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Koine Greek: a Curse or a Blessing? A Sociolinguistic and Intertextual Study on the Reception of the Confusion of Tongues (Gen. 11,1-9) in Hellenistic Jewish Writings

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Koine Greek: a Curse or a Blessing?

*A Sociolinguistic and Intertextual Study on the Reception of the
Confusion of Tongues (Gen. 11,1-9) in Hellenistic Jewish Writings*

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List of abbreviations

Abr.	<i>De Abrahamo</i>
Conf.	<i>De Confusione Linguarum</i>
Congr.	<i>De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia</i>
Deut.	<i>Deuteronomy</i>
Ex.	<i>Exodus</i>
Ez.	<i>Ezekiel</i>
Gen.	<i>Genesis</i>
Is.	<i>Isaiah</i>
Jer.	<i>Jeremiah</i>
Jos. Ant.	<i>Josephus' Antiquitates Iudaicae</i>
Jub.	<i>Jubilees</i>
LAB	<i>Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum</i>
LXX	Septuagint
Mos.	<i>De Vita Mosis</i>
MT	Masoretic Text
Neh.	<i>Nehemiah</i>
Nu.	<i>Numbers</i>
Od.	<i>Odyssee</i>
OT	Old Testament
Praep. Ev.	<i>Praeparatio Evangelica</i>
Ps.	<i>Psalms</i>
Sam.	<i>(1/2) Samuel</i>
Sib. Or.	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>

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1. Introduction

Thousands of languages are spoken worldwide. Since most people do not speak more than three languages, this means that most humans are not able to communicate with each other, except with people who share the same language. What is the origin of this situation?

The Book of Genesis contains a narrative which addresses this problem. In Genesis 11,1-9, the history of language diversity deals with the “confusion of tongues” after the construction of the city and tower of Babel. The language that was spoken by all humans became confused and caused scattering of people, languages and cultures.

However, how should this narrative be interpreted in a world that becomes more and more global using a universal language? Hellenistic Jews used the (Greek translation of) the Hebrew Torah, including Genesis, and were acquainted with the Biblical narrative of the Confusion of Tongues in Gen. 11,1-9. However, they lived in a time in which nations, languages and cultures became increasingly connected, because they were bridged by a universal language: Koine Greek. This unification of cultures is an opposite movement as the one in Gen. 11,1-9. Did Hellenistic Jews see this situation as a paradox? And if so, how would they have dealt with it?

1.1 Research question

The question that is central to this thesis is: *How did Jews living in 2nd c. BC-2nd c. AD relate to language shift to Koine Greek, based on the Hellenistic Jewish reception of the Confusion of Tongues (Gen. 11,1-9)?*

We also know how rabbis around the 3rd and 4th c. AD explained the linguistic situation before and after the Confusion of Tongues from their own contemporary language perspective (see 1.3). However, it is unknown how Jewish societies around the Mediterranean from the 2nd BC-2nd AD reacted on language change and how manifested their beliefs on the status of Hebrew and Greek. Was Hebrew still connected to Jewish identity? And how should they relate to Koine Greek as a universal language bridging cultures? A shared Biblical narrative on language diversification (Gen. 11,1-9) evokes the presenting of such thoughts, since the narrative needs to make sense in the author’s and his reader’s life. On the other hand, the Tower-narratives from the Hellenistic period are studied (see 1.2), but not interpreted sociolinguistically (except for *Jubilees*). The aim of this research is to give a voice to the thoughts of Jews on language change during a period of Hellenization.

For this aim I have chosen four Jewish texts from the Hellenistic period with different provenances¹.

- *Jubilees*: ca. 160-150 BC, Palestine;
- *Sibylline Oracles* book 3: ca. 80-40 BC, Asia Minor;
- Philo's *De Confusione Linguarum*: ca. 20 BC-ca. 49 AD, Alexandria (Egypt);
- Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*: ca. 1-150 AD, Palestine.

These texts are most promising as case studies for the answering of the central question on language perception². All four texts are based on the same Biblical narrative, but show the reception of Jews with from different times and geographical locations in the Greek and Palestine world with different degrees of assimilation and attitudes towards it. I expect to find different renderings of the Tower-narrative based on these factors, for these determine the extent to which Jews feel threatened or at ease by Greek language and culture.

The Tower-narrative in *Jubilees* is intriguing for its strong focus on the value of the preservation of Hebrew. The *Sibylline Oracles* provides a perspective of a Jew from Asia Minor, who converted the Tower-narrative in an eschatological prophesy of a Sibyl in a Greek genre. Another Diaspora Jew, Philo, devotes an entire treatise on the Confusion of Tongues in which he explains the Tower-narrative allegorically. Pseudo-Philo fuses two Tower-traditions in order to connect the narrative with the choosing of Abram.

1.2 Debate

All these Hellenistic Jewish accounts of the Tower of Babel (except for the *Sibylline Oracles*) are thoroughly treated by Sherman (2008) in his dissertation "Translating the Tower: Genesis 11 and ancient Jewish interpretation". He analyzed the reception of Gen. 11,1-9 by Jewish authors from the Second Temple Period until the Rabbinic Period. In his own words:

My focus throughout will be to hold together history and exegesis, interpretation and ideology, as I explore how various interpreters of Scripture in Jewish antiquity looked to the narrative of Babel and sought a lesson of pressing importance for the ongoing life and well-being of their respective communities.³

He used the method of *Rezeptionsgeschichte*, i.e. the analysis of the history of interpretation of, in his case, biblical texts. Sherman's results lead him to the conclusion that "interpretation is a historically conditioned and highly contextualized activity".

¹ These texts are presented in the appendix. The Exam Committee has agreed to exclude the texts in the appendix from the word count.

² There are other Hellenistic Jewish writings about the Tower as well, but these are not included as case studies in this research: fragment 1 and 2 of Pseudo-Eupolemos *apud* Eusebius²: the uncertain origin and fragmentary nature makes it hard to draw conclusions from these; 3 Baruch chapter 2 and 3, which are very interesting in its account of the motivation and consequences of the building of the Tower, but: this writing provides less information on the linguistic aspect of the Confusion of Tongues than the four chosen works; and last but not least Josephus' account in *Ant.* 1.110-121: Josephus is mainly concerned with the political aspect of the Tower narrative and paraphrases the Sibyl, which is treated already in 3.2.

³ Sherman 2008, 9.

How is my research different from Sherman's? Sherman (2008) is focused on the multiple interpretations of the complete narrative of Gen 11,1-9, whereas I focus mainly on the Confusion of Tongues. Moreover, he uses the method of *Rezeptionsgeschichte*, while I apply a sociolinguistic perspective, when I analyze the text using intertextuality. Except in his study of *Jubilees*, he does not delve into the author's ideas of his language situation, while this is the core of my research. Additionally, I will examine the Tower-narrative of the Sibylline Oracles, which is not included in Sherman (2008).

1.3 Sociolinguistic History of the Post-exilic Jews

What was the sociolinguistic situation of the Jews during Hellenism? Was the status of Hebrew then different from earlier times? And how does Aramaic fit in this picture? This section is mainly based on Spolsky's book about the sociolinguistic history of the languages of the Jews⁴. By understanding this sociolinguistic history, we are able to investigate the ideas about the sociolinguistic situation in the next chapters.

For Spolsky's treatment of the languages of the Jews, we need to get introduced to the following terms: *multilingualism* and *plurilingualism*. The former designates "a speech community with many languages functioning in it"⁵ and the latter "the proficiency of individuals controlling more than one language"⁶. In a multilingual society, different languages function for different tasks, like a language for government, business or in various neighborhoods⁷. With plurilingualism and bilingualism, performing certain tasks may be better in one language than another and certain domains are better to handle for individual plurilinguals than others⁸.

Why are these terms important to Spolsky? He opposes the traditional view that before the Babylonian exile (597 BC) every Jew was monolingual in Hebrew and returned to Palestine speaking Aramaic as a vernacular, but with Hebrew as a sacred language:

Much more likely than this traditional view is a multilingual pattern, with varying levels of individual plurilingualism, and an overall triglossia⁹ of the sort that emerged later, with use of Hebrew for higher and sacred functions and as a continuing internal spoken vernacular (though a slowly changing variety under the pressure of Aramaic and other varieties, as shown in Mishnaic Hebrew), and changing varieties of Aramaic serving both as the co-territorial variety for contact with non-Jews, with whom there was regular trade, and in many cases (such as among those with the major external contact or with the higher status associated with wealth and trade) as a regular vernacular¹⁰.

⁴ Spolsky 2014.

⁵ Spolsky 2014, 30.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ Spolsky 2014, 31.

⁹ *Diglossia* is a form of bilingualism, characterized by a division of functions for language use, defined by rules for choosing a language. *Triglossia* is a similar form, but involving three languages.

¹⁰ Spolsky 2014, 30.

When Jewish people returned from exile, they probably still spoke Hebrew. Spolsky points out that 40 years is too short a time for a complete three generation language shift: “the immigrant generation adding the new language, their children being bilingual, and the third generation moving to the new language.”¹¹ This assumption seems to be supported by this following passage of Nehemia, narrating the return of a group of Jews:

In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language [Yehudit], but according to the language of each people¹².

The returning group finds an increasingly assimilated group of Jews by intermarriage. Clearly Nehemia associates the loss of language with a loss of ethnic identity by intermarriage¹³. Apparently, the returning Jews managed to stay bilingual in an all-Aramaic exile, while the Jews in Palestine were adopting other varieties from neighboring regions, because of intermarriage with women who did not speak Hebrew with their children. Hebrew was the language of common people before the Babylonian exile and after it, although the two groups did not understand each other’s language varieties anymore¹⁴.

After the Babylonian exile, Aramaic became more and more the vernacular of the Jews. However, Hebrew continued to exist in the late Second Temple period and the Mishnaic period as a religious and literary language¹⁵. A third language caused the Jewish sociolinguistic world to become trilingual in the 4th c. BC, when Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire, which resulted in Greek-speaking empires¹⁶. This change affected Jews in Palestine and in the Diaspora, since it spread Hellenism and Greek into Jewish life and continued to do so under Roman rule. Spolsky mentions multiple arguments that Greek was (well-)integrated in all parts of Jewish society¹⁷. The start of Roman power in 63 BC added a fourth language for Palestinian Jews: Latin. However, Aramaic (and Hebrew for some) remained the vernacular for Jews, which suggests a double diglossia with Hebrew as the H (High) language and Aramaic as the L (Low) within Palestine; the Greek (and Latin to a lesser extent) were the H language in Gentile–Jewish interaction¹⁸.

So, what do H and L mean? H and L are language varieties spoken by the same people. The L is the vernacular, spoken informally; the H is a formal and written language that needs to be learned and enjoys high esteem¹⁹. Its characteristics are summarized by Coulmas in the table below²⁰:

¹¹ Spolsky 2014, 29.

¹² Neh. 13, 23-24.

¹³ Spolsky 2014, 40.

¹⁴ Spolsky 2014, 39-40.

¹⁵ Spolsky 2014, 44-45.

¹⁶ Spolsky 2014, 46.

¹⁷ Spolsky 2014, 47-49.

¹⁸ Spolsky 2014, 52.

¹⁹ Coulmas 2013, 142.

²⁰ Coulmas 2013, 143.

	L	H
Function	intimacy, solidarity	formality, power
Context of use	informal	formal
Mode	predominantly spoken	predominantly written
Norm/standard	based on modern speech	based on classical texts; archaic
Lexicon	mixed	purist; technical
Acquisition	home transmission	schooling
Prestige	low	high

In this table, we can recognize the H as Hebrew and L with Aramaic within Palestine. In contacts with the Greek-speaking world the H is Greek. But does this also reflect the situation in the Diaspora? This question will be answered in 3.2 and 3.3.

So far, Spolsky treated the aspect of *practice* of language policy (the other two are *beliefs* and *management*)²¹. He continued with the second: beliefs or ideology of language behind the practices. He cites several Talmudic passages that encourage learning Greek as a governmental language, but simultaneously, the use of Hebrew within the Jewish community²². According to Spolsky:

These examples of language beliefs also demonstrate language management, as the rabbis were arguing for the maintenance of Hebrew at a time that it was no longer a mother tongue.²³

There are also Talmudic passages about the interpretation of the Tower of Babel, showing the wide variety of ideas among rabbi's:

In the Jerusalem Talmud Megilla (1: 11 71b), Rabbi Eleazar (about 300 CE) is cited as saying that there were multiple languages spoken before the Tower of Babel, and that God's punishment for the attempt to build the tower was to stop people understanding each other's language. Rabbi Yochanan (about 280 CE) disagrees, arguing that everyone spoke Hebrew before Babel, and that the single language was then divided there into seventy. Bar Qappara (about 350 CE) suggests an intermediate position, with Greek existing alongside Hebrew before Babel.²⁴

These Talmudic citations provide interesting insights in the Jewish perception of language, which are inspired by their contemporary language situation. However, these Talmudic opinions are from the 3rd-4th c. AD and do not represent the language beliefs of Jews in Palestine and the Diaspora of the 2nd BC-2nd AD. By studying the texts about the Confusion of Tongues (Gen. 11, 1-9) of Jewish authors during that time period, I will determine their attitudes towards linguistic diversity and their own beliefs of their contemporary language

²¹ Spolsky 2014, 49.

²² Spolsky 2014, 49-50.

²³ Spolsky 2014, 51.

²⁴ Spolsky 2014, 51.

situation. The results can count as an addition to the sociolinguistic study of Jewish languages through time.

In the next paragraph I will specify the method of intertextuality, which I will use for the sociolinguistic interpretation of the four case studies.

1.4 Methodology: Intertextuality

What is intertextuality and what function does it serve for this research? The term intertextuality is frequently used with different definitions. Therefore, I will specify in this paragraph the definition I use for this thesis.

I have chosen the approach of Tull (2000) with the renaming of Miller (2011), because of the orientation on Biblical literature instead of literary studies in general. According to them, intertextuality can be roughly divided into two types: reader-oriented and author-oriented²⁵. The first one focusses on the reader, who establishes connections between the text and other texts and experiences²⁶ and therefore meaning. Without the reader a text is lifeless and questions about author's intent, provenance and influence are irrelevant²⁷. Contrarily, author-oriented intertextuality focusses mainly on the author's intent. Therefore, meaning is established beforehand by the author and the goal of the reader is "to follow the pathways created by the author, which if competently navigated [will] lead to the understanding that the author wanted readers to gain" (Tull 2000, 63). It is the reader's task to discover intertextual clues or 'markers' that are embedded in the text²⁸.

The latter approach of serves this thesis best, since the author's intent is needed to investigate his reflections on his language situation. His treatment of his source text(s) as visible in e.g. exact wording, additions, omissions, alternations extracts information on his accordance with the content and message of the source text and shapes his own message.

The source text to all Hellenistic Jewish literature on the Confusion of Tongues is the book of Genesis. The exact Hebrew source text(s) is not extant, however the neat correspondences with the Qumran Scrolls and the Septuagint (especially the Pentateuch) makes the Masoretic Text a suitable representative of a Hebrew version of Genesis. A Hebrew text of Genesis was the source text of the Tower-narrative in *Jubilees* and *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (LAB), however, combined with other Jewish traditions or personal modifications as a "rewritten Bible". Rewritten Bible is a "term used for writings which amplify, modify, or in some other way revise existing books of the OT, thus making them more relevant or acceptable to a later generation of readers." (Oxford Reference)²⁹. Contrarily, the source text of Philo's *De Confusione Linguarum* was most definitely the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, since he cites it directly. However, this is less clear for the Sibylline

²⁵ Miller 2011, 285-286.

²⁶ Miller 2011, 286.

²⁷ Miller 2011, 287.

²⁸ Ben-Porat 1976, 108

²⁹ Cf. Sherman 2008, 116-118.

Oracles, since neither a Hebrew text of Genesis or the LXX seem to be the source text of this passage as will be discussed in 3.2.2.

1.5 Structure

This thesis is structured as follows. The second chapter will treat the source texts of Gen. 11,1-9, starting with the Hebrew MT. I will paraphrase the passage to elucidate the various points of interest. Afterwards, the passage in the LXX become part of the examination. Since translating is not possible without interpretation, there may be some new accents in the LXX. If these accents are present in Hellenistic Jewish literature, they must have adopted it from the LXX.

