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B.'s solution to the problem of scribal involvement is to state that "[c]ertain kinds of legal boilerplate show up in all petitions, but to attribute this to the hand of the scribe alone is to enter dangerous territory" (p. 63). Quite right. But it is also to "enter dangerous territory" to attribute the words or rhetorical strategies in a particular document to the petitioner, yet B. does precisely this throughout the book. The fact is that, in the vast majority of cases, we just do not know whose subjective mental states we are seeing in these texts, or if certain phrases or narrative features were repeated through sheer force of habit. The fact that B. produces two private letters (p. 64), each with a word that he deems "legal" (without any argument about what identifies a word as "legal"), does not prove much about the extent to which the general public could deploy legal jargon—especially since private letters were sometimes written by paid scribes as well. Thus, if petitions are to be used to peer inside the minds of petitioners, better arguments will need to be found.

The above reflections on *Violence in Roman Egypt* have suggested, I hope, that B. has produced a stimulating and thought-provoking book. Work needs to be done to clarify and provide evidentiary support for his detailed arguments, and to strengthen the claims he makes for the meaning of his evidence. But the purpose of an essay is surely to provoke debate and raise new research questions. This essay will certainly achieve such a purpose.

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Greek in Talmudic Palestine. By DANIEL SPERBER. Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2012. Pp. 266.

The systematic study of the numerous Greek and Latin loanwords found in classical rabbinic literature, written between the first and the seventh centuries C.E., began in earnest in the eleventh century, when Rabbi Nathan ben Yehiel of Rome wrote his magisterial *Arukh*. This alphabetically arranged dictionary-cum-encyclopedia made use of earlier glossaries and commentaries on rabbinic literature, and of R. Nathan's own extensive knowledge of Latin and Greek, to which he had been exposed as a Jew living in Italy.¹ His work became an essential tool for all medieval and later readers of rabbinic literature, most of whom had no knowledge of the classical languages, and therefore no other way of dealing with the endless stream of transliterated Greek words, and less numerous Latin words, found in their central religious scriptures. In fact, it was one of the first Hebrew books ever printed, and supplements to it were written from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries.

With the rise of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the early nineteenth century, one of the scholarly desiderata for the scientific study of the classical Jewish texts was a new dictionary of Greek and Latin words in rabbinic literature, one that would make use of all the tools of modern textual and philological scholarship. A first major step in this direction was taken in the 1880s, when Alexander Kohut produced a critical edition of the *Arukh* that has not been replaced since.² A second step was

1. For Nathan of Rome and his *Arukh*, see Shifra Sznol, "Medieval Jewish Greek Lexicography: The 'Arukh' of Nathan ben Jehiel," *Erytheia* 30 (2009): 107–28.

2. Alexander Kohut, *Arukh completum, sive lexicon vocabula et res, quae in libris targumicis, talmudicis et midraschicis continentur, explicans* (Vienna, 1878–92).

taken at the very end of the nineteenth century, when Samuel Krauss published his monumental dictionary of Greek and Latin loanwords in rabbinic literature, a work that was intended to serve students and scholars of rabbinic literature in their search for the etymology and meaning of many inexplicable, and often corrupt, loanwords, and which still serves us all to this very day.³ And yet, the inadequacies of this work were noted soon after its publication, and the need for a better dictionary—one that would be based on better manuscript evidence for the works in question, on a more critical assessment of each word's nature as a loanword from Greek or Latin, and on a better assessment of its possible meanings in Greek and Latin and its uses in Aramaic and Hebrew texts. But to tackle such a task, a scholar must be an expert in rabbinic literature and its text-critical study, in the classical languages and all the different types of texts transmitted in Greek and Latin (including epigraphy and papyrology, which often are more relevant for the study of Talmudic realia than Euripides or Tacitus), and in the basic rules of Indo-European and Semitic linguistics, of Greek dialectology, and of the proper analysis of etymologies, and of the transfer of words and ideas from one language to another. Unfortunately, very few scholars can claim to have mastered all these disparate bodies of knowledge, and the few who do tend to have many research projects that call for their rare expertise. Among these, two names stand out: the first is the late Professor Saul Lieberman (1898–1983), who was the foremost Talmudic scholar of the twentieth century, and a major contributor to the study of the Greek and Latin impact on rabbinic literature.⁴ The second is the author of the present volume, Professor Daniel Sperber (1940–), a disciple of Professor Lieberman, and a continuator of some of his teacher's works, and especially that which deals with the impact of Greek and Latin—both the languages and the cultures—on classical rabbinic Judaism. S.'s own understanding of his role as a continuator is made manifest in the present volume (pp. 9–10) by the facsimile reproduction, transliteration, and English translation of a short handwritten letter sent to him by Lieberman in 1978 and congratulating him for the publication of his "Prolegomena" in 1977.

