

## PREFACE

This volume had a long period of gestation. It began with two long articles, published in 1977 and 1979, in the *Bar-Ilan Annual* Nos. XIV-XV, XVI-XVII, under the general title “Greek and Latin Words in Rabbinic Literature: Prolegomena to a New Dictionary of Classical Words in Rabbinic Literature.” The study was well received by the foremost authorities in the field, and followed numerous articles dealing with individual words that I had published earlier in different journals, in both English and Hebrew, which had served as preparatory studies to these summarizing expositions. Subsequently, I continued in this vein, examining individual lexical entries and then in a variety of books, some with more encompassing subjects.

Thus, *A Dictionary of Greek and Latin Legal Terms in Rabbinic Literature* appeared in 1984; *Nautica Talmudica* appeared in 1986, dealing with Palestinian shipping terminology; in 1982, I published a collection of essays in Hebrew and English entitled *Essays on Greek and Latin in the Mishna, Talmud and Midrashic Literature*; two volumes in Hebrew on *Material Culture in Eretz-Israel during the Talmudic Period* appeared in 1993 and 2006, dealing with a variety of objects and implements; and *The City in Roman Palestine*, which appeared in 1998, which had much philological material relating to different aspects of urban life. Additionally, *Magic and Folklore in Rabbinic Literature*, which appeared in 1994, contained a number of studies on Greco-Jewish magical terminology.

Over the years, I had assembled a very detailed card index of thousands of Greek loan-words in rabbinic literature, including full source references, variant readings, a bibliography of articles and books discussing each entry, articles on the Greek word in classical journals, etc. – all this in preparation for a new *Lehrwörter*, which kept getting put off as other books got written.

This volume, then, is a sort of interim summation of where I have got thus far in this area of research. It falls into two separate parts: the first, in a way, being a continuation of Samuel Krauss’s great pioneering *Griechische und Lateinische Lehrwörter im Talmud, Midrash und Targum*, published in Berlin in 1899, which, with all its failings, remains to this day the best work of its kind on this subject; and the second, clearly following on in the way shown

us by the greatest Talmudist of his generation, Prof. Saul Lieberman, in his many studies, and his two seminal volumes, *Greek in Jewish Palestine* and *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, first published in 1942 and 1950.

I owe a great debt to these two outstanding masters, and most especially to Prof. Lieberman, who, as it were, adopted me as his disciple in this field, and served as a constant source of encouragement. I only regret that, out of a misplaced fear of feeling like an idiot, I did not ask him more questions on terms that, to this day, remain for me unsolved puzzles. It was for me an honor and a privilege to have been numbered among his pupils.

I also owe a deep debt of gratitude to Prof. Goshen-Gottstein, from whom I learned a great deal about lexicography, especially when preparing my *Dictionary*. He gave of his time and expertise unsparingly, even late into the night, to straighten out my scrambled entries, and reveal to me the structure of a clear lexical entry.

And here I cannot but mention a great mentor, under whose joint direction with Prof. Siegfried Stein I did my doctorate, Prof. Arnaldo Momigliano, a hard master but a real friend, whose peripheral knowledge was so vast, that every incidental conversation on any subject was a deep learning experience.

My colleagues in the Talmud department at Bar-Ilan University throughout my forty odd years in the University have been a wonderful support group, and are dear friends.

That great old lady, whom within the family circle I call my “girl friend,” Mrs. Blanca Wintner Roven, who many years ago dedicated the Chair of which I am the incumbent, in memory of her late husband, Milan Roven, has indeed served over the years as a real friend.

My sincere and heartfelt thanks to my daughter Elisheva Oszvad, Dr. Chava Korzakova and Ms. Esther Dranger for their invaluable assistance in preparing this manuscript.

Finally, my sincere thanks go to several generations of family. My grandfather, Rabbi David Sperber, whom I had the privilege to know and serve in the latter years of his life, my dear late parents, my father Rabbi Samuel Sperber, from whom I learned both Torah and Derech Eretz – I hope – and my mother, whose love was unending, and, of course, my wonderful wife, Chana, without which nothing could have happened, and my children and grandchildren, who are the ultimate source of satisfaction and fulfillment for every parent.

May they all be blessed.

Daniel Sperber