In the third chapter, I will examine four texts of Hellenistic Jewish authors, which seem to present the attitude to the contemporary language situation most clearly, in chronological order: *Jubilees*, narrating the loss of Hebrew in Babel; book 3 of the *Sibylline Oracles*, which expresses the Tower-narrative by a Sibyl in Greek Hexameters; Philo's *De Confusione Linguarum*, adding an Alexandrian perspective; and Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*, which connects the Confusion of Tongues with the election of Abraham. In order to provide their answer to the research question, every paragraph will start with background information, continued by the intertextual study of the Tower-narrative, which will be sociolinguistically analyzed in the subsequent section. In the conclusion, we will combine the results of the previous chapters.

2. Source Texts

In this chapter, we will investigate the texts that functioned as the source for the Hellenistic Jewish authors. In 2.1, the content of the Biblical narrative of the Tower of Babel and the subsequent Confusion of Tongues as it is transmitted by the Masoretic Text (MT) will be discussed. Thereafter (in 2.2), we will compare this Hebrew version with the Septuagint (LXX) translation of the same narrative³⁰. The LXX is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is known that the LXX Pentateuch is a literal translation of Hebrew source texts (see 2.2). Therefore, it is expected that the Greek translation of Gen. 11,1-9 does not deviate too much from its source text. Nevertheless, that makes the differences that do appear in the translation even more important. The translation choices, influenced by the contemporary climate, may have caused different interpretations of the Confusion of Tongues. Therefore, the interpretation of this narrative by Hellenistic Jewish authors may be traced back to their source text: the LXX.

2.1 MT: The Story of Babel

What happened exactly in Babel, according to Gen. 11, 1-9 (Text 1 in the appendix)? I have divided the narrative in two parts: the cause (1-4) and God's intervention (5-9)

The Cause

After the division of land in Gen. 10 after the Flood, humanity spoke one language and migrated and settled in the valley of Shinar (v.1-2). Westermann regards v.2 as the description of a transition from nomadic to sedentary life³¹. In Shinar, they started to make plans for building with bricks and bitumen (v.3). The building project is specified in v.4: a city and a tower, reaching into heaven. Why? To make a name and to prevent being scattered over the earth (v.4). The building materials, bricks and bitumen, are specifically mentioned, since these are not typical for the Palestine way of building (with stone and mortar) and places the setting in an area with buildings that are built this way³².

What is meant with the making of a name? This expression is used in other Biblical passages as well: e.g. 2 Sam. 7,23; 2 Sam. 8,13; Is. 63,12; Jer. 32,20; Neh. 9,10 and designates fame, either received or made by oneself³³. This fame could be gained by building large buildings, like other civilizations around Palestine did.

God's Intervention

But then, God descends from heaven to see the building of the city and the tower (v.5). God reflects on the situation by saying that it is possible to make these buildings because of their unity in people and language and that they will be capable of more deeds like this (v.6).

³⁰ However, one must be cautious to regard the MT as "the original", since its composition started in the 6th c. AD and was completed in the 10th c. AD, long after the other works mentioned in this thesis.

³¹ Westermann 1984, 544.

³² Westermann 1984, 546.

³³ Westermann 1984, 548.

Therefore, He will descend and confuse the universal speech, so that mankind will not be able to understand each other anymore (v.7). And it happened as God said: God scattered humanity over the earth and they stopped building the tower (v.8). That is why that place is called Babel, because of Gods confusion of language and scattering over the earth (v.9).

What is exactly the problem? Westermann argues that these measures are not taken against the building project itself, but against unity of language, which makes nothing impossible for humanity³⁴. The consequence is that God pluralizes language and peoples by scattering them. These two concepts are closely connected in Gen. 10.5,20,31 as well and it makes an end to “they are one people and have one language” (v.6).

The problem in this passage is the twofold mention of God descending. According to Westermann, this is the result of a harmonization of two separate stories with three motives: one about the confusion of language and one about the dispersion of humanity after building a tower³⁵. His assumption is partly based on the etymology of Babel, which only seems to deal with confusion of language and not with dispersion of people³⁶. However, Grossman (2017) has proposed that Babel has a twofold etymology in Gen. 11,1-9. The first one is based on the phonetic similarity between Babel and the Hebrew verb *balal* “to confuse” and the second connects Babel to the Akkadian verb for “to move”, based on the etymology of Babylon in the Enûma Eliš³⁷. Therefore, the multiple layers in Gen. 11,1-9 contained several etiologies for the Jews.

2.2 LXX: Translation Choices

In the previous paragraph we have seen the content of the MT Gen 11,1-9. However, how was this narrative received in the Diaspora?

The *Letter of Aristeas* (3rd-2nd c. BC) describes and aims to justify the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek (LXX)³⁸. The content may be summarized as follows: Aristeas, courtier of king Ptolemy II Philadelphus, writes to his brother about the way the LXX came into existence. The king orders a translation of the Laws of Moses and asks the Palestinian high-priest to provide translators for this project. The high-priest applauds the request and selects the best educated translators: 6 men of every 12 tribes. These translators received a warm welcome in Egypt and answered philosophical questions on a symposium. After that, the translators completed their translation task in 72 days. Their work was well-received and the Alexandrians even put a curse on the people who would change the translation.

This letter is an indicator for linguistic change in Jewish society. The sacred Law of Moses became disconnected from its original language, Hebrew, and was translated in the language of a pagan culture. Although, Hebrew was not the vernacular of Diaspora Jews anymore, this must have caused some stir in Jewish society. The *Letter of Aristeas* is an *apologia* in which

³⁴ Westermann 1984, 551.

³⁵ Westermann 1984, 552; cf. Grossman 2017, 370.

³⁶ Westermann 1984, 535-536.

³⁷ Grossman 2017, 372.

³⁸ Rajak 2009, chapter 1 “The Letter of Aristeas between History and Myth” discusses this letter thoroughly.

the LXX was anchored in the sacred tradition of the Jews: the translation was divinely coordinated and the high-priest gave his blessing by sending the best representatives of every tribe.

Apart from this letter, we know by studies as Rajak (2009) that Alexandrian Jews had koine Greek as their vernacular and replaced Hebrew as an H language, for the written Hebrew Scriptures had to be translated into Greek. Rajak (2009) carefully studied the maintenance of Jewish identity in the Diaspora, in which the LXX played a vital role.

Since the LXX is a translation that tries to be as literal as possible (at least in the Pentateuch), are there any differences to observe between the two versions of Gen. 11, 1-9³⁹? Yes, but they are subtle. They can be roughly divided into difference in lexicon and grammar. They will be briefly discussed in this section. The full text of the LXX is presented as Text 2 in the appendix.

2.2.1 Lexicon

Alternative vocabulary adds valuable information on contemporary interpretation of Gen. 11,1-9:

a. Throughout the narrative in the MT the word **לשון** “lip, language” is used⁴⁰. In the first verse, the word **דבר** “word, deed” is used denoting language as well:

:וְהָיָה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ שְׂפָה אֶחָד וּדְבָרִים אֶחָדִים (1)

“And the whole earth had one **language** (lit.: “lip”) and the same **words**”.

However, this distribution is not found in the LXX. Instead, more terms are used:

(1) Καὶ ἦν πᾶσα ἡ γῆ **χείλος** ἓν, καὶ **φωνή** μία πᾶσιν.

“And the whole earth had one **lip** and one **voice/speech** for all”.

(7) δεῦτε καὶ καταβάντες συγχέωμεν ἐκεῖ αὐτῶν **τὴν γλῶσσαν**, ἵνα μὴ ἀκούσωσιν ἕκαστος τὴν **φωνήν** τοῦ πλησίον.

“Come and, after descending, let us confuse there their **tongue/language**”, so that each one cannot hear **the voice/speech** of his neighbor.

(9) (...) ὅτι ἐκεῖ συνέχεεν κύριος **τὰ χεῖλη** πάσης τῆς γῆς (...)

(...) “because the Lord confused there **the lips** of the whole world” (...)

The translators carefully provided Greek equivalents of Hebrew words and expressions, e.g. “face” (of the earth) and “head” (of a mountain). However, these words and expressions would not have been transparent enough for a Greek-speaking audience. Possibly, “lip” was

³⁹ See Tov 1999, 2012, 2015 on the topics of the nature of the LXX as a translation and its relation with the MT.

⁴⁰ Other places in the MT of **לשון** in the meaning of “language” are: Is. 19,18; 28,11; Ez. 3,5f., Ps. 81,6.

not usually metaphorically used for “language” and that problem was solved by using more common terminology like φωνή and γλῶσσα.

b. בְּבֵל: Σύγχυσις (9)

While the MT hints to Babylon with “Babel”, this connection is not made in the LXX. The place is named after the Confusion (Σύγχυσις) of Tongues with no specific existing place in mind.

2.2.2 Grammar

c. יִפְּזְזֵנוּ: πρὸ τοῦ διασπαρῆναι (4)

The Hebrew “so that we will not be scattered” implies a fear of being dispersed. The LXX goes even further by using πρὸ “before (being scattered)”, specifically stating that mankind *knew* that they would be scattered.

d. הִרְדֵּנוּ: καταβάντες (7)

In this case, the cohortative in Greek is not translated as a subjunctive, but as a participle. Possibly, the translators used the aorist participle to solve the “problem” of Gods double descending in v. 5 and 7.

e. שִׁפְּתַי: τὰ χεῖλη (9)

The LXX reads a plural “lips/languages” and the MT uses the singular “lip/language”. It is unlikely that LXX translators mean that God confused multiple languages, since the word for “lip” is previously used in verse one, explicitly claiming that there was just one lip/language. I think it’s more likely that the literal meaning of lips is meant.

2.3 Summary

In this chapter, we have read the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel in the MT and LXX. In the MT, the connection between Gen. 11, 1-9 with Babylon is made in several ways, such as in the twofold etymology in v. 9 and the use of building material in v. 3. However, in the LXX “Babel” is translated as Σύγχυσις “Confusion”, eliminating every connection with Babylon and focusing on the diversification of languages. Another noteworthy difference is the use of different translations for Hebrew שִׁפְּתַי “lip, language”: χεῖλος “lip”, φωνή “voice, sound” and γλῶσσα “tongue, language”. Beside some additions, lexical and grammatical variations, the LXX does not differ that much of the MT. Therefore, this chapter can be used as a reference for the Hellenistic Jewish texts in the following chapters. Any element that cannot be found in the texts of this chapter is an intentional addition or a modification of the author. In the next chapter we will encounter such deviances. These will reveal the beliefs about language loss (Hebrew) and language shift (to Greek) of the authors.

3. Case Studies

Now we know what the contents are of the Biblical narrative of the Tower of Babel, we will study four Jewish works that were produced between the 2nd c. BC and 2nd c. AD in different locations of the Mediterranean. In this way, we want to grasp the different thoughts on language loss and language shift in the Jewish world. The objects of study are: *Jubilees* (3.1), *Sibylline Oracles* book 3 (3.2), Philo's *De Confusione Linguarum* (3.3) and *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (3.4).

3.1 Jubilees

Let us turn first to the earliest of the four Hellenistic Jewish writings. How does the book of *Jubilees* perceive the events in Gen. 11, 1-9? In 3.1.1, some background on *Jubilees* will be provided to place the text into perspective. After that, 3.1.2 will compare the Tower-narrative with the Biblical narrative. The results of this intertextual study will shed light on the author's sociolinguistic evaluation of the Confusion of Tongues compared to the status of Hebrew and Greek in his own time (3.1.3).

3.1.1 Background

According to its author, *Jubilees* is the revelation to Moses on Mount Sinai⁴¹. The first chapter describes God's words about the future of the Jews, its apostasy and ultimate restoration. The other chapters (2-50) contain the history of mankind and subsequent history of God's chosen people until Moses, revealed by the angel of the presence⁴².

This recitation of heavenly words by the angel of the presence gives the text the authority of an eternally inscribed text issued by God himself. Meanwhile, the text contains many deviations from Genesis and first chapters of Exodus. The author condensed, omitted, expurgated, explained, supplemented and recast the Biblical narrative⁴³, making it a rewritten Bible.

Jubilees was originally composed in Hebrew. However, a complete text is only preserved in Gə'əz⁴⁴. Most likely, the text is composed in the second century BC. More specifically, between 160 and 150 BC⁴⁵. This dating is based on the "references in *Jubilees* to historical events; the paleographic evidence of the Qumran copies of *Jubilees*; the dependence of *Jubilees* upon earlier compositions; the attitude towards the rest of the nation expressed in *Jubilees*."⁴⁶

⁴¹ Jub. 1,4-5; cf. Ex. 24, 18; cf. Sherman 2008, 120.

⁴² Charlesworth 2010, 35.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ Charlesworth 2010, 43; Sherman 2008, 119. *Jubilees* (or "Book of Division") is still considered canonical in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

⁴⁵ Vanderkam 1997, 20.

⁴⁶ Segal 2007, 35.

3.1.2 Intertextuality

Jubilees is a typical, and perhaps the oldest, case of a rewritten Bible version of the Confusion of Tongues. In *Jubilees* 10.18-26, several additions, recontextualizations and omissions have been made to the Biblical Tower-narrative. These will be discussed in this paragraph and can be seen in Text 3 in the appendix.

The Tower-narrative is preceded by Peleg's marriage with Lomna and the birth of their son Reu (10,18). Peleg is mentioned in Gen. 10,25 and after the Confusion of Tongues in Gen. 11,16. His name is etymologically associated with division: פלג "to divide", because "in his days the earth was divided" (Gen. 10,25). *Jubilees* 8 and 9 explain this association: when Peleg was born, the sons of Noah had divided the earth for themselves in a bad way. Therefore, Noah divided the earth again and all swore that they would occupy their share. Peleg's son is only mentioned in the genealogy, but his name, associated with evil, gets a role in the exegesis of Gen. 11,1-9. This leads Sherman to the conclusion that *Jubilees*' account of Babel is "subordinated and absorbed into a larger discussion of the separation of humanity based largely on Gen 10"⁴⁷.

Finally, after the scattering of people, *Jubilees* mentions that the tower is destroyed by a great wind, which made the tower collapse. There is even an etymology provided for this event, which is provided by God Himself: "And behold, it is between Asshur and Babylon in the land of Shinar and he called it "the Overthrow"⁴⁸.

Beside adding parts, there are two key elements missing in *Jubilees* version of Gen. 11,1-9: the notion that there was one universal language and the motivation for the building of the city and the tower, namely to avoid being scattered and for name-making. Concerning the latter omission, the only motivation that is mentioned is "Come let us go up in it into heaven" (v. 19). Sherman connects this phrase with other passages in *Jubilees* about Enoch and Cainan. The former is praised for knowing the heavenly realm, whereas Cainan is condemned for it, because he accessed this forbidden knowledge without divine approval, when he wanted to build a city⁴⁹. Since both Cainan and the Babelites were building a city and the location of the Tower, Babylonia, was associated with astronomical/astrological knowledge⁵⁰, the interpretation of the v.19 leads us into the direction of an attempt to gain astronomical/astrological knowledge of the heavenly realm without divine permission. This passage about Cainan and the knowledge of the Watchers is not in the Pentateuch and could fit in a broader message of *Jubilees*. This topic will be taken up later.

Let us now treat the omission of the notion that there was one language for mankind. In order to understand this, we need to go back to the expulsion of all creatures from Eden. Jub. 3,28 narrates:

⁴⁷ Sherman 2008, 127.

⁴⁸ Jub. 10,26.

⁴⁹ Sherman 2008, 138-139.

⁵⁰ Sherman 2008, 139.

And on that day was closed the mouth of all beasts, and of cattle, and of birds, and of whatever walks, and of whatever moves, so that they could no longer speak: for they had all spoken one with another with one lip and with one tongue.⁵¹

This depriving of language from animals is not mentioned in Genesis and is an addition of Jubilees. In this event, the universal language became restricted to humans⁵².

Which language is that, according to Jubilees? It is the language of creation: Hebrew. This is explicitly stated in Jub. 12,26 in a passage that describes the order of God to an angel to teach Abram Hebrew (see Text 4). Hence, Jubilees narrates that Hebrew, the language of creation, disappeared after the building of the tower! Sherman argues that the Jubilees shows a narrowing of linguistic options, when human relationship with God worsens⁵³. Hebrew was firstly deprived from animals after Eden and later from all humanity when they try to climb into heaven⁵⁴.

