1, *egeneto de in tō ton ochlon epikeisthai autō*.
- (2.) The order of attributive adjectives and nouns sometimes corresponds to the normal Hebrew pattern, namely, article, noun, article, adjective, as in Matthew 6:11, *ton arton hēmōn ton epiousion dos hēmin sēmeron*.
- (3.) Adjectival genitives correspond to the Hebrew and Aramaic tendency to use a noun in the genitive in place of an adjective to modify another noun, as in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, *ho anthrōpos tēs anomias, ho uios tēs apōleias*.
- (4.) The instrumental use of *en* corresponds to the Hebrew *bēth*, as in Revelation 2:16, *polemēsō met' autōn en tē romphaia tou stomatos mou*.

In each of these cases, Greek examples may be found, but not in anything like the frequency which the New Testament enjoys. How extensive, then, is Semitic interference in New Testament Greek? The answer is not at all apparent. The issue, it should be quite clear, revolves around the matter of *secondary* Semitisms—which constructions may be so classified—and this is really an argument regarding frequency. How frequent is frequent for the sake of linguistic comparison? The evidence changes day by day. Stanley Watson, in a recent publication, has argued quite convincingly that several constructions thought to be rare in Greek and frequent in Hebrew and Aramaic—and, therefore, by virtue of frequent usage secondary Semitisms (e.g., the use of the future indicative in place of a tense of the subjunctive after *hina* [Luke 20:10] and the imperatival participle [1 Peter 1:18])<sup>35</sup>—are, in fact, frequent in the Koine Greek of Hellenistic times and, therefore, cannot be classified as Semitisms in any real sense at all.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, it is right to ask what the *cause* of the Semitisms which do exist is, for it is a question which has importance for our understanding of the life of the early church. Again, there is little consensus on this matter, but the following may be noted. Some Semitisms seem to be directly attributable to *external* factors, to factors outside the mental world of the individual author himself. Aside from the obvious, a transliteration—taking over directly what a principal speaks in Hebrew or Aramaic (e.g., *ēli, ēli, lema sabachthani*, in Matthew 27:46)—some Semitic interference may represent translations from other texts. On the one hand, we may think of written texts. Quotations from the Septuagint are obvious examples of such Semitic interference, for the Septuagint itself is a translation of a Hebrew text. But this point does raise the question of *written* Semitic texts, *Vorlagen* (whether in the form of *logia* collections or some other format),<sup>37</sup> for certain portions of New Testament texts, such as sayings of our Lord, which contain Semitisms at every turn. On the other hand, *unwritten* texts may be translational sources for the same portions of the New Testament text—Semitic oral traditions which have now been rendered into Greek, such as those hypothesized for almost eighty years by form-critical studies.

Other Semitisms are attributable to internal factors, to factors within the mental world of the individual author himself. And here two items may be noted. The first is the Old Testament translated into Greek in the Septuagint—meaning not quotations of the Septuagint (which were mentioned above) but, rather, the linguistic influence of the Septuagint on early Christian speech. The Septuagint was surely widely known—quotations from New Testament authors of every type and stripe are proof of that—which means that the words and the structures of this work—itsself heavily Semitic as translational Greek—impressed themselves upon the thought of early Christian writers, in the same way in which the King James Version has affected the speech of English-speaking Christians throughout the entire world.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Septuagintisms, both real (e.g., *en tō* with the infinitive [Luke 5:1]) and imitational (e.g., *anatolē ex hupsous*, "dayspring from on high" [Luke 1:78]), have been detected by Max Wilcox<sup>39</sup> and several others.<sup>40</sup> It is difficult to overestimate the influence of the Septuagint on the New Testament writers as a whole.