The first major fruit of S.'s work on this topic was a detailed introduction to the field, coupled with numerous supplements to Krauss' dictionary, which were to serve as the basis for a new dictionary of the Greek and Latin loanwords in rabbinic literature (and which won Lieberman's above-mentioned approval).⁵ These were followed by a dictionary of the Greek and Latin legal terms found in rabbinic literature and a fully annotated glossary of the rabbis' maritime vocabulary, including many Greek and Latin loanwords.⁶ To these may be added dozens of smaller contributions on specific words, literary motifs, and physical, technological, social, and cultural (esp. religious) realia that are reflected in rabbinic literature and may be elucidated with the help of classical sources. And yet, the comprehensive dictionary, on which S. has been

3. Samuel Krauss, *Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum*, 2 vols., with remarks by Immanuel Löw (Berlin, 1898–99) (repr. Hildesheim, 1964). Krauss also edited Kohut's previously unpublished addenda to the *Aruch*: Samuel Krauss, ed., *Addimenta ad librum Aruch Completum Alexandri Kohut*, with the assistance of Bernhard Geiger, Louis Ginzberg, Immanuel Löw, and Benjamin Murelstein (Vienna, 1937).

4. For his most important contributions to this field, see Saul Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine* (New York, 1942) (2nd ed., 1965); *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York, 1950) (2nd ed., 1962).

5. See Daniel Sperber, "Greek and Latin Words in Rabbinic Literature: Prolegomena to a New Dictionary of Classical Words in Rabbinic Literature," *Bar-Ilan* 14–15 (1977): 9–60 and *Bar-Ilan* 16–17 (1979): 9–30.

6. See Daniel Sperber, *A Dictionary of Greek and Latin Legal Terms in Rabbinic Literature* (Ramat-Gan, 1984); *Nautica Talmudica* (Ramat-Gan, 1986).

working (especially by compiling detailed lexical card-indexes, as explained here on p. 7), has not yet been produced, and its fate is far from clear. Thus, the present volume is presented by its author as “a sort of interim summation of where I have got thus far in this area of research” (p. 7). In fact, it consists of some previously published essays, often in an expanded form, and some shorter essays that seem to be published here for the first time, although the difference between these two types of essays is not clearly indicated.⁷

The book is divided in two parts. Part 1 (pp. 15–110) includes the above-mentioned “Prolegomena,” partly augmented and updated.⁸ Following some introductory remarks on Krauss and his dictionary, and on the need for a new and better dictionary, S. discusses the methodological problems inherent in the search for the Greek and Latin words that lurk in rabbinic literature. Transliterated in an alphabet that is inherently unsuitable for this task, preserved in texts that are often characterized by their terse and highly technical style, copied by medieval scribes who no longer knew any Greek or Latin, and preserved in often corrupt manuscripts, the Greek and Latin loanwords found in rabbinic literature often are badly garbled, thus making their identification and their correct interpretation extremely difficult. S. highlights these difficulties, but then proceeds to offer 288 words that were not included in Krauss’ *Lehnwörter*, followed by more methodological discussions of the correct identification of such words. Throughout, these discussions focus on specific examples of Greek and Latin words and terms that may be reconstructed from their corrupt remains in the best manuscript witnesses for the specific passages in rabbinic literature where these words make an appearance.

Part 2 of the book (pp. 111–83) offers a series of more specific studies pertaining to the rabbis’ knowledge of the Greek language and of Greek culture. These include a brief foray into the question of the rabbis’ familiarity with the Homeric poems, a short discussion of their use of Roman and Greek legal terminology, and a few notes on the appearance of Greek words in later rabbinic texts (or, to be more precise, in ancient Jewish magical and mystical texts whose relations to rabbinic Judaism are much disputed among scholars). Here too, S.’s favorite *modus operandi* is the raising of a larger point and its support with the help of specific examples, that often boil down to the appearance of a single word, phrase, or literary theme. Finally, the book ends with four appendices (pp. 184–215)—one on the knowledge of Latin in Palestine of the rabbis’ time, two on specific Greek loanwords, and one with a list of 420 Greek words that are found in rabbinic literature and also appear in the New Testament. The book is then rounded off with a series of useful indexes.

As the reader of the above summary may already realize, this book is not for the fainthearted. To make full use of its many treasures, one has to have a sound knowledge of Greek, Latin, Aramaic, and Hebrew, and a thorough familiarity with rabbinic literature. One must also bear with detailed excursions into the life histories of specific words, their appearances in different types of Greek and Latin texts, their reappearance

7. Moreover, the complex editorial history of this volume has left its mark. On p. 110 n. 120, the reference to “See above p. 164 no. 125,” leads nowhere; on p. 161, the reference to “See above Part I sect. III near note 31,” is wrong, and so on.