How, then, did Abram acquire the knowledge of Hebrew? And how is it connected to sacred knowledge? Text 5 precedes the teaching of Hebrew to Abram. In verse 16, Abram is observing the stars, when he concludes that God is in control of the signs of celestial bodies (v.17). Everything is subjected to Gods will (v.18). By saying this, Abram declares that he trusts God and that he does want to control the heavens himself. His modest response is in contrast with the Babelites, who wanted to build a tower to access heaven. This allowed him to learn the sacred language of his ancestors and teach it to his children⁵⁵. Sherman mentions the recurrent phrase throughout Jubilees: "His father taught him (the art) of writing"⁵⁶, which accentuates the characteristic transmission taking place between father and his children by written teaching⁵⁷. This theme of transmission of learning and writing Hebrew is important for Jubilees, which closely connects the transmission of sacred knowledge with what is recorded and written down⁵⁸.

Therefore, the Tower-narrative in Jubilees "marks the (momentary) eclipse of sacred tradition"⁵⁹ The story fits in Jubilees' message about the "communication of sacred knowledge and the status of Hebrew as the primordial and only acceptable language of revelation. Consequently, the narrative portrays speakers of Hebrew as privileged, speaking the language of creation and sacred knowledge. Other nations have lost this ability and do not possess the sacred language, writings and knowledge.

⁵¹ Translation by Charles (1913).

⁵² Sherman 2008, 129.

⁵³ Sherman 2008, 143.

⁵⁴ Sherman 2008, 143-144.

⁵⁵ Sherman 2008, 144.

⁵⁶ Namely in Jub. 4,17; 8,2; 11,16.

⁵⁷ Sherman 2008, 142.

⁵⁸ Sherman 2008, 142.

⁵⁹ Sherman 2008, 139.

3.1.3 Sociolinguistic Evaluation

The author of Jubilees certainly has language beliefs about the decline of Hebrew and the increase of the use of Aramaic and Greek of his time. In his time, the Hebrew as a spoken language was replaced by Aramaic and Hebrew became the language restricted to the temple and the Pentateuch. On a larger scale, Judaism became more assimilated during the early Hellenistic period. This caused a search to establish a national identity, including language. Whereas Rubin points to the role of unique Hebrew as an organ of a separate, national identity⁶⁰, Sherman sees more in this rewritten Bible version of Babel than a claim for the symbolic importance of Hebrew. According to him, the Jewish contemporaries of Jubilees faced the same situation as the one of Babel: the spread of Hellenization resembled the hegemonic practices of the Babelites, which was possible by being one “civilization”⁶¹. Therefore, Jews should reject pagan religious practices of other cultures, like Abram did by rejecting the “pagan” obsession of the heavenly realm⁶². The assimilation to Hellenism would be senseless, since other nations lost the privilege in their pagan obsession to know the cosmos of reading the sacred language of creation.

Jubilees is clear in its linguistic criterion of being a true Jew. This Jew learns the pure Hebrew, reads the Hebrew Scriptures, and transmits this knowledge to his offspring. By doing so, Jews follow the example of Abram to whom Hebrew and its primordial secrets were exclusively revealed after rejecting pagan practices.

So, what about the practical side of Jubilees’ vision on maintaining Hebrew? This is rather underexposed by Sherman and Rubin. What is Jubilees’ sociolinguistic rescue plan to save Hebrew from extinction?

1. Raising awareness by Jews that the decline of Hebrew would be a great loss, since it is so well-connected to their culture, history and their connection to God.
2. Expanding areas in which Hebrew was spoken. Not only in the temple and when reading the Thora. Hebrew was also a language of sacred science and history. For it was given to them as a privilege by God, let the language be used in as much areas as possible, so that there is no need for a pagan, inferior language.
3. The importance of teaching Hebrew to later generations by writing and reading. The author of Jubilees was well-aware of the danger of language death and emphasizes in multiple phrases that Hebrew should not only be spoken, but also read by children. Some insights of the field of Sociolinguistics elucidate the relationship between language and writing (and reading). Mesthrie writes:

Children learn their first language as an oral entity by socialization. Writing comes later (if at all) by conscious teaching.⁶³

Additionally, Coulmas writes:

⁶⁰ Rubin 1998, 313.

⁶¹ Sherman 2008, 149.

⁶² Sherman 2008, 148.

⁶³ Mesthrie 2009, 26.

In linguistics it has become abundantly clear that writing is not just visible speech, but rather a mode of verbal communication in its own right (...) It changes the nature of verbal communication as well as the speakers' attitude to, and awareness of, their language. Writing makes a society language-conscious (...) Generally writing enlarges the functional potential of languages.⁶⁴

Hence, teaching knowledge of Hebrew by reading and writing leads to a more profound knowledge of the language than a spoken language and makes the Jews more conscious of their divine language and enlarges its potential for the Jews.

3.1.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have encountered the work of a Palestinian Jew with strong beliefs about Hebrew and other languages. This author claimed divine authority for conveying messages to Jews in a time of assimilationist tendencies towards Hellenization. His attitude towards other nations and languages becomes clear by his account of the expulsion from Eden, when the universal language Hebrew became restricted to humans; the account of the Tower of Babel, when the language of sacred knowledge disappeared completely; and the ability to speak, read and write Hebrew was given to Abram and his offspring, when he humbly acknowledges God's provenance.

Jubilees wants to make his public aware of the Jewish privilege to know Hebrew, the language of creation in which the sacred wisdom is written. They should not only follow their ancestor Abram in rejecting pagan practices, but also in learning, copying and transmitting Hebrew. Hebrew should become reappreciated by the Jews and not be restricted to the elite, the temple and the Torah. He conveys his public to actively learn Hebrew to children by reading and writing to enhance its use in every aspect of society. The author of Jubilees was aware of the threatened state of Hebrew and tries to save it by conveying this message.

Simultaneously, Jubilees' attitude towards other nations and languages (like Aramaic and Koine Greek) is clear as well. He regards Hebrew as superior to other languages, since they appeared when the language of creation disappeared as a punishment for the unjust way of acquiring sacred knowledge in Gen. 11,1-9. Jews should not assimilate to these cultures and reject their inferior languages and philosophy. Their attempt for unification of cultures by language resembles the situation of the Babelites and should be refuted for God did that as well.

In the next chapter we will learn about the very different language beliefs of a Jew from Asia Minor in the third book of the *Sibylline Oracles*.

⁶⁴ Coulmas 1989a, 12-14.

3.2 Sibylline Oracles Book 3

In this chapter, the third book of the Sibylline Oracles is the object of study. In the light of the research question, we will focus on the nature of Sibylline Oracles in 3.2.1 and wonder about the choice of a Jewish author for this “genre”. After that (in 3.2.2), we will discuss the rather short text which is based on Gen. 11, 1-9, but shows interesting additions, omissions and alternations. 3.2.3 analyzes the language beliefs of the author, which appear most clearly in the choice of format.

3.2.1 Background

In order to treat the Tower-narrative in the Sibylline Oracles, it is necessary to understand the nature of the Sibylline oracles. In the next sections, the development, characteristics, Sibylline Oracles book 3 and the message will be discussed.

3.2.1.1 History of the Sibyl

The earliest transmitted mention of a Sibyl is from Heraclitus (ca. 500 BC) by Plutarch (ca. 50-120 AD)⁶⁵. After him, the Sibyl and her practice are mentioned by Euripides, Aristophanes, Plato and Heraclides of Pontus. The latter, living in ca. 390-310 BC, was the first to connect a Sibyl with Asia Minor (see 3.2.1.3). From these Greek sources we know that a prophetess called Sibyl lived in or before the 6th c. BC., that she foretold the future in opaque sayings and that these sources differ in the living location of the Sibyl: Libya or Asia Minor⁶⁶. The Sibylline oracles became increasingly popular, especially in Rome. Greek and Roman sources of the 2nd c. BC often mention Sibylline oracles and books⁶⁷.

A shared feature of all extant Sibylline oracles is the formulation in Greek hexameters, just as other oracles⁶⁸. Another feature is the use of acrostics. However, this criterion is largely absent in Jewish and Christian Sibylline oracles⁶⁹.

3.2.1.2 A Jewish Sibyl?

The third book of the Sibylline Oracles containing a narrative on the Tower of Babel was written by a Jew, however transmitted via Christian manuscripts⁷⁰. Examples of indications of a Jewish author are: the central role of the temple in Jerusalem and worship there⁷¹; the

⁶⁵ Buitenwerf 2021, 93.

⁶⁶ Buitenwerf 2021, 92-96.

⁶⁷ Buitenwerf 2021, 96-99; 123.

⁶⁸ Buitenwerf 2021, 108-109.

⁶⁹ Buitenwerf 2021, 108.

⁷⁰ The chapter ‘The genesis and development of the Sibylline collection’ by Buitenwerf 2021 provides a reconstruction of the Sibylline collection, based on the extant material.

⁷¹ E.g. Sib. Or. 3, 328-329; 564-565; 657-668; 702-703; 718; 772-775.

sympathy to an unnamed group, that refer to Jews, present in two long passages⁷²; and the many passages about the Law of God^{73,74}.

Buitenwerf dates the composition of the third book of Sibylline Oracles at 80-40 BC in Asia Minor⁷⁵. Since this book mentions Egyptian kings and Hellenized Judaism was thought to be a phenomenon in Egypt, the author of Sib. Or. 3 was located in Egypt. However, Buitenwerf argues that both the topographical references in Sib. Or. 3 and the popularity of the Sibyl in Asia Minor in the first c. BC point⁷⁶ to a provenance in Asia Minor, more specifically the Roman province of Asia.

Additionally, the Sibyl of Sib. Or. 3 claims that Greeks connect her to Erythrae⁷⁷. One of the famous Sibyls is the Sibyl of Erythrae. Erythrae was located on the West coast of Lydia in Asia Minor⁷⁸. Text 6 shows a 2nd c. CE inscription was found in a cave on this location. Although this inscription is from the 2nd c. AD, epigraphic evidence shows that the presence of the Sibyl in Erythrae was much older (at least 2nd c. BC)⁷⁹. The mention of the Erythraen Sibyl by the author of book 3 makes it even more likely that he was from Asia Minor.

How does the Sibyl of book 3 presents her identity? At the very end of the book, she reveals herself (Text 7). Her identity makes book 3 a very interesting account of the Tower of Babel! Let us first analyze her through the eyes of the Greeks and then focus on her Biblical background and mission.

She mocks that people say she is from another fatherland (813), since she is said to be a shameless one, born in Erythrae (814). The existence of this tradition is visible in Text 6. Sibyl claims that she is from Erythrae and has no other home town (3). The author must have been familiar with the Sibylline oracles in Erythrae. The other accusation, that she is a raging, lying Sibyl with Circe as her mother and an unknown father (815-816), illustrates and deals with the critical and ridiculing attitude of some classical authors towards Sibylline oracles^{80,81}.

So, how should Greeks see her? She shares some curious information on her background. She is a *νύμφη* of Noah (827)⁸². *νύμφη* is here used for a female relative, because of the addition that she is from his blood, probably a daughter-in-law⁸³. The choice for the word *νύμφη* connects this Sibylle with the Sibylle of Erythrae, since she is associated with nymphs (see Text 6, 2)⁸⁴. Noah is her her father(-in-law), which places her in the time of the Flood and the Tower of Babel! That makes her an eye-witness. Additionally, it is from Noah that

⁷² Sib. Or. 3, 211-294; 573-600.

⁷³ E.g. 248-264 in which the Law of God is discussed and highly praised.

⁷⁴ Buitenwerf 2021, 126.

⁷⁵ Buitenwerf 2021, 124-134.

⁷⁶ Buitenwerf 2021, 134.

⁷⁷ Sib. Or. 3, 814.

⁷⁸ Buitenwerf 2021, 118.

⁷⁹ Buitenwerf 2021, 120.

⁸⁰ Examles are: Aristophanes, *Pax* 1063-1100 ridiculing her and her followers; Cicero *De Divinatione* 2, 54, 112.

⁸¹ Buitenwerf 2021, 297.

⁸² The name of Noah is not literally mentioned in the text passage. However, the description clearly points to Noah.

⁸³ Buitenwerf 2021, 300. Sib. Or. 1, 287-290 describes her as Noah's daughter-in-law.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*.

she received knowledge about the past events. God revealed her events in the future. That is why she prophesies in the past tense about events that took place in her past and before her existence and are the events of after the fall of the Tower of Babel events told in the future tense (or equivalent)⁸⁵. In line 809-810 she claims to have left Babylon. That is the place where the tower was built and the languages diversified. After that event, she is sent to Greece to prophesy God's revelations in divine riddles (810-812). So, after the differentiation of languages, she spoke Greek and was sent to Greece where she prophesied to Greek-speaking people. The fact that she is not Jewish makes her a reliable Non-Jewish prophetess of God.

3.2.1.3 Public and Purpose

So, the Sibyl's addressees are the Greeks. This is also implicit to the genre of Sibylline Oracles, written in Greek hexameters. Although Asia was not located in Greece, it had been part of the Greek world for a long time. The author of Sib. Or. 3 regards his own society, Asia, as belonging to the Greek sphere⁸⁶. However, this does not mean that he and his Jewish group fully identified themselves with the Greek population there⁸⁷. In several passages, the behavior of Jews is contrasted with other people in their lifestyle⁸⁸. However, the literal audience of Greeks are not the author's intended audience. There are multiple indications in book 3 is written for a Jewish audience, such as the linking of the Sibyl to Noah and the presupposed knowledge of Jewish traditions⁸⁹.

What was the message of the Sibyl for the Greeks? She tells the Greeks to be monotheistic and that they should worship God solely in the temple in Jerusalem⁹⁰. Furthermore, her audience should live righteously, according to God's Law, i.e. the law of nature⁹¹. In book 3, "Law of God" is used both for the Jewish law and natural law and the former is the latter in physical form⁹². In Sib. Or. 3,261-262 the author asserts that the earth was given by God to all people and that everybody has received divine knowledge as well. That makes all people equipped to live righteously, according to God's will. However, only the Jews answer this calling by keeping the Mosaic Law of God, whereas the non-Jews fail to keep the natural law and live immorally⁹³. Therefore, The Sibyl uses eschatological scenarios to convince Greeks to live piously and righteously and to show the danger of impiety and immorality⁹⁴. If the Greeks ignore her exhortations, trouble (e.g. war) will befall them⁹⁵.

⁸⁵ Buitenwerf 2021, 372.

⁸⁶ Buitenwerf 2021, 375.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁸ Sib. Or. 3, 218-247, 573-600.

⁸⁹ Buitenwerf 2021, 375-376.

⁹⁰ Buitenwerf 2021, 346.

⁹¹ Buitenwerf 2021, 347.

⁹² Buitenwerf 2021, 356.

⁹³ Buitenwerf 2021, 341.

⁹⁴ Buitenwerf 2021, 347.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*.

3.2.2 Intertextuality

What is the Sibyl's eye-witness account of Gen. 11,1-9 (Text 8⁹⁶)? It becomes directly clear that the author deals freely with the Biblical In his version, parts are added, alternated and omitted. Mankind was building a great tower, because they wanted to go up to heaven. This is immediately followed by the addition of Gods specific punishment: he sent storms that overthrew the tower and caused strife between people (101-103). These two elements are absent in the MT. As we have seen, the mention of winds destroying the tower occurs in the book of Jubilees as well (see 3.1.2). Jubilees, however, places this event after the Confusion of Tongues and the scattering of people. The strife has eschatological implications, just as is introduced in line 97-99, since it is mentioned in line 640 as ἔρις αὐτῶν "strife among themselves" as one of the eschatological woes. This may be a consequence of losing the ability to understand each other. However, the strife is caused by the winds and the division of languages is placed after the fall of the tower. Hence, the diversification of language is not the cause of the failure of the tower, but a consequent event.

What are lexical alternations to the Biblical texts? First, the Biblical geographical names Shinar and Babel are replaced by concrete geographical names that were known to the public: the land of Assyria (99) and the city of Babylon (104). This is not unique⁹⁷, but it shows that the text does not follow the LXX, which names the place "Confusion".

Another change is the choice for the verb μερίζω "to divide, distribute" in the phrase following 105. Instead of confusion, the author chose a verb for division. The author may have concluded himself that one language cannot be mingled with itself and was therefore divided into multiple parts or he adopted this idea from tradition⁹⁸.

Does the text claim that there were one or more languages before Babel? The word that is used for sharing the same language is ὁμόφωνοι (99). This word has also the connotation of being in unison or agreeing. Probably, the author intended both meanings, since the second meaning follows naturally from the first one. The absence of unison causes strife (103).

When we look at the omissions in this Babel narrative, it is striking how much is elided of the Biblical material. From details, like the building materials, to complete scenes, like God's visit and speech before the confusion. Another element missing is the argumentation of mankind to build the tower: no prevention of scattering or "name-making" is mentioned. Buitenwerf argues that the phrase "and wanted to go up to starry heaven", combined with the titanomachy following this narrative is about the etiology of evil and the intend to enter heaven is an example of human arrogance⁹⁹.

⁹⁶ This is the reconstruction of Buitenwerf (2021, 170). He comes to the conclusion that Polyhistor used an early recension of the third book of Sibylline Oracles: "This recension differed from the one transmitted in our manuscripts of Sib. Or. III in that it connected the name 'Babylon' with the notion of the confusion of languages. The text known to Polyhistor was probably the original".

⁹⁷ Praep. Ev. 19.17.2 and Jub. 10,26

⁹⁸ Ps. 55,10 alludes to the Confusion of Tongues and uses the verb "to divide" as well. However, the LXX shows the verb καταδιαπέω "to divide, distribute". Therefore, it is more likely that the author took the verb from other traditions.

⁹⁹ Buitenwerf 2021, 171.

When we oversee the deviations from the Hebrew and Greek Biblical text, how can we determine its source text? This is hard to say, since the content and lexical choices do not match either of these texts. It seems that he used both the Biblical narrative and the existing traditions from Jewish and non-Jewish origin to tell the story in headlines to write a book in the "genre" of Sibylline prophecy¹⁰⁰.

3.2.3 Sociolinguistic Evaluation

Let us now consider the language beliefs of the author of Sibylline Oracles book 3 to get a unique insight in the ideas of a Jew and his Jewish readers from Asia Minor living in the 1st c. BC.

First, the author has chosen the format of a pagan oracle in Greek hexameters to convey his message! He has chosen the Sibyl and made her a contemporary of Noah and thus an eye-witness of the Flood and subsequent building and destruction of the Tower of Babel. The Sibyl became a speaker of Greek after the differentiation of languages and was sent by God to Greece to be a prophetess of God for the Greeks. This nicely corresponds to the tradition that the Sibyl addresses a fictional Greek public, although we know that the author intends a Jewish audience. According to Buitenwerf, the Jewish author has chosen the Sibylline oracle for his moral and ethical messages for the following reasons:

- 1) He shared the passion of Sibylline oracles that was popular in that time in Asia Minor and so does his Jewish audience, for he is not critical at all about the Sibyl's authority in his work¹⁰¹.
- 2) The Sibylline oracle functions as a device of using an outsider's point of view as a way of presenting one's own ideas as those of an objective spokesperson, since the Sibyl is not Jewish, but a universal prophetess, sent by God to the Greeks¹⁰². In this way, he can extend praise for the Jews and criticism to the Non-Jews¹⁰³.
- 3) He wanted to entertain his Jewish addressees by using an attractive format to convey his message¹⁰⁴.

This all shows that the author and his public must have been educated into Greek language and literature toward which the author shows a high sympathy. On the other hand, the author is clearly acquainted with Jewish tradition and thought. He negotiates his place as a Jew in Greek society by criticizing Greek immoral behavior and applauding Jewish virtue using a Greek medium.

Being a relative of the forefather of humans, this Sibyl is universal. She is never explicitly specified as pagan or Jewish. This makes God universal as well, since he sends Sibyl to the Greeks and, thereby, does not restrict himself to the Jews. God communicates with the Greeks, even before making a covenant with Abram, by sending them Sibyl with her

¹⁰⁰ Buitenwerf 2021, 332.

¹⁰¹ Buitenwerf 2021, 377.

¹⁰² Buitenwerf 2021, 377-378. This was also used in the *Letter of Aristeas* (378).

¹⁰³ Buitenwerf 2021, 381.

¹⁰⁴ Buitenwerf 2021, 379-381.

revelations! This tells us that the author and his milieu has thought thoroughly about Gods relation with Non-Jews. Confrontations between Jewish Law and the Greek ways of living could have been an incentive to this work. In the Sibyl's account of the Tower-narrative, it was the immoral behavior that made God punish mankind with strife. This narrative from the past serves as a warning for the Greeks, because of their immorality: they may live in a connected world, using a universal language (Koine Greek), but God can repeat the events of Babel, causing destruction and strife among people. The Jews, however, became a model for a pious and righteous life, because they received and lived according to the Mosaic Law. The Jewish law is equaled with natural law, or knowledge of right and wrong, that was given to everyone. If Non-Jews would live piously and righteously, they would be free from blame. However, in practice it appears that Jews are morally superior to Non-Jews.

The complete absence of Hebrew in the Sibylline Oracles shows that the status of Hebrew was no reason for concern for Jews in Asia Minor. Greek was their language and the Greek world was their society with which they negotiated. Being a Jew was defined by living according to Gods Law and not by language. Greeks should do the same by keeping their God-given natural law.

3.2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen that between 80-40 BC, a Jew from the Roman province of Asia has written in the genre of Sibylline oracles. His account of the Tower-narrative shows that he combines Greek and Jewish literature in an artistic way, admiring both. Using the authoritative words of the Sibyl, sent by God, he is able to criticize the Greek immoral way of living. His message concerning the Law of God is not that it is different from universal, natural law, but that the Jews are superior in keeping this law. The Sibyl threatens that God will do the same to Koine Greek and Hellenistic society if they do not convert from immorality, by causing destruction and strife. Therefore, being a Jew was not connected to speaking a certain language, but by keeping the Law of God. The non-Jews should do the same by keeping their natural Law. This shows an open attitude to their non-Jewish environment.

In the next chapter, another Diaspora Jew, Philo of Alexandria, will explicitly write about his view on Hebrew and Greek in his allegorical interpretation of the Tower-narrative.

3.3 Philo's *De Confusione Linguarum*

3.3.1 Background

The author of "On the Confusion of Tongues" is Philo of Alexandria. This Egyptian city is known for its famous library and its intellectual climate¹⁰⁵. Meanwhile, there it was the city of many Diaspora Jews. Philo lived at the end of the first century BC until the beginning of the first century AD (ca. 20 BC-ca. 49 AD). Flavius Josephus points out that Philo was from a distinguished family and that he was "not inexperienced in philosophy"¹⁰⁶. The presence of numerous references to Classical Greek literature in Philo's works suggest that he was highly educated in Greek¹⁰⁷. Meanwhile, Philo was extensively exposed to the Greek Bible, as is shown by his in-depth familiarity with Biblical knowledge that is displayed in his works¹⁰⁸. He writes exclusively in Greek and he seems to know no Hebrew, since he mentions only Hebrew proper names¹⁰⁹. Philo's attitude towards the Greek and Hebrew Bible will be treated in 3.3.2.

Philo's treatises can be divided into allegorical commentaries, questions and answers, historical writings, philosophical writings and the exposition of the Law¹¹⁰. Philo prefers the allegorical interpretation, because he thinks that the literal sense has no or limited value¹¹¹.

What is allegorical interpretation exactly? Copeland & Struck provides the following definition:

Allegorical interpretation (allegoresis) is understood as explaining a work, or a figure in myth, or any created entity, as if there were another sense to which it referred, that is, presuming the work or figure to be encoded with meaning intended by the author or a higher spiritual authority.¹¹²

In this case study, *De Confusione Linguarum* is an allegorical commentary on the Biblical narrative of the Building of the tower of Babel and its subsequent Confusion of Tongues. In this case, Philo needs to decode the meaning of this narrative as it was intended by Moses, who was inspired by God. Meanwhile, Philo needs to interpret this meaning in a world that is radically different from the one of Moses. In the words of Sherman:

There are two constants required for allegorical reading: (1) a text which is considered a cultural classic and is therefore culturally non-negotiable and (2) a larger world-view which is radically different and in significant tension with the cultural classic.¹¹³

¹⁰⁵ See e.g. Niehoff 2018, part 3 "Young Philo among Alexandrian Jews".

¹⁰⁶ *Jos. Ant.* 18.259

¹⁰⁷ Niehoff 2018, 3

¹⁰⁸ Niehoff 2018, 3-4

¹⁰⁹ Kamesar 2009, 71

¹¹⁰ For an overview, see Niehoff 2018, 245-246.

¹¹¹ Kamesar 2009, 82-83. See *Conf.* 190; *Abr.* 200, 217.

¹¹² Copeland & Struck 2010, 2.

¹¹³ Sherman 2008, 284.

3.3.2 Intertextuality

Philo cites the LXX directly and follows this text word by word (v. 1). This quoting shows a direct involvement with the source text. His interpretation, however, is allegorical.

In his exegesis, Philo adheres to the exact wording of the LXX. It is striking that the deviances of the LXX from the Hebrew text are the building blocks of Philo's interpretation (e.g. "voice" and "before", see 2.2), which would not have been possible if his source text resembled the MT. Especially the list of potential terminology for "confusion" is remarkable, since this requires heavily trust that Moses would have had these choices of vocabulary in Hebrew as well. Philo explains his trust in the LXX in *De Vita Mosis* (Text 9). This passage starts with a similar narration of the origin of the translation as the Letter of Aristeas (see 2.2) in v. 28-37, introduced in v. 25-27. Since Philo regards the LXX as equally inspired as the Hebrew Scriptures, the wording and meaning of the Hebrew text correspond directly with the Greek one (v. 38-39). Philo explains why in v. 40. Speakers of both Hebrew and Greek can compare the Hebrew version and the LXX and they conclude that they are miraculously the same in content and words. They regard the authors of the LXX not as translators, but as "prophets and priests of the mysteries", who equal the spirit of Moses.

To what allegorical interpretation does the literary reading of the text lead? Three passages of *De Confusione Linguarum* are of special interest, since they show the cause of his treatise (v. 9-13), why the LXX uses the term "confusion" (v. 190-192) and what the purpose is of the confusion and scattering (v. 195-198). Let us first consider v. 9-13.

3.3.2.1 *Conf. 9 t/m 13* (Text 10)

Philo treats the objections of opposers who criticize the Tower-narrative as a "myth". They compare building a tower to reach heaven with the Homeric myth of the Aloeidae¹¹⁴ (v. 2-4) and point out the impossibility of this (v. 5). A second comparison is made with a fable that, originally, all animals had a common language, but it was divided into different languages because of their audacity (v. 6-8). In v. 9-13, the idea that multiplication of languages as a prevention of co-operation in sin is presented as absurd. Philo wants to explain the text by allegory in order to answer these objections.

Whereas I hypothesize that there could have been a paradox for Hellenistic Jews concerning uniforming Koine and the classical narrative on the Confusion of Tongues in Genesis, the Hellenistic Jew Philo is largely concerned with the paradox why God would deprive humanity of a benefitting, universal language as a source of evil (v. 13).

Before continuing, we should ask ourselves: Is this solely the vision of Philo's opposers? Sherman may be right, when he suggests that Philo agrees with the argumentation that he makes unnamed people utter in the introduction¹¹⁵. The brief dismissal of his "opponent's" detailed arguments and the brief conclusion support this suspicion¹¹⁶.

¹¹⁴ *Od.* 11.315, 318.

¹¹⁵ Sherman 2008, 296.

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

Let us return to the arguments for the absurdity of the Confusion of Tongues as a remedy for sin. V.10 states that there appear no good results to it. Although the nations dispersed, the world is still full of evil. Furthermore, persons whose tongues are cut (literally: οἱ ἐκτετμημένοι γλῶτταν) can still communicate by nodding and making gestures, which does not rule out evil (v. 11).

After pointing out the ineffectiveness of the Confusion of Tongues to prevent evil, Philo starts naming the benefits of sharing a uniform language in v. 12-13. In other words, he will provide us the view which most likely corresponds with his own ideas of Koine Greek.

First, it could have prevented dangerous situations of citizens, who were not able to understand the warnings. Nothing has kept people as safe as uniformity of language (v.12). This leads to Philo's conclusion that having a community in languages does more good than harm (v.12). Second, knowing other languages than one's own opens doors by others, because his speech is familiar to them and that gives them the feeling that he is trustworthy (v. 13). Philo ends this argumentation strongly with a rhetorical question why God would destroy uniformity of language despite the clear benefits for mankind.

The fact that Philo does not respond at all to the arguments concerning the benefits of a universal language suggests that Philo agrees with them. The connection between "a universal language" and Greek Koine is easily made.

Being a Jew does not make a difference in speaking Greek. Philo calls Greek "our language" in *Congr.* 44 (cf. v. 129). Even Moses would have had a partially Greek education (*Mos.* 1.23). His devotion to the LXX, as is shown in 3.3.2, is another indicator that Philo regards himself both as a Jew and a Greek. Therefore, the events in Gen. 11,1-9 would indeed have resulted in a paradox for himself and raised the question why God would confuse languages. Interpreting the narrative allegorically as the division of senses in the battle of the soul allows him to refrain from the topic of language diversity.

Additionally, Hebrew or Aramaic are not even mentioned in this treatise on the Confusion of Tongues by this Hellenistic Jewish author. Clearly, Philo does not make any association in his writing between Gen. 11,1-9 and present languages of the Jews.

3.3.2.2 *Conf.* 190-192 (Text 11)

Approaching the end of his treatise, Philo makes the following remarks. In v. 190, Philo specifically mentions the literal interpretation of Gen. 11,1-9: "But they who follow only what is plain and easy, think that what is here intended to be recorded, is the origin of the languages of the Greeks and barbarians". Philo and the group mentioned here clearly regard themselves as belonging to the "Greek" group. An identification with Hebrew would have placed them in the "barbarian" group.

The ones who explain the narrative literally in v. 190 seems to be the same group as in v. 14:

Those who take the letter of the law in its outward sense and provide for each question as it arises the explanation which lies on the surface, will no doubt refute on their own principles the authors of these insidious criticisms.

Therefore, Philo mentions a group of Jews who interpret the law literally. This provides interesting inside information on how at least one group of Jews interprets the Babel narrative: as the genesis of languages of Greeks and Non-Greeks.

Philo continues with the careful choice of words by Moses in v. 191-192. He argues that if God would have divided languages, Moses would have chosen more appropriate terminology: dissection (τομήν), distribution (διανέμησιν), division (διάκρισιν) or something of that kind (τι ὁμοίωτροπον εἰπών). All these terms do not presuppose confusion, since nothing is mixed, but one thing (or more) is divided into multiple parts.

So, if the literal interpretation is to be preferred above his allegorical one, Moses would not have used a word for confusion, but for division. For there was only one Pre-Babel language (v. 192), which God ordered to divide into divisions of multiple languages (v. 192). In short, the word σύγχυσις is consciously chosen by Moses, which excludes the meaning of one language becoming divided into multiple ones.

3.3.2.3 *Conf.* 195-198 (Text 12)

What is God's real purpose with the confusion? In v. 193 and 195, Philo explains that the confusion is to break up the company of vice and to annihilate and destroy her powers. Likewise, the dispersion refers to the scattering of vice (v. 195). Philo contrasts dispersion (διέσπερειν) with sowing (σπείρειν), the latter being the cause of good, noble living for the whole world, wanted by God (v. 196). The former signifies the cause of ill, which God wants to banish from the Commonwealth of the world (ἐκ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου πολιτείας). We should note that Philo expresses in v. 196 the volition of God to bring good to and to banish ill from the whole world, not only the Jews. By this confusion, "the evil ways which hate virtue may at last cease to build the city of vice and the tower of godlessness."

Then, Philo does something remarkable. In v. 197, he mentions the scattered, who have been living in exile under tyranny, and cites a promise from Deut. for the people of Israel: "if thy dispersion be from one end of heaven to the other he shall gather thee from thence"¹¹⁷. However, Philo does not connect this promise to the scattered Jews! Instead, he writes about the scattered souls of virtue-loving Jews and non-Jews¹¹⁸. All these souls are scattered, but God will restore their connection with the heaven, the divine.