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The second internal source of interference is Semitic linguistic competence on the part of those whose native language was the Hebrew or Aramaic tongue. A man grows up speaking and thinking Hebrew or Aramaic. Later, he also acquires Greek. But his Semitic patterns of expression never leave him altogether, although he becomes fluent in his second tongue—even as those born in Germany or France never speak English totally as a native, with total idiomatic command, exhibiting especially native language interference of the "secondary" kind. Such interference need not be harsh or frequent, but it is present nonetheless, being more or less in evidence in each individual case. In this observer's opinion, however, there is no clear and strong evidence for a special "Jewish-Greek" dialect spoken by Semitic people, a Jewish-Greek *patois* (which type of special dialect has been conjectured by many since Edwin Hatch,<sup>41</sup> most strongly by Nigel Turner<sup>42</sup> and most recently by Steven Thompson in his new study on the Book of Revelation).<sup>43</sup> Indeed, sociolinguistic study itself would suggest that such would not be the case, for Greek was the "prestige" language of the Mediterranean world; and, in such a multilingual setting, linguistic transfer normally occurs in the direction *from*, not toward, the dominant language of the time.<sup>44</sup>

### C. *The Relationship between Hellenic and Semitic Features*

What is the relationship between the two sets of characteristics of New Testament Greek as we have noted them, the Hellenic and the Semitic? Each student must decide for himself on this matter but, as this observer reads the evidence, the Hellenic factors are dominant in the end. Yes, Semitic constructions do appear. Yes, Semitic vocabulary does abound. But the Greek of the New Testament is still Greek—true Hellenistic Greek—not basically Hebrew disguised as Greek nor Aramaic in Greek dress. It is truly Greek, Koine Greek with a Semitic tinge, a tinge which may be traced in large measure to the Septuagint, as has been said. And this phenomenon should not surprise us in the least. For our God is a God who works with tools, tools He has at hand, but tools appropriate to the task. And the language of the New Testament as we have it in our books is appropriate to this task. For it is truly Greek—the *lingua franca* of its time—able to reach many peoples and nations throughout the

ancient world, with no language barrier at all. Yet salvation is "of the Jews." The Old Testament is still true. And the incarnational roots—the heritage from the Semitic past—are still present, not only in the thought, the doctrine, and the truths, but also in something of the very form by which that truth is told.

### Endnotes

1. Moses Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture: Fusion and Diffusion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959; reprint, 1972), pp. 21-42.
2. Procope S. Costas, *An Outline of the History of the Greek Language with Particular Emphasis on the Koine and the Subsequent Periods* (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1936; reprint, 1979), p. 42.
3. Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture*, p. 34.
4. Saul Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Life and Manners of Jewish Palestine in the II-IV C.E.* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1942), and *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Literary Transmission Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the I Century B.C.E.-IV Century C.E.* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962).
5. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D.," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 32 (1970), pp. 507-518.
6. Pinchas Lapide, "Insights from Qumran into the Language of Jesus," *Revue de Qumran*, 8 (1972-75), pp. 498-501.
7. Robert Gundry, "The Language Milieu of First Century Palestine: Its Bearing on the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 83 (1964), pp. 404-408.
8. Jan N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968).

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9. C. F. D. Moule, "Once More, Who Were the Hellenists?" *Expository Times*, 70 (1959), pp. 100-102.
  10. Julius Wellhausen, *Einleitung in die Drei Ersten Evangelien* (Berlin: Reimer Verlag, 1905), p. 14 (cf. also p. 34).
  11. Harris Birkeland, *The Language of Jesus* (Oslo, 1954).
  12. Jehoshua M. Grintz, "Hebrew as the Spoken and Written Language in the Last Days of the Second Temple," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 79 (1960), pp. 32-47.
  13. Moses H. Segal, *Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927).
  14. Lapidé, "Insights from Qumran into the Language of Jesus," pp. 483-501.
  15. Fitzmyer, "The Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D.," pp. 528-531.
  16. Jozsef T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea*, trans. J. Strugnell (Naperville, Illinois: A. R. Allenson, 1959).
  17. J. A. Emerton, "The Problem of Vernacular Hebrew in the First Century A.D. and the Language of Jesus," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 24 (1973), pp. 1-23.
  18. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea*, pp. 130-131.
  19. Lapidé, "Insights from Qumran into the Language of Jesus," pp. 485-501.
  20. Cf. James W. Voelz, "The Language of the New Testament," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, 25:2, ed. Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), 894-930.
  21. See especially Matthias Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae S. seu de Sermone Sacrarum Literarum*, 1 (Basel: P. Quecum, 1567).
  22. Early church fathers, such as Isidor of Pelusium (4, Epistle 67, in Migne, *Patrologia Graece*, 78, 1124-1125), felt constrained to defend the ingenuous nature of New Testament Greek.
  23. A new study of no small significance has just been published: Stanley E. Porter, "The Language of the Apocalypse in Recent