8. Unfortunately, there is no typographical distinction between the original texts and the updated sections or footnotes. I note, moreover, that the “Prolegomena” had already been reprinted, with handwritten addenda, in his *Essays on Greek and Latin in the Mishna, Talmud and Midrashic Literature* (Jerusalem, 1982).

in different guises in the Jewish texts, and the many different shapes they take in the manuscripts through which rabbinic literature was transmitted. And yet, this detailed philological analysis is absolutely essential for the correct interpretation of the rabbinic texts in which these words are found, and for the broader analysis of the impact of classical civilization upon that of rabbinic Judaism. Thus, S. is to be lauded for his efforts, and for the erudition he brings to each one of these specific studies. The resulting book is useful, as it gathers together important contributions to the study of the impact of the Greek and Latin languages, and of Hellenism in general, on rabbinic culture. And yet, reading it is a somewhat sad experience, since it seems to be presented to the academic world in lieu of the comprehensive dictionary that all scholars are still expecting. Moreover, while S. is the undisputed master in this field, it is quite clear that with his many other research interests, the field had outpaced its prolific master.

To see how the very uneven process of updating S.'s earlier publications, and presenting the data found in his lexical cards, is manifested in the present book, we may focus on a few specific examples.

* On p. 42 n. 13, S. has added to his original text a reference to Nicholas de Lange's seminal publication of Judaeo-Greek texts, which came out in 1996.⁹ But in the same footnote, his discussion of the spelling of Greek γυνή (acc. γυνᾶϊκα) as נק״י, which clearly reflects the Byzantine pronunciation of this word (note the palatalization of the *gamma*) would have benefitted from a reference to the appearance of the same word (נק״י, "the woman") in a medico-magical text published by Peter Schäfer and Shaul Shaked in 1994.¹⁰

* On p. 44 n. 18, S. has added another important reference to de Lange's 1996 publication. But in the very same footnote, we hear that "Prof. Wirszubski told me of a manuscript of *Hechalot Rabbati* where the chapter numbers are [also] in Greek [in Hebrew letters]." This is definitely correct, but the manuscript in question had been published by Schäfer in his *Synopsis of Hekhalot Literature* already in 1981, and is available for all to see.¹¹

* On pp. 105–7, a detailed discussion of the different appearances and the various spellings of the word נ״פ, i.e., Νύμφη in rabbinic literature would surely have benefited from the analysis of a passage of a Palestinian Jewish Aramaic hemerologion, published by Shaked in 1992 and displaying an abundant influence of Greek mythology, where we learn that the twenty-sixth of the month is the day on which נ״פ is born.¹²

9. Nicholas R. M. de Lange, *Greek Jewish Texts from the Cairo Genizah*, *Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum* 51 (Tübingen, 1996). It must be noted, however, that most of the texts edited by de Lange are of a much later date than the classical rabbinic sources, and reflect the Byzantine (Judaeo-)Greek spoken by Romaniote Jews, and not the Greek loanwords of the Aramaic- and Hebrew-speaking rabbis of Late Antiquity. I am grateful to Shifra Sznol for stressing this point in our conversations on these subjects.

10. Peter Schäfer and Shaul Shaked, *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, vol. 1, *Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum* 42 (Tübingen, 1994), 88. I owe this reference to Nicholas de Lange.

11. Peter Schäfer, *Synopsis zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, *Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum* 2 (Tübingen, 1981); for the transliterated Greek chapter-numbers, see *ibid.*, the right column of §205, §213, §218, §224, §230, §233, §237, §240, §246, and §259.

12. Shaul Shaked, "A Palestinian Jewish Aramaic Hemerologion," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 15 (1992): 28–42, on p. 33. For further discussion, see Reimund Leicht, *Astrologumena Judaica: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Astrologischen Literatur der Juden*, *Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism* 21 (Tübingen, 2006), 60 and 63.

* On pp. 170–76, a detailed discussion of a transliterated Greek prayer to Helios and a Greek dismissal formula in *Sepher Ha-Razim* (“The Book of Mysteries,” a Jewish book of magic which displays many similarities with the Greek magical papyri) makes no use, or even mention, of the newer edition of this text, which has much more textual material than Mordecai Margalioth’s classic edition.¹³

Examples such as these could easily be multiplied. As noted above, S. is a prolific scholar, whose many contributions to different fields of scholarship, and to current developments within Orthodox Jewish society in Israel, have justly earned him many awards, including the Israel Prize. But reading the present volume, one cannot help feeling that the question of when we will finally have an adequate replacement for Krauss’ problematic but essential *Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter* remains open, and the prospects of its emergence in the foreseeable future seem dimmer with every passing year. Eventually, a new generation of scholars will have to start where Krauss, Lieberman, and Sperber left off, and build on their achievements to create a thoroughly revised dictionary of Greek and Latin loanwords in rabbinic literature.¹⁴

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13. Bill Rebigier and Peter Schäfer, *Sefer ha-Razim I und II: Das Buch der Geheimnisse I und II*, 2 vols., Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 125, 132 (Tübingen, 2009).

14. For the problems they will have to face, see now Julia G. Krivoruchko, “Greek Loanwords in Rabbinic Literature: Reflections on Current Research Methodology,” in *Greek Scripture and the Rabbis*, ed. Timothy Michael Law and Alison Salvesen, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 66 (Leuven, 2012), 193–216.