Therefore, Philo interprets Gen. 11,1-9 as a source of hope for humanity. God brings together the consonance of virtues into full harmony, namely the virtue-loving souls, but banishes and destroys the consonance of vices (v. 198).

3.3.3 Sociolinguistic Evaluation

What can we deduce from this intertextual material about the language beliefs of Philo and the Jewish society in Alexandria?

¹¹⁷ Deut. 30, 4.

¹¹⁸ Sherman 2008, 349.

First, Greek was the language of the Alexandrian Jews and they were completely comfortable with it. Although Philo mentions Greek-speaking Jews learning Hebrew and Hebrew-speaking Jews learning Greek¹¹⁹, most of the Alexandrian Jews were monolingual in Greek. For them, there was no added value to the use of Hebrew, since they had their own Bible in Greek. The only opposition that is made is between languages of Greeks and Non-Greeks in general¹²⁰. Furthermore, Philo sees uniformity of language as a blessing that should be even more firmly established¹²¹.

Second, Philo firmly believes in the divine character of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures for Jew and Greek. He does not only accept the *apologia* of the Letter of Aristeas (see 2.2), but he also includes this narrative in *De Vita Mosis*, expanding on the reliability and excellence of the LXX. Therefore, he adheres much to the literal wording of Moses, assuming that he consciously chose his terminology. However, the literal reading of Gen. 11,1-9 is incompatible with the contemporary world of the Greeks and the Alexandrian Jews: the Greeks mock the narrative, dismissing it as a myth; a group of Jews accepts this discrepancy and interprets the text as an etiology for the origin of Greek and Non-Greek languages. Philo, however, uses allegorical interpretation to explain the narrative and thereby opens a dialogue with both the Greeks and the Jews.

Finally, being a Jew is defined not by provenance or language, but by keeping the laws of Moses. Philo is convinced that the Greeks (and other nations) are blessed to have the LXX, which enables to read and use this legislation as well¹²². Therefore, keeping these laws produces virtue for Jews and Greeks. We have read the opposition of virtue and vice in *Conf.*: God is graceful to virtue-loving souls by banishing evil oppression. He will restore heavenly contact with lovers of virtue, either Jew or Greek.

3.3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to determine the language beliefs of Philo and the Alexandrian Jewish society based on intertextual evidence. We have seen that Philo is radical in his language beliefs: Greek is “our language” and the LXX is our Bible. He is completely indifferent to the status of Hebrew, since this language is no longer needed to transmit the legislation of Moses. The universal character of Koine Greek is the opportunity to share the sacred Laws with the Greeks! In the end, it is not about Jews against Non-Jews, but of souls of virtue or vice.

In the following chapter, we will investigate the double Tower-narrative of Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* and his connection between Gen. 11, 1-9 and the choosing of Abram.

¹¹⁹ *Mos.* 2.40.

¹²⁰ *Conf.* 190.

¹²¹ *Conf.* 11-13.

¹²² *Mos.* 2.26.

3.4 Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*

The Tower-narrative in *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (LAB) as well as the study of its views on Hebrew and other languages is central in this chapter. 3.4.1 will offer some background of LAB, 3.4.2 will treat two chapters of LAB, containing two Tower-narratives. In 3.4.3, the results of 3.4.2 will be analyzed sociolinguistically in order to reconstructs LAB's view on Hellenization.

3.4.1 Background

Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum (LAB) is an imaginative retelling of the history of Israel from Adam until David. It has been connected to Philo of Alexandria, because LAB's transmitted manuscripts and early editions mention him as the author¹²³. However, it is clear that Philo was not the author of LAB, since that would cause serious inconsistencies (as will be clear in this chapter). Furthermore, Philo writes exclusively in Greek. It is very likely that we will never know the real author of LAB.

Based on linguistic evidence, it is nowadays agreed upon that LAB has originally been written in Hebrew, had a Greek intermediate stage and was then translated into Latin¹²⁴. This Latin translation is the only version that is extant.

The provenance of LAB is debated. Jacobson thinks of Galilee¹²⁵, whereas Charlesworth considers the writing in Hebrew, usage of a Palestinian Biblical text, literary parallels with Palestinian 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, theological interests and the knowledge of the geography of Palestine as indications for a Palestinian provenance¹²⁶.

The dating of LAB is even more debated and highly uncertain. While Jacobson places LAB after the destruction of the temple (1st-2nd c. CE)¹²⁷, Charlesworth considers the beginning of the first century, before 70 CE, a more suitable date¹²⁸.

3.4.2 Intertextuality

The exact pre-text of LAB as it is handed down to us is hard to determine¹²⁹, because of:

- 1) the different language transmissions (see 3.1.1). In theory, it is possible that translators of either the Greek or Latin translation or both made adaptations to their own version of Scripture.

¹²³ Jacobson 1996, 195.

¹²⁴ Charlesworth 2010, 298-299; See Jacobson 1996, 215-224 for an elaborate discussion.

¹²⁵ Jacobson 1996, 211.

¹²⁶ Charlesworth 2010, 300.

¹²⁷ Jacobson 1996, 199-210.

¹²⁸ Charlesworth 2010, 299.

¹²⁹ However, it is clear that this (presumably Hebrew) pre-text does not deviate too much from the MT. An elaborate discussion about this can be found in Jacobson 1996, 254-257.

- 2) It's nature as *rewritten Bible*. Pseudo-Philo makes deliberate use of paraphrasing, omission, addition, modification and allusion to make a well-known passage contemporary relevant¹³⁰.

However, Pseudo-Philo's work is one big mosaic of Biblical texts and themes. He uses all his knowledge of Scripture and tradition to piece together a rewritten story of the Scriptures. Jacobson mentions several intertextual techniques of LAB. I have chosen the most relevant ones and numbered them:

1. LAB knows more than one tradition about a particular event or episode and incorporates them.¹³¹
2. LAB fashions episodes out of sections of the Bible that seem unrelated.¹³²
3. LAB introduces language or thematic material that is not present in the treated Biblical narrative, but is found elsewhere in the Bible with reference to this episode.¹³³
4. LAB introduces material from a seemingly alien text elsewhere in Scriptures into his account of a particular biblical episode that does not occur in the biblical version¹³⁴.

Regarding the curious fact that LAB contains two Tower-narratives, let us start with (1). In chapter 6 (Text 13), Pseudo-Philo interrupts the Biblical story after v. 4 (although he writes first about the plans of the building of the tower and then about the use of materials). The rest of chapter 6 is an inserted story of Abram in the furnace, before the "regular" story continues in chapter 7 (Text 14). Jacobson suggests that this incorporated story is from a different tradition that stressed the element of idolatry, since the twelve refusing men declare *unum Dominum novimus* (6.4) "we recognize one God"¹³⁵.

Regarding (2), we recognize several themes and elements that are biblical, but have nothing to do with the Tower of Babel in chapter 6. The story is clearly alluding to the story of Daniel in Daniel 6. It has elements of Gen. 37 as well in the form of Joktan, who, like Ruben, wants to spare life by buying time. Joktan's help to escape reminds us of Rahab help towards the spies in Joshua 2. The punishment by God is biblical as well. Jacobson mentions: the earthquake at Nu. 16, the fire of God at Nu. 11 and the fiery sparks of Daniel 3¹³⁶.

¹³⁰ For literature on "rewritten Bible": Brooke, G.J. "Rewritten Bible." pp. 777-781 in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Edited by L. H. Schiffman and J. C. VanderKam. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.; Bernstein, M. "'Rewritten Bible': A Generic Category that has Outlived its Usefulness?" *Textus* 22 (2005), 169-196.

¹³¹ Jacobson 1996, 234.

¹³² Jacobson 1996, 231.

¹³³ Jacobson 1996, 228.

¹³⁴ Jacobson 1996, 229.

¹³⁵ Jacobson 1996, 234.

¹³⁶ Jacobson 1996, 231.

Technique (3) is interesting for the analysis of *dividam linguas* “I will divide up (their) languages” (7.3; cf. 7,5). Both the MT and LXX do not use the term “divide”, but “confuse”. We do find “divide” in MT Ps. 55,10:

בִּלְעֵ אֲדָנִי פִּלְגֵ לְשׁוֹנֶם כִּי־רָאִיתִי חֲמָס וְרִיב בְּעִיר:

“Confuse, Lord, **divide** their tongue/language, for I have seen violence and disputes in the city.”

This passage seems to allude to Gen. 11,1-9¹³⁷. Pseudo-Philo, on his turn, alludes to this Psalm by using its lexicon.

However, this is also possible without reference to Gen. 11,1-9: (4). The phrase *terram quam respexit oculus meus ab initio* (7.4) “into the land upon which my eye has looked from the beginning” is an adaptation of Deut. 11,12, but suits the purposes of LAB to connect it with the choosing of Abram.

Now we know some techniques used in LAB, what does chapter 7 say about the Confusion of Tongues? First, LAB sticks to the Biblical narrative, when LAB says in 7.2 that there was one universal language. Second, it is mentioned twice that God divided their languages (7.3, 7.5). This is interesting, since it is mentioned before that there was one universal language. I would suggest that the plural *linguas* is the Latin translation of an intermediate Greek τὰ χεῖλη “the lips” (cf. LXX Gen. 11,9; cf. 2.2). Concerning the verb *dividam/dividit*, it is used synonymously to *(Deus) confudit (linguas)* (“God confused (their) languages” in 7.5). Therefore, Pseudo-Philo does not share Philo’s thoughts on the terminology for confusion (cf. 3.3.3) and uses the verb “to divide” to allude to Ps. 55, 10 (see 3.4.2). A last observation is that in LAB language is inseparable from appearance. Both define a people. God divides the languages of mankind and changes people’s appearances (7.5; cf. 7.3), so that they would not be recognized by their family and acquaintances and stop building the tower. Following the words *dispergam eos in omnes regions*, LAB implies that the scattering of people is connected to their different appearances according to race and nationalities .

So, we notice two different consequences of the building of the tower. Beside the division of languages, God changes appearances and scatters mankind over the earth. LAB adds more words to the latter in 7.3: mankind will lead uncivilized lives on cliffs, in caves etc. and live there like beasts (notice the parallel with the animals in 3 Baruch). Moreover, they will be like that for all time before God and He will disgust them. Ultimately, water or thirst will kill them.

How different does God treat Abram! In 7.4, God chooses servant Abram and promises to bring him into Canaan, which He did not even destroy in the Flood. He will establish a covenant with Abram and bless his offspring that will call Him “eternal God”.

The reason for this privileged treatment of Abram (and the Jews) is for his pious role in chapter 6. Abram’s complete devotion to God until possible death distinguishes him from everyone, even the eleven other men who refuse to join the idolatry.

¹³⁷ Jacobson 1996, 228.

3.4.3 Sociolinguistic Evaluation

What do we learn about Palestinian language beliefs of roughly two centuries after the composition of Jubilees? First, we should note that there is a bigger tension between Palestinian Jews and other nations. In LAB 6, Abram and others who obey God are oppressed by evil people. In LAB 7, God rewards Abram for his pious behavior and punishes the other nations for their oppression. Pseudo-Philo draws a line to his time by adding the phrase *et in novissimis diebus alterutrum erimus expugnantes nos* (“and in later times we will be fighting each other”) (6.1). This phrase refers to events in (recent) history and the present, known to the contemporary Jewish readers. The Tower-narratives are still connected to their situation, since they are the offspring of Abram and the contemporary nations of the scattered nations. Pseudo-Philo connects the choosing of Abram (Gen. 12) so strongly with the Tower-narrative that the story is now about Jews against the rest of humanity.

Whereas the Tower-narrative of Jubilees is a wake-up call for the Jews to remind them of their privilege to possess Hebrew and to appreciate it as such, LAB does not mention Hebrew anymore. Apparently, this topic is not worth mentioning explicitly. However, this text is produced in Hebrew, so the author prefers Hebrew above other languages. This opinion is also noticeable in LAB 6 and 7. The author clearly separates the Jews from other nations and this implies that he opposes assimilation with those nations contemporarily. According to LAB, other nations are idolatrous and oppress(ed) Jews. They may have a means to unite again: Koine Greek, but this will never change their evil nature and Gods attitude towards them. It is even an attempt to undo their punishment of the Confusion of Tongues in Gen. 11,1-9. Therefore, Jews should not unite with them and their language. The Jews should not use languages of uncivilized and idolatrous people.

3.4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that Pseudo-Philo is clear in his message in Hebrew: because of its evil, idolatrous deeds, mankind is punished by confusion of language, scattering over the earth in uncivilized circumstances and changing of appearance. God will always see them like that. However, based on Abram’s pious role in chapter 6, God chooses him to move to the promised land, bless his offspring and make a covenant with him. Abram and the Jews will always be his people and he will deliver them from all pagan oppressors.

That is why a universal language is regarded negatively: it caused united rebellion against God. A contemporary common language, Koine Greek, is not to be favored, since it is against the division made by God in Gen. 11,1-9. The Jews are set apart even more by God, because they are His people. They should not mingle with the other nations, but be pious to God and have faith that he will rescue them again.

The results of this chapter together with the outcomes of the previous chapters will be addressed in the conclusion.

4. Conclusion

We started this thesis with the question:

How did Jews living in 2nd c. BC-2nd c. AD relate to language shift to Koine Greek, based on the Hellenistic Jewish reception of the Confusion of Tongues (Gen. 11,1-9)?

We have seen that the LXX does not deviate much from the Tower-narrative in Genesis as it is transmitted by the MT. However, in the case studies we have encountered four Jewish writings from the 2nd c. BC-2nd c. AD, which presented an adapted text, using additions, omission or alternated content (rewritten Bible), or, in the case of Philo, followed the Biblical text literally and interpreted it allegorically. All these writers wanted to convey a message for their present and future, using this narrative from the past.

For the author of *Jubilees*, a Palestinian Jew from ca. 160-150 BC, the Confusion of Tongues is about the tragic loss of the creation language: Hebrew. In this language, the sacred ancestral knowledge had been transmitted. However, God chose Abram to return Hebrew to him and his offspring. What a privilege for the Jews! The author makes his readers aware that they should highly appreciate Hebrew as a Jewish language and that they should transmit it to later generations by studying the language and writing it. This author would prefer a monolingual Jewish society, because the Jewish people do not need other, inferior languages, if they have the God-given Hebrew. Hebrew belongs to the Jewish identity.

How different are the ideas of the author of the third book of the *Sibylline Oracles*! Being written by a Jew between 80-40 BC in Asia Minor, the Tower-narrative is narrated by a Sibyl in Greek hexameters. This account of the Tower-narrative shows that the Jewish author highly regarded Greek literature. The universal character of the Sibyl makes it possible to transmit a message that negotiates between the Greek and Jewish culture. Being a Jew is defined by keeping God's Law, which is something that Greeks should do as well. This shows an open attitude to their non-Jewish environment.

Another, well-integrated Greek Jew is Philo of Alexandria. He adheres to the exact wording of the LXX, since he regards this Greek translation as equally inspired as the Hebrew Scriptures. His interpretation, however, is allegorical, because he cannot imagine that God would deprive humanity of something as good as a universal language. Instead, it was the confusion of evil ways of the soul that were annihilated and dispersed. Therefore, there is hope: God will harmonize virtue-loving souls with the divine realm and save them from folly. It is clear that Philo is the most explicit and radical in his language beliefs, because he regards Greek, as a universal language, as a blessing for mankind. Hebrew and its status do not have any importance for him, since the Greek Bible was now available for all humanity.

Returning to Palestine, we find a polemic account of Gen. 11,1-9 in LAB. His message from around 1-150 AD in Hebrew cannot be misunderstood: after the building of the Tower, humanity is turned into different nations, with their own language and appearance and sent into wild places to live an uncivilized life. For God they will be like that forever. However, Abram has proven to be pious to God by refusing to build bricks for an earlier tower and to

flee the flames of the furnace. Therefore, God makes a covenant with him and his offspring and brings them in the promised land. That is why Jews should not aspire unity with other, uncivilized peoples by means of a universal language. They were set apart by God, whom they should trust, because he will rescue them again from the pagan oppression. LAB does not prescribe which language should be spoken by Jews, however, since we can eliminate languages belonging to other peoples, we may presume that the language that was spoken in the making of the covenant with Abram was the language of the Jews and should be maintained as such.

The results show that there is division in language ideas by Palestinian and Diaspora Jewish societies. The former society fear the loss of Jewish identity by the loss of Hebrew, because of the threat of Hellenism by the universal character of Greek. Jubilees and LAB remind their readers that the Jews were set apart by God from other nations (and languages) and that they should not pursue closer connections. The latter group, Diaspora Jews from Alexandria and Asia Minor, are fully integrated into Greek Hellenistic society. They see Greek as a blessing, because they are now able to communicate Jewish ideas with their Greek environment and among themselves. By adopting Greek language and genres, they place the Biblical narrative of the Confusion of Tongues in a new perspective, namely, that of punishment of immoral behavior. Meanwhile, they do not keep God's Law, the source of virtue, for themselves. Greeks are able to live piously before God by keeping this Law (Philo) or by keeping the natural Law (Sib. Or.)

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Appendix

Text 1: MT Gen. 11, 1-9

Own translation

<p>1 וַיְהִי כָל־הָאָרֶץ שְׂפָה אַחַת וּדְבָרִים אֶחָדִים:</p> <p>2 וַיְהִי בְּנִסְעֵם מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּמְצְאוּ בְּקַעֲוֹה בְּאֶרֶץ שִׁנְעָר וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם:</p> <p>3 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ הִבֵּה נִלְבְּנָה לְבָנִים וְנִשְׂרָפָה לְשִׂרְפָּה וְתִהְיֶה לָהֶם הַלֵּבָנָה לְאַבֵּן וְהַחֲמֶר הִיָּה לָהֶם לְחֹמֶר:</p> <p>4 וַיֹּאמְרוּ הִבֵּהוּ נִבְנֶה־לָּנוּ עִיר וּמִגְדָּל וְרֹאשׁוֹ בַשָּׁמַיִם וְנַעֲשֶׂה־לָּנוּ שֵׁם פֶּן־נִפּוּץ עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ:</p> <p>5 וַיֵּרַד יְהוָה לִרְאֹת אֶת־הָעִיר וְאֶת־הַמִּגְדָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ בְּנֵי הָאָדָם:</p> <p>6 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הֵן עַם אֶחָד וְשָׂפָה אַחַת לְכֻלָּם וְזֶה הַחֲלֹם לַעֲשׂוֹת וְעַתָּה לֹא־יִבְצָר מֵהֶם כָּל אֲשֶׁר יִזְמוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת:</p> <p>7 הִבֵּה נִרְדָּה וְנִבְלָה שֵׁם שְׂפָתָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אִישׁ שִׁפְתֵי רֵעֵהוּ:</p> <p>8 וַיִּפֹּץ יְהוָה אֹתָם מִשָּׁם עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּחְדְּלוּ לִבְנֹת הָעִיר:</p> <p>9 עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ בָּבֶל כִּי־שָׁם בִּלְלַל יְהוָה שִׁפְתֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ וּמִשָּׁם הִפִּיצָם יְהוָה עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ: פ</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. And the whole earth was of one lip and of the same words.2. And it happened that, in their leaving from the east, they found a valley in the land of Shinar and they settled there.3. And one man said to his neighbor: "Come on, let us brickmake bricks and let us burn them to fire". And the brick was for them to stone and the bitumen was for them to mortar.4. And they said: "Come on, let us build for ourselves a city and a tower with its top in heaven and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth".5. And YHWH descended to see the city and the tower which the sons of man built.6. And YHWH said: "Behold, one people and one lip for all of them and this is their beginning to making and now nothing will be impossible for them what they will think to make.7. Come on, let us descend and let us confuse their lip, so that a man does not hear the lip of his neighbor."8. And YHWH scattered them from there over the face of the whole earth and they ceased building the city.9. Therefore, her name is called Babel, because there YHWH confused the lip of the whole earth and from there, YHWH scattered them over the face of the whole earth.
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Text 2: LXX Gen. 11, 1-9

Own translation

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Καὶ ἦν πᾶσα ἡ γῆ χειλὸς ἓν, καὶ φωνὴ μία πᾶσιν.2. καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ κινήσει αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν εὗρον πεδίον ἐν (τῇ) γῆ Σεννααρ καὶ κατώκησαν ἐκεῖ.3. καὶ εἶπεν ἄνθρωπος τῷ πλησίον Δεῦτε πλινθεύσωμεν πλίνθους καὶ ὀπτήσωμεν αὐτὰς πυρί. καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτοῖς ἡ πλίνθος εἰς λίθον, καὶ ἄσφαλτος ἦν αὐτοῖς ὁ πηλός.4. καὶ εἶπαν Δεῦτε οἰκοδομήσωμεν ἑαυτοῖς πόλιν καὶ πύργον, οὗ ἡ κεφαλὴ ἔσται ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ποιήσωμεν ἑαυτοῖς ὄνομα πρὸ τοῦ διασπαρῆναι ἐπὶ προσώπου πάσης τῆς γῆς.5. καὶ κατέβη κύριος ἰδεῖν τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὸν πύργον, ὃν ᾠκοδόμησαν οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.6. καὶ εἶπεν κύριος Ἴδού γένος ἓν καὶ χειλὸς ἓν πάντων, καὶ τοῦτο ἤρξαντο ποιῆσαι, καὶ νῦν οὐκ ἐκλείψει ἐξ αὐτῶν πάντα, ὅσα ἂν ἐπιθῶνται ποιεῖν.7. δεῦτε καὶ καταβάντες συγχέωμεν ἐκεῖ αὐτῶν τὴν γλῶσσαν, ἵνα μὴ ἀκούσωσιν ἕκαστος τὴν φωνὴν τοῦ πλησίον.8. καὶ διέσπειρεν αὐτοὺς κύριος ἐκεῖθεν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον πάσης τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἐπαύσαντο οἰκοδομοῦντες τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὸν πύργον.9. διὰ τοῦτο ἐκλήθη τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῆς Σύγχυσις, ὅτι ἐκεῖ συνέχεεν κύριος τὰ χεῖλη πάσης τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἐκεῖθεν διέσπειρεν αὐτοὺς κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ πρόσωπον πάσης τῆς γῆς.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. And the whole earth was of one lip and one voice for all.2. And it happened that in their moving from the east that they found a plain in the land of Sennaar and they lived there.3. And a man said to his neighbor: "Come on, let us brickmake bricks and let us bake them with fire" and the brick was for them to stone and bitumen was for them the clay.4. And they said: "Come on, let us build for ourselves a city and a tower, which top will be unto the heaven and let us make for ourselves a name before being schattered over the face of the whole earth".5. And the Lord descended to see the city and the tower which the sons of men builded.6. And the Lord said: "Behold, one people and one lip for all and this they began to make and now nothing will fail by them what they attempt to do.7. Come on, and being descended, let us confuse there their tongue, so that every man will not hear the voice of his neighbor."8. And the Lord scattered them from there over the face of the whole earth and they ceased building the city and the tower.9. Therefore, her name is called Confusion, because there the Lord confused the lips of the whole earth and from there the Lord, the God, scattered them over the face of the whole earth.
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Text 3: Jubilees 10.18-26

Translation: Charlesworth 2010

(18) And in the thirty-third jubilee, in the first year of this second week, Peleg took a wife whose name was Lomna, daughter of Sina'ar. And she bore a son for him in the fourth year of that week. And he called him Reu because, he said, "Behold, the sons of man have become evil with perverse counsel so that they are building a city and a tower for themselves in the land of Shinar."

(19) For they departed from the land of Ararat toward the east into Shinar, because in his days they built city and a tower, saying, "Come let us go up in it into heaven."

(20) And they began building. And in the fourth week they baked bricks in fire, and bricks were for them like stones. And the mud with which they plastered was bitumen, which came out of the sea, and the springs of water in the land of Shinar.

(21) And they built it; forty-three years they were building it. Its width was two hundred and three bricks. And the height of a brick was one third its length. Five thousand, four hundred and thirty-three cubits and two palms its height rose up. And thirteen stades (was its wall).

(22) And the Lord our God said to us, "Behold, the people are one and they have begun working. Now nothing will escape them. Behold, let us go down and let us mix up their tongues so each one will not hear another's word, and they will be scattered into cities and nations, and, therefore, one counsel will not reside with them until the day of judgement."

(23) And the Lord went down and we went down with him. And we saw the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.

(24) And he mixed up their tongues, and, therefore, one did not hear another's word. And so they ceased to build the city and the tower.

(25) Therefore, all of the land of Shinar is called Babel because there the Lord mixed up all the languages of the sons of men. And from there they were scattered into their cities according to each of their languages and nations.

(26) And the Lord sent a great wind upon the tower and overthrew it on the earth. And behold, it is between Asshur and Babylon in the land of Shinar and he called it "the Overthrow".

Text 4: Jubilees 12.25-27

Translation: Charlesworth 2010

(25) Then the Lord God said to me: "Open his mouth and his ears to hear and speak with his tongue in the revealed language." For from the day of the collapse it had disappeared from the mouth(s) of all mankind.

(26) I opened his mouth, ears, and lips and began to speak Hebrew with him—in the language of creation.

(27) He took his father's books (they were written in Hebrew) and began to copy them. From that time he began to study them, while I was telling him everything that he was unable (to understand).

Text 5: Jubilees 12.16-18

Translation: Charlesworth 2010

(16) In the sixth week, during its fifth year, Abram sat at night—at the beginning of the seventh month—to observe the stars from evening to dawn in order to see what would be the character of the year with respect to the rains. He was sitting and observing by himself.

(17) A voice came to his mind and he said: "All the signs of the stars and signs of the moon and sun—all are under the Lord's control. Why should I be investigating (them)?"

(18) If he wishes he will make it rain in the morning and in the evening; and if he wishes, he will not make it fall. Everything is under his control".

Text 6: IOR IV 1540

Translation: Engelmann & Merkelbach 1973, 379-383

1 I am Sibyl, uttering oracles, the servant of Phoebus,
the first-born daughter of a nymph, a Naiad.
Erythrae is my only home town,
and Theodore was my mortal father.

5 The (mountain) Kissotas carried my birth, the place where I left
the womb and immediately spoke oracles to the mortals.
While I was sitting on this rock,
I sang for the mortals predictions of future sufferings.
I lived for three times three hundred years,

10 I, an unwedded virgin, and I travelled all over the world.
But now I am again sitting here on my dear rock,
delighted by this charming spring.
I am glad that the time of which I spoke has now come true,
the time in which, according to my prophecy, Erythrae will flourish again,

15 and will enjoy good order, wealth, and fame,
through a young Erythraean, who comes to his beloved home town.

Text 7: Sibylline Oracles 3, 809-929

Translation: Buitenwerf 2021

809	ταῦτά σοι Ἀσσυρίης Βαβυλώνια τείχεα μακρά
810	οἰστρομανῆς προλιποῦσα, ἐς Ἑλλάδα πεμπόμενον πῦρ πᾶσι προφητεύουσα θεοῦ μηνίματα θνητοῖς — ὥστε προφητεῦσαί με βροτοῖς αἰνίγματα θεῖα. καὶ καλέσουσι βροτοί με καθ' Ἑλλάδα πατρίδος ἄλλης, ἐξ Ἐρυθρῆς γεγαυῖαν ἀναιδέα· οἱ δέ με Κίρκης
815	μητρὸς καὶ Γνωστοῖο πατρὸς φήσουσι Σίβυλλαν μαινομένην ψεύστειραν· ἐπὴν δὲ γένηται ἅπαντα, τηνίκα μου μνήμην ποιήσετε κούκέτι μ' οὐδεὶς μαινομένην φήσειε, θεοῦ μέγαλοιο προφήτην. οὐ γὰρ ἐμοὶ δήλωσεν, ἃ πρὶν γενετῆρσιν ἐμοῖσιν·
820	ὅσσα δὲ πρῶτ' ἐγένοντο, τὰ μοι *θεὸς* κατέλεξε, τῶν μετέπειτα δὲ πάντα θεὸς νόω ἐγκατέθηκεν, ὥστε προφητεύειν με τὰ τ' ἐσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα καὶ λέξαι θνητοῖς. ὅτε γὰρ κατεκλύζετο κόσμος ὔδασι, καὶ τις ἀνὴρ μόνος εὐδοκίμητος ἐλείφθη
825	ὑλοτόμῳ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ ἐπιπλώσας ὑδάτεσσιν σὺν θηρσὶν πτηνοῖσί θ', ἵν' ἐμπλησθῆ ἄλλοι κόσμος· τοῦ μὲν ἐγὼ νύμφη καὶ ἀφ' αἵματος αὐτοῦ ἐτύχθην, τῷ τὰ πρῶτ' ἐγένοντο· τὰ δ' ἔσχατα πάντ' ἀπεδείχθη· ὥστ' ἀπ' ἐμοῦ στόματος τὰδ' ἀληθινὰ πάντα λελέχθω.
809	These things (I say) to you, after I left the long Babylonian walls
810	of Assyria in a rage, I, a fire sent to Greece. I prophesy revelations of God to all mortals, so that I prophesy divine riddles to the mortals. Throughout Greece, mortals will say that I am from another fatherland, and that I am a shameless one, born in Erythrae. Others will call me
815	raging, lying Sibyl, whose mother is Circe and whose father is unknown. But when all these things happen, then you will remember me. Nobody will call me anymore a raging prophetess of the great God. For he did not reveal to me the things that happened previously to my parents.
820	My father passed on to me all things that happened first, and God put in my mind all things that would happen later, so that I can prophesy both future and past and tell them to the mortals. For when the world was inundated with waters, and a certain man, a single famous person, survived
825	by sailing upon the waters in a wooden house, together with beasts and birds, so that the world would be filled again, His relative am I, and I am of his blood.
828	He went through the first things. All the things (which would happen) later were revealed.
829	So let all these things uttered from my mouth be taken as coming true.

Text 8: Sibylline Oracles 3, 97-104

Text and translation: Buitenwerf 2021

97	ἀλλ' ὀπόταν μέγαλοιο θεοῦ τελέωνται ἀπειλαί, ἄς ποτ' ἐπηπείλησε βροτοῖς, ὅτε πύργον ἔτευξαν χώρῃ ἐν Ἀσσυρίῃ· ὁμόφωνοι δ' ἦσαν ἅπαντες
100	καὶ βούλοντ' ἀναβῆναι εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα· αὐτίκα δ' ἀθάνατος μέγαλην ἐπέθηκεν ἀνάγκην πνεύμασιν· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ἄνεμοι μέγαν ὑψόθι πύργον
103	ρίψαν καὶ θνητοῖσιν ἐπ' ἀλλήλους ἔριν ὤρσαν·
105 [Th. 8]	αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πύργος τ' ἔπεσεν γλῶσσαί τ' ἀνθρώπων
[Th. 9]	εἰς πολλὰς θνητῶν ἐμερίσθησαν διαλέκτους·
104	τοῦνεκά τοι Βαβυλῶνα βροτοὶ πόλει οὔνομ' ἔθεντο·
97	But when the threats of the great God are fulfilled, with which he once threatened mortals when they were building a tower in the land Assyria, They all spoke the same language
100	and wanted to go up to starry heaven. But immediately the Immortal put great pressure on the winds. Then the storms threw the great tower down
103 [Th. 7]	from above and roused the mortals to strive against each other.
105 [Th. 8]	And when the tower fell, the human tongues
[Th. 9]	were divided into the many languages of mortals.
104	Therefore people called the city Babylon.

Text 9: Philo's *De Vita Mosis* 2, 25-41

Translation: Colson 1935

(25) Τὸ δὲ τῆς νομοθεσίας ἱεροπρεπὲς ὡς οὐ παρ' Ἰουδαίοις μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ πᾶσι τοῖς ἄλλοις τεθαύμασται, δῆλον ἔκ τε τῶν εἰρημένων ἤδη καὶ 26τῶν μελλόντων λέγεσθαι.

(26) τὸ παλαιὸν ἐγράφησαν οἱ νόμοι γλῶσση Χαλδαϊκῆ καὶ μέχρι πολλοῦ διέμειναν ἐν ὁμοίῳ τὴν διάλεκτον οὐ μεταβάλλοντες, ἕως μήπω τὸ κάλλος εἰς τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους ἀνέφηναν αὐτῶν.

(27) ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐκ τῆς καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν συνεχοῦς μελέτης καὶ ἀσκήσεως τῶν χρωμένων αἴσθησις ἐγένετο καὶ ἑτέροις καὶ τὸ κλέος ἐφοίτα πανταχόσε—τὰ γὰρ καλὰ κἂν φθόνῳ πρὸς ὀλίγον ἐπισκιασθῆ χρόνον, ἐπὶ καιρῶν αὐτοῖς ἀναλάμπει φύσεως εὐμενεία—, δεινὸν ἠγησάμενοί τινες, εἰ οἱ νόμοι παρὰ τῷ ἡμίσει τμήματι τοῦ γένους ἀνθρώπων ἐξετασθήσονται μόνῳ τῷ βαρβαρικῷ, τὸ δ' Ἑλληνικὸν εἰς ἅπαν ἀμοιρήσει, πρὸς ἐρμηνείαν τὴν τούτων ἐτρέποντο.

(28) τὸ δ' ἔργον ἐπεὶ καὶ μέγα ἦν καὶ κοινωφελές, οὐκ ἰδιώταις οὐδ' ἄρχουσιν, ὧν πολὺς ἀριθμὸς, ἀλλὰ βασιλεῦσι καὶ βασιλέων ἀνετέθη τῷ δοκιμωτάτῳ.

(29) Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Φιλάδελφος ἐπικληθεὶς τρίτος μὲν ἦν ἀπ' Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ τὴν Αἴγυπτον παραλαβόντος, ἀρεταῖς δὲ ταῖς ἐν ἡγεμονίᾳ πάντων, οὐχὶ τῶν καθ' αὐτὸν μόνον, | ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν πάλαι πώποτε γεγενημένων ἄριστος, οὗ καὶ μέχρι νῦν τοσαύταις ὑστερον γενεαῖς ἄδεται τὸ κλέος πολλὰ δείγματα καὶ μνημεῖα τῆς μεγαλοφροσύνης κατὰ πόλεις καὶ χώρας ἀπολιπόντος, ὡς ἤδη καὶ ἐν παροιμίας εἶδει τὰς ὑπερόγκους φιλοτιμίας καὶ μεγάλας κατασκευὰς Φιλαδελφείους ἀπ' ἐκείνου καλεῖσθαι.

(25) That the sanctity of our legislation has been a source of wonder not only to the Jews but also to all other nations, is clear both from the facts already mentioned and those which I proceed to state.

(26) In ancient times the laws were written in the Chaldean tongue, and remained in that form for many years, without any change of language, so long as they had not yet revealed their beauty to the rest of mankind.

(27) But, in course of time, the daily, unbroken regularity of practice exercised by those who observed them brought them to the knowledge of others, and their fame began to spread on every side. For things excellent, even if they are beclouded for a short time through envy, shine out again under the benign operation of nature when their time comes. Then it was that some people, thinking it a shame that the laws should be found in one half only of the human race, the barbarians, and denied altogether to the Greeks, took steps to have them translated.

(28) In view of the importance and public utility of the task, it was referred not to private persons or magistrates, who were very numerous, but to kings, and amongst them to the king of highest repute.

(29) Ptolemy, surnamed Philadelphus, was the third in succession to Alexander, the conqueror of Egypt. In all the qualities which make a good ruler, he excelled not only his contemporaries, but all who have arisen in the past; and even till to-day, after so many generations, his praises are sung for the many evidences and monuments of his greatness of mind which he left behind him in different cities and countries, so that, even now, acts of more than ordinary munificence or buildings on a specially great scale are proverbially called Philadelphian after him.

(30) συνόλως μὲν οὖν ἡ τῶν Πτολεμαίων οἰκία διαφερόντως παρὰ τὰς ἄλλας βασιλείας ἤκμασεν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς Πτολεμαίοις ὁ Φιλάδελφος—ὅσα γὰρ εἷς ἔδρασεν οὗτος ἐπαινετά, μόλις ἐκεῖνοι πάντες ἄθροοι διεπράξαντο¹—γενόμενος καθάπερ ἐν ζῶντι τὸ ἡγεμονεῦον κεφαλὴν τρόπον τινὰ τῶν βασιλέων.

(31) ὁ δὲ τοιοῦτος ζῆλον καὶ πόθον λαβὼν τῆς νομοθεσίας ἡμῶν εἰς Ἑλλάδα γλῶτταν τὴν Χαλδαϊκὴν μεθαρμόζεσθαι διανοεῖτο καὶ πρέσβεις εὐθύς ἐξέπεμπε πρὸς τὸν τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἀρχιερέα καὶ βασιλέα—ὁ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἦν—τό τε βούλημα δηλῶν καὶ προτρέπων ἀριστίνδην ἐλέσθαι τοὺς τὸν νόμον διερμηνεύοντας.

(32) ὁ δ' οἷα εἰκὸς ἦσθεις καὶ νομίσας οὐκ ἄνευ θείας ἐπιφροσύνης περὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον ἔργον ἐσπουδακέναι τὸν βασιλέα, σκεψάμενος τοὺς παρ' αὐτῷ δοκιμωτάτους Ἑβραίων, οἳ πρὸς τῇ πατρίῳ καὶ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν ἐπεπαίδευντο παιδεῖαν, ἄσμενος ἀποστέλλει.

(33) ὡς δ' ἦκον, ἐπὶ ξενίαν κληθέντες λόγοις ἀστείοις καὶ σπουδαίοις τὸν ἐστιάτορα εὐώχουν ἀντεφροσύνωντες· ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἀπεπειρᾶτο τῆς ἐκάστου σοφίας καινὰς ἀλλ' οὐ τὰς ἐν ἔθει ζητήσεις προτείνων, οἳ δ' εὐστόχως καὶ εὐθυβόλως, οὐκ ἐπιτρέποντος μακρηγορεῖν τοῦ καιροῦ καθάπερ ἀποφθεγγόμενοι τὰ προταθέντα διελύοντο.

(34) δοκιμασθέντες δ' εὐθύς ἤρξαντο τὰ τῆς καλῆς πρεσβείας ἀποτελεῖν καὶ λογισάμενοι παρ' αὐτοῖς, ὅσον εἴη τὸ πρᾶγμα θεσπισθέντας νόμους χρησιμοῖς διερμηνεύειν, μὴτ' ἀφελεῖν τι μὴτε προσθεῖναι ἢ μεταθεῖναι δυναμένους, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἰδέαν καὶ τὸν τύπον αὐτῶν διαφυλάττοντας, ἐσκόπουν τὸ καθαρώτατον τῶν περὶ τὸν τόπον χωρίων ἔξω πόλεως· τὰ γὰρ ἐντὸς τείχους ἅτε παντοδαπῶν πεπληθότα ζώων

(30) To put it shortly, as the house of the Ptolemies was highly distinguished, compared with other dynasties, so was Philadelphus among the Ptolemies. The creditable achievements of this one man almost outnumbered those of all the others put together, and, as the head takes the highest place in the living body, so he may be said to head the kings.

(31) This great man, having conceived an ardent affection for our laws, determined to have the Chaldean translated into Greek, and at once dispatched envoys to the high priest and king of Judaea, both offices being held by the same person, explaining his wishes and urging him to choose by merit persons to make a full rendering of the Law into Greek.

(32) The high priest was naturally pleased, and, thinking that God's guiding care must have led the king to busy himself in such an undertaking, sought out such Hebrews as he had of the highest reputation, who had received an education in Greek as well as in their native lore, and joyfully sent them to Ptolemy.

(33) When they arrived, they were offered hospitality, and, having been sumptuously entertained, requited their entertainer with a feast of words full of wit and weight. For he tested the wisdom of each by propounding for discussion new instead of the ordinary questions, which problems they solved with happy and well-pointed answers in the form of apophthegms, as the occasion did not allow of lengthy speaking. |

(34) After standing this test, they at once began to fulfil the duties of their high errand. Reflecting how great an undertaking it was to make a full version of the laws given by the Voice of God, where they could not add or take away or transfer anything, but must keep the original form and shape, they proceeded to look for the most open and unoccupied spot in the neighbourhood outside the city. For, within the walls, it was full of every kind of living

διὰ νόσους καὶ τελευτὰς καὶ τὰς
ὑγιαίνοντων οὐκ 35εὐαγεῖς πράξεις ἦν
ὑποπτα.

(35) νῆσος ἡ Φάρος πρόκειται τῆς
Ἀλεξανδρείας, ἥς αὐχὴν ὑποταίνιος τέταται
πρὸς τὴν πόλιν περικλειόμενος | οὐκ
ἀγχιβαθεῖ τὰ δὲ πολλὰ τεναγῶδει θαλάττῃ,
ὡς καὶ τῆς τῶν κυμάτων φορᾶς τὸν πολὺν
ἦχον καὶ πάταγον ἐκ πάνυ μακροῦ
διαστήματος προεκλύεσθαι.

(36) τοῦτον ἐξ ἀπάντων τῶν ἐν κύκλῳ
κρίναντες ἐπιτηδειότατον εἶναι τὸν τόπον
ἐνησυχᾶσαι καὶ ἐνηρεμῆσαι καὶ μόνη τῇ
ψυχῇ πρὸς μόνους ὀμιλῆσαι τοὺς νόμους,
ἐνταυθοῖ κατέμειναν καὶ τὰς ἱεράς βίβλους
λαβόντες ἀνατείνουσιν ἅμ' αὐταῖς καὶ τὰς
χεῖρας εἰς οὐρανόν, αἰτούμενοι τὸν θεὸν μὴ
διαμαρτεῖν τῆς προθέσεως· ὁ δ' ἐπινεύει
ταῖς εὐχαῖς, ἵνα τὸ πλεῖστον ἦ καὶ τὸ
σύμπαν γένος ἀνθρώπων ὠφελῆθῃ
χρησόμενον εἰς ἐπανόρθωσιν βίου
φιλοσόφοις καὶ παγκάλους διατάγμασι.

(37) καθίσαντες δ' ἐν ἀποκρύφῳ καὶ
μηδενὸς παρόντος ὅτι μὴ τῶν τῆς φύσεως
μερῶν, γῆς ὕδατος ἀέρος οὐρανοῦ, περὶ ὧν
πρῶτον τῆς γενέσεως ἔμελλον
ἱεροφαντήσιν—κοσμοποιία γὰρ ἡ τῶν
νόμων ἐστὶν ἀρχή—, καθάπερ
ἐνθουσιῶντες προεφήτευσον οὐκ ἄλλα
ἄλλοι, τὰ δ' αὐτὰ πάντες ὀνόματα καὶ
ῥήματα, ὡς περ ὑποβολέως ἐκάστοις
ἀοράτως ἐνηχοῦντος.

(38) καίτοι τίς οὐκ οἶδεν, ὅτι πᾶσα μὲν
διάλεκτος, ἡ δ' Ἑλληνικὴ διαφερόντως,
ὀνομάτων πλουτεῖ, καὶ ταύτων ἐνθύμημα
οἷόν τε μεταφράζοντα καὶ παραφράζοντα
σηματίσαι πολλαχῶς, ἄλλοτε ἄλλας
ἐφαρμόζοντα λέξεις; ὅπερ ἐπὶ ταύτης τῆς
νομοθεσίας οὐ φασι συμβῆναι,
συνενεχθῆναι δ' εἰς ταῦτόν κύρια κυρίους
ὀνόμασι, τὰ Ἑλληνικὰ τοῖς Χαλδαϊκοῖς,

creatures, and consequently the prevalence
of diseases and deaths, and the impure
conduct of the healthy inhabitants, made
them suspicious of it.

(35) In front of Alexandria lies the island of
Pharos, stretching with its narrow strip of
land towards the city, and enclosed by a sea
not deep but mostly consisting of shoals, so
that the loud din and booming of the
surging waves grows faint through the long
distance before it reaches the land.

(36) Judging this to be the most suitable
place in the district, where they might find
peace and tranquillity and the soul could
commune with the laws with none to
disturb its privacy, they fixed their abode
there; and, taking the sacred books,
stretched them out towards heaven with
the hands that held them, asking of God
that they might not fail in their purpose.
And He assented to their prayers, to the
end that the greater part, or even the
whole, of the human race might be profited
and led to a better life by continuing to
observe such wise and truly admirable
ordinances.

(37) Sitting here in seclusion with none
present save the elements of nature, earth,
water, air, heaven, the genesis of which was
to be the first theme of their sacred
revelation, for the laws begin with the story
of the world's creation, they became as it
were possessed, and, under inspiration,
wrote, not each several scribe something
different, but the same word for word, as
though dictated to each by an invisible
prompter.

(38) Yet who does not know that every
language, and Greek especially, abounds in
terms, and that the same thought can be
put in many shapes by changing single
words and whole phrases and suiting the
expression to the occasion?

This was not the case, we are told, with this
law of ours, but the Greek words used
corresponded literally with the Chaldean,
exactly suited to the things they indicated.

έναρμωσθέντα εὖ μάλα τοῖς δηλουμένοις πράγμασιν.

(39) ὄν γάρ τρόπον, οἶμαι, ἐν γεωμετρῖα καὶ διαλεκτικῇ τὰ σημαίνόμενα ποικιλίαν ἐρμηνείας οὐκ ἀνέχεται, μένει δ' ἀμετάβλητος ἢ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τεθεῖσα, τὸν αὐτὸν ὡς ἔοικε τρόπον καὶ οὗτοι συντρέχοντα τοῖς πράγμασιν ὀνόματα ἐξεῦρον, ἅπερ δὴ μόνα ἢ μάλιστα τρανώσειν ἔμελλον ἐμφαντικῶς τὰ δηλούμενα.

(40) σαφεστάτη δὲ τοῦδε πίσις· ἐάν τε Χαλδαῖοι τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν γλῶτταν ἐάν τε Ἑλληνες τὴν Χαλδαίων ἀναδιδαχθῶσι καὶ ἀμφοτέραις ταῖς γραφαῖς ἐντύχωσι, τῇ τε Χαλδαϊκῇ καὶ τῇ ἐρμηνευθείσῃ, καθάπερ ἀδελφὰς μᾶλλον δ' ὡς μίαν καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔν τε τοῖς πράγμασι καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασι τεθήησιν καὶ προσκυνοῦσιν, οὐχ ἐρμηνέας ἐκείνους ἀλλ' ἱεροφάντας καὶ προφήτας προσαγορεύοντες, οἷς ἐξεγένετο συνδραμεῖν λογισμοῖς εἰλικρινέσι τῷ Μωυσέως καθαρωτάτῳ πνεύματι.

(41) διὸ καὶ μέχρι νῦν ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος ἑορτὴ καὶ πανήγυρις ἄγεται κατὰ τὴν Φάρον νῆσον, εἰς ἣν οὐκ Ἰουδαῖοι μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ παμπληθεῖς ἕτεροι διαπλέουσι τό τε | χωρίον σεμνουῦντες, ἐν ᾧ πρῶτον τὰ τῆς ἐρμηνείας ἐξέλαμψε, καὶ παλαιᾶς ἕνεκεν εὐεργεσίας ἀεὶ νεαζούσης εὐχαριστήσοντες τῷ θεῷ.

(39) For, just as in geometry and logic, so it seems to me, the sense indicated does not admit of variety in the expression which remains unchanged in its original form, so these writers, as it clearly appears, arrived at a wording which corresponded with the matter, and alone, or better than any other, would bring out clearly what was meant.

(40) The clearest proof of this is that, if Chaldeans have learned Greek, or Greeks Chaldean, and read both versions, the Chaldean and the translation, they regard them with awe and reverence as sisters, or rather one and the same, both in matter and words, and speak of the authors not as translators but as prophets and priests of the mysteries, whose sincerity and singleness of thought has enabled them to go hand in hand with the purest of spirits, the spirit of Moses. |

(41) Therefore, even to the present day, there is held every year a feast and general assembly in the island of Pharos, whither not only Jews but multitudes of others cross the water, both to do honour to the place in which the light of that version first shone out, and also to thank God for the good gift so old yet ever young.

Text 10: Philo's *De Confusione Linguarum* 9-13

Translation: Colson & Whitaker 1932

(9) Ὁ δ' ἐγγυτέρω τάληθοῦς προσάγων τὸν λόγον τὰ ἄλογα τῶν λογικῶν διέζευξεν, ὡς ἀνθρώποις μόνοις μαρτυρῆσαι τὸ ὁμόφωνον. ἔστι δέ, ὡς γέ φασι, καὶ τοῦτο μυθῶδες. καὶ μὴν τὴν γε φωνῆς εἰς μυρίας διαλέκτων ἰδέας τομῆν, ἣν καλεῖ γλώττης σύγχυσιν, ἐπὶ θεραπείᾳ λέγουσιν ἀμαρτημάτων συμβῆναι, ὡς μηκέτ' ἀλλήλων ἀκρώμενοι κοινῇ συναδικῶσιν, ἀλλὰ τρόπον τινὰ [ἄλλοι] ἀλλήλοις κεκωφωμένοι * * * κατὰ συμπράξεις ἐγχειρῶσι τοῖς αὐτοῖς.

(10) τὸ δὲ οὐκ ἐπ' ὠφελείᾳ φαίνεται συμβῆναι· καὶ γὰρ αὐθις οὐδὲν ἦττον κατὰ ἔθνη διωκισμένων καὶ μὴ μιᾶ διαλέκτω χρωμένων γῆ καὶ θάλαττα πολλάκις ἀμυθήτων κακῶν ἐπληρώθη. οὐ γὰρ αἱ φωναί, ἀλλὰ αἱ ὁμότροποι τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς τὸ ἀμαρτάνειν ζηλώσεις τοῦ συναδικεῖν αἴτιαι·

(11) καὶ γὰρ οἱ ἐκτετμημένοι γλώτταν νεύμασι καὶ βλέμμασι καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις τοῦ σώματος σχέσεσι καὶ κινήσεσιν οὐχ ἦττον τῆς διὰ λόγων προφορᾶς ἃ ἂν θελήσωσιν ὑποσημαίνουσι· χωρὶς τοῦ καὶ ἔθνος ἐν πολλάκις οὐχ ὁμόφωνον μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁμόνομον καὶ ὁμοδίαιτον τοσοῦτον ἐπιβῆναι κακίας, ὥστε τοῖς ἀνθρώπων ἀπάντων ἀμαρτήμασιν ἰσοστάσια δύνασθαι πλημμελεῖν·

(12) ἀπειρία τε διαλέκτων μυριοὶ πρὸς τῶν ἐπιτιθεμένων οὐ προῖδόμενοι τὸ μέλλον προκατελήφθησαν, ὡς ἔμπαλιν ἐπιστήμη τοὺς ἐπικρεμασθέντας ἴσχυσαν φόβους τε καὶ κινδύνους ἀπώσασθαι· ὥστε λυσιτελεῖς μᾶλλον ἢ βλαβερὸν εἶναι τὴν ἐν διαλέκτοις κοινωνίαν, ἐπεὶ καὶ μέχρι νῦν οἱ καθ' ἐκάστην χώραν, καὶ μάλιστα τῶν¹

(9) Now Moses, say the objectors, brings his story nearer to reality and makes a distinction between reasoning and unreasoning creatures, so that the unity of language for which he vouches applies to men only. Still even this, they say, is mythical. They point out that the division of speech into a multitude of different kinds of language, which Moses calls "Confusion of tongues," is in the story brought about as a remedy for sin, to the end that men should no longer through mutual understanding be partners in iniquity, but be deaf (put to silence) in a sense to each other and thus cease to act together to effect the same purposes.

(10) But no good result appears to have been attained by it. For all the same after they had been separated into different nations and no longer spoke the same tongue, land and sea were constantly full of innumerable evil deeds. For it is not the utterances of men but the presence of the same cravings for sin in the soul which causes combination in wrongdoing.

(11) Indeed men who have lost their tongue by mutilation do by means of nods and glances and the other attitudes and movements of the body indicate their wishes as well as the uttered word can do it. Besides a single nation in which not only language but laws and modes of life are identical often reaches such a pitch of wickedness that its misdeeds can balance the sins of the whole of mankind.

(12) Again multitudes through ignorance of other languages have failed to foresee the impending danger, and thus been caught unawares by the attacking force, while on the contrary such a knowledge has enabled them to repel the alarms and dangers which menaced them. The conclusion is that the possession of a common language does more good than harm—a conclusion

<p>αὐτοχθόνων, δι' οὐδὲν οὕτως ὡς διὰ τὸ ὁμόγλωσσον ἀπαθεῖς κακῶν διατελοῦσι.</p> <p>(13) κἄν εἰ μέντοι τις ἀνὴρ πλείους ἀναμάθοι διαλέκτους, εὐδόκιμος εὐθύς παρὰ τοῖς ἐπισταμένοις ἐστὶν ὡς ἤδη φίλιος ὢν, οὐ βραχὺ γνῶρισμα κοινωνίας ἐπιφερόμενος τὴν ἐν τοῖς [407] ὀνόμασι συνήθειαν, ἀφ' ἧς τὸ ἀδεὲς εἰς τὸ μηδὲν ἀνήκεστον παθεῖν ἔοικε πεπορίσθαι. τί οὖν ὡς κακῶν αἴτιον τὸ ὁμόγλωπτον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἠφάνιζε, δέον ὡς ὠφελιμώτατον ἰδρῦσθαι;</p>	<p>confirmed by all past experience which shews that in every country, particularly where the population is indigenous, nothing has kept the inhabitants so free from disaster as uniformity of language.</p> <p>(13) Further the acquisition of languages other than his own at once gives a man a high standing with those who know and speak them. They now consider him a friendly person, who brings no small evidence of fellow-feeling in his familiarity with their vocabulary, since that familiarity seems to render them secure against the chance of meeting any disastrous injury at his hands. Why then, they ask, did God wish to deprive mankind of its universal language as though it were a source of evil, when He should rather have established it firmly as a source of the utmost profit?</p>
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Text 11: Philo's *De Confusione Linguarum* 190-192

Translation: Colson & Whitaker 1932

<p>(190) ταῦτα μὲν ἡμεῖς, οἱ δὲ τοῖς ἐμφανέσι καὶ προχείροις μόνον ἐπακολουθοῦντες οἴονται νυνὶ γένεσιν διαλέκτων Ἑλληνικῶν τε καὶ βαρβάρων ὑπογράφεσθαι· οὓς οὐκ ἂν αἰτιασάμενος—ἴσως γὰρ ἀληθεῖ καὶ αὐτοὶ χρῶνται λόγῳ—παρακαλέσαιμ' ἂν μὴ ἐπὶ τούτων στήναι, μετελθεῖν δὲ ἐπὶ τὰς τροπικὰς ἀποδόσεις, νομίσαντας τὰ μὲν ῥητὰ τῶν χρησμῶν σκιάς τινὰς ὡσανεὶ σωμάτων εἶναι, τὰς δ' ἐμφαινομένας δυνάμεις τὰ ὑφεστῶτα ἀληθείᾳ πράγματα.</p> <p>(191) δίδωσι μέντοι πρὸς τοῦτ' ἀφορμὰς τὸ εἶδος τοῖς μὴ τυφλοῖς διάνοιαν ὁ νομοθέτης αὐτός, ὡς περ ἀμέλει καὶ ἐφ' ὧν νῦν ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος· τὸ γὰρ γινόμενον σύγχυσιν προσεῖπε. καίτοι γε εἰ διαλέκτων</p>	<p>(190) This, now, is our opinion upon and interpretation of this passage. But they who follow only what is plain and easy, think that what is here intended to be recorded, is the origin of the languages of the Greeks and barbarians, whom, without blaming them (for, perhaps, they also put a correct interpretation on the transaction), I would exhort not to be content with stopping at this point, but to proceed onward to look at the passage in a figurative way, considering that the mere words of the scriptures are, as it were, but shadows of bodies, and that the meanings which are apparent to investigation beneath them, are the real things to be pondered upon.</p> <p>(191) Accordingly, this lawgiver usually gives a handle for this doctrine to those who are not utterly blind in their intellect; as in fact he does in his account of this very event, which we are now discussing: for he</p>
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γένεσιν αὐτὸ μόνον ἐδήλου, κὰν ὄνομα εὐθυβολώτερον ἐπεφήμισεν ἀντὶ συγχύσεως διάκρισιν· οὐ γὰρ συγχεῖται τὰ τεμνόμενα, διακρίνεται δ' ἔμπαλιν, καὶ ἔστιν οὐ μόνον ἐναντίον ὄνομα ὀνόματι, ἀλλ' ἔργον ἔργῳ.

(192) σύγχυσις μὲν γὰρ, ὡς ἔφην, ἐστὶ φθορὰ τῶν ἀπλῶν δυνάμεων εἰς συμπεφορημένης μιᾶς γένεσιν, διάκρισις δὲ ἐνὸς εἰς πλείω τομῆ, καθάπερ ἐπὶ γένους καὶ τῶν κατ' αὐτὸ εἰδῶν ἔχειν συντέτευχεν. ὥστε εἰ μίαν οὔσαν φωνὴν ἐκέλευσε τέμνειν ὁ σοφὸς εἰς πλειόνων διαλέκτων τμήματα, προσεχεστέροις ἂν καὶ κυριωτέροις ἐχρήσατο τοῖς ὀνόμασι, τομὴν ἢ διανέμησιν ἢ διάκρισιν ἢ τι ὁμοιότροπον εἰπὼν, οὐ τὸ μαχόμενον αὐτοῖς, σύγχυσιν.

has called what took place, confusion; and yet, if he had only intended to speak of the origin of languages, he would have given a more felicitous name, and one of better omen, calling it division instead of confusion; for things that are divided, are not confused, but, on the contrary, are distinguished from one another, and not only is the one name contrary to the other, but the one fact is contrary to the other fact.

(192) For confusion, as I have already said, is the destruction of simple powers for the production of one concrete power; but division is the dissection of one thing into many parts, as is the case when one distinguishes a genus into its subordinate species so that, if the wise God had ordered his ministers to divide language, which was previously only one, into the divisions of several dialects, he would have used more appropriate expressions, which should have given a more accurate idea of the case: calling what he did, dissection, or distribution, or division, or something of that kind, but not confusion, a name which is at variance with all of them.

Text 12: Philo's *De Confusione Linguarum* 195-198

Translation: Colson & Whitaker 1932

(195) ἔγνω γὰρ ὁ τεχνίτης, ὅτι τὸ μὴ ἀκούειν ἕκαστον τούτων τῆς τοῦ πλησίον φωνῆς λυσιτελέες ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν τῆς ψυχῆς μέρη ταῖς οἰκείαις δυνάμεσιν ἀσυγχύτοις χρῆσθαι πρὸς τὴν τῶν ζώων ὠφέλειαν καὶ τὴν πρὸς ἄλληλα κοινωνίαν ἀφηρῆσθαι, τὰ δὲ τῆς κακίας εἰς <σύ>χυσιν καὶ φθορὰν ἀχθῆναι παντελεῖ, ἵνα μήτε συμφωνήσαντα μήτε καθ' ἑαυτὰ ὄντα ζημία τοῖς ἀμείνοσι γένηται.

(195) For the great Contriver knew that it was well for them that none should hear the voice of his neighbour. He willed rather in the interests of animal life, that each part of the living organism should have the use of its own particular powers without confusion with others, and that fellowship of part with part should be withdrawn from them, while on the other hand the parts of vice should be brought into confusion and complete annihilation, so that neither in unison nor separately by themselves should they become a source of injury to their betters.

(196) Παρὸ καὶ λέγει· “διέσπειρεν αὐτοὺς κύριος ἐκεῖθεν,” ἐν ἴσω τῷ ἐσκέδασεν, ἐφυγάδευσεν, ἀφανεῖς ἐποίησε· τὸ γὰρ σπείρειν <ἀγαθῶν, κακῶν δὲ αἷτιον τὸ διασπείρειν>, ὅτι τὸ μὲν ἐπιδόσεως καὶ αὐξήσεως καὶ γενέσεως ἐτέρων ἕνεκα συμβαίνει, τὸ δ’ ἀπωλείας καὶ φθορᾶς. βούλεται δὲ ὁ [435]φυτουργὸς θεὸς σπείρειν μὲν ἐν τῷ παντὶ | καλοκάγαθίαν, διασπείρειν δὲ καὶ ἐλαύνειν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου πολιτείας τὴν ἐπάρατον ἀσέβειαν, ἵν’ ἤδη ποτὲ παύσωνται τὴν κακίας πόλιν καὶ τὸν ἀθεότητος πύργον οἰκοδομοῦντες μισάρετοι τρόποι.

(197) τούτων γὰρ σκεδασθέντων οἱ πάλαι πεφευγότες τὴν τυραννίδα τῆς ἀφροσύνης ἐνὶ κηρύγματι κάθοδον εὐρήσουσι, γράψαντός τε καὶ βεβαιώσαντος <θεοῦ> τὸ κήρυγμα, ὡς δηλοῦσιν οἱ χρησμοί, ἐν οἷς διείρηται ὅτι “ἐὰν ἧ ἡ διασπορά σου ἀπ’ ἄκρου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἕως ἄκρου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἐκεῖθεν συνάξει σε”·

(198) ὥστε τὴν μὲν ἀρετῶν συμφωνίαν ἐμπρεπὲς ἀρμόζεσθαι θεῷ, τὴν δὲ κακιῶν¹ διαλύειν τε καὶ φθείρειν. οἰκειότατον δὲ κακίας ὄνομα σύγχυσις· οὗ πῖστις ἐναργῆς πᾶς ἄφρων, λόγοις καὶ βουλαῖς καὶ πράξεσιν ἀδοκίμοις καὶ πεφορημέναις χρώμενος.

(196) That is why he adds—The Lord dispersed them thence (Gen. xi. 8), that is He caused them to be scattered, to be fugitives, to vanish from sight. For while sowing is the cause of good, dispersing or sowing broadcast is the cause of ill. The purpose of the first is to improve, to increase, to create something else; the purpose of the second is to ruin and destroy. But God the Master-planter wills to sow noble living throughout the All, and to disperse and banish from the Commonwealth of the world the impiety which He holds accursed. Thus the evil ways which hate virtue may at last cease to build the city of vice and the tower of godlessness.

(197) For when these are scattered, those who have been living in exile for many a day under the ban of folly’s tyranny, shall receive their recall under a single proclamation, even the proclamation enacted and ratified by God, as the oracles shew, in which it is declared that “if thy dispersion be from one end of heaven to the other he shall gather thee from thence” (Deut. xxx. 4).

(198) Thus it is a work well-befitting to God to bring into full harmony the consonance of the virtues, but to dissipate and destroy the consonance of vices. Yes, confusion is indeed a most proper name for vice, and a standing evidence of this is every fool, whose words and purposes and deeds alike are worthless and unstable.

Text 13: Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 6

Translation: Jacobson 1996

<p>(1) Tunc hi omnes qui divisi erant habitantes terram, postea congregati habitaverunt simul. Et profecti ab oriente invenerunt campum in terra Babilonis, et habitantes ibi dixerunt quique ad proximum suum: Ecce futurum est ut dispergamur unusquisque a fratre suo, et in novissimis diebus alterutrum erimus expugnantes nos. Nunc ergo venite et edificemus nobismetipsis turrim, cuius caput erit usque ad celum, et faciemus nobis nomen et gloriam super terram.</p> <p>(2) Et dixerunt unusquisque ad proximum suum: Accipiamus lapides et scribamus singuli quique nomina nostra in lapidibus et incendamus eos igne, et erit quod perustum fuerit in luto et latere.</p> <p>(3) Et acceperunt singuli quique lapides suos, extra viros duodecim qui noluerunt accipere. Et hec nomina eorum: Abram, Nachor, Loth, Ruge, Tenute, Zaba, Armodat, Iobab, Esar, Abimahel, Saba, Augin.</p> <p>(4) Et comprehendit eos populus terre et adduxerunt eos ad principes suos, et dixerunt: Hi sunt viri qui transgressi sunt consilia nostra et nolunt ambulare in viis nostris. Et dixerunt ad eos duces: Quare nolulistis mittere singuli quique lapides cum populo terre? Et illi responderunt dicentes: Non mittimus vobiscum lapides, nec coniungimur voluntati vestre. Unum Dominum novimus, et ipsum adoramus. Et si nos mittatis in ignem cum lapidibus vestris, non consentiemus vobis.</p> <p>(5) Et irati duces dixerunt