- Discussion," *New Testament Studies*, 35 (1989), pp. 582-603. Porter also treats the historical and social milieu of New Testament Greek.
24. See especially G. Adolf Deissmann, *Biblical Studies: Contributions Chiefly from Papyri and Inscriptions to the History of the Language, the Literature, and the Religion of Hellenistic Judaism and Primitive Christianity*, trans. A. Grieve (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1909), *The Philology of the Greek Bible: Its Present and Future*, trans. L. R. M. Strachan (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), and *Licht vom Osten: Das Neue Testament and die neuentdeckten Texte der hellenistisch-römischen Welt*, fourth ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1923).
  25. Cf. Voelz, "The Language of the New Testament," 932-933, note 232.
  26. Cf. Voelz, "The Language of the New Testament," 933, note 233.
  27. Cf. Voelz, "The Language of the New Testament," 934, note 240.
  28. Cf. Voelz, "The Language of the New Testament," 933.
  29. The latest treatment is contained in Porter, "The Language of the Apocalypse," p. 590.
  30. Costas, *Greek Language Outline*, p. 47.
  31. Albert Thumb, *Die Griechische Sprache im Zeitalter des Hellenismus: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Beurteilung der Koine* (Strassburg: K. J. Trübner, 1901; photocopy ed., Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1974), p. 8.
  32. Costas, *Greek Language Outline*, p. 47.
  33. William L. Wonderly, "Some Principles of 'Common Language' Translation," *Bible Translator*, 21 (1970), p. 127.
  34. James H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek, 2: Accidence and Word-Formation*, ed. W. F. Howard (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1929), pp. 15-16.
  35. Porter, "The Language of the Apocalypse," pp. 590-592.

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36. There is, further, the question of the Greek evidence *per se*. Has it—the secular Greek which is used as a standard for comparison in matters of Semitic influence in texts—been infected, so to speak, by Semitic influence itself? Evidence has been presented which would answer "yes" to such a question, especially for documents from the Egyptian desert, but again all the evidence is not in. See Voelz, "The Language of the New Testament," 919-920, note 157.
37. Compare the comments of Papias regarding Matthew writing *ta logia in hebraïdi dialektō* (Eusebius, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, III, 39, 16).
38. This idea has been growing in popularity. See Bruce M. Metzger, "The Language of the New Testament," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, 7 (New York: Abingdon Press), p. 46, and J. C. Doudna, "The Greek of the Gospel of Mark," *Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series*, 12 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), p. 136, who speaks of Mark's mind being "stored with the expressions of the Septuagint," a description which surely describes St. Luke. Deissmann, the great pioneer of linguistic investigation of the New Testament, propounded a similar position in *Biblical Studies*, p. 76.
39. Max Wilcox, *The Semitisms of Acts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 57.
40. Cf. Voelz, "The Language of the New Testament," 927, note 200.
41. Edwin Hatch, *Essays in Biblical Greek* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1889).
42. James H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 4: Style, by Nigel Turner (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1976), pp. 4-8, and Nigel Turner, "Second Thoughts VII: Papyrus Finds," *Expository Times*, 76 (1964), p. 45: ". . . the language of the Old Testament translators and the New Testament writers was the same: a living dialect of Jewish Greek."
43. Steven Thompson, *The Apocalypse and Semitic Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
44. Porter, "The Language of the Apocalypse," pp. 600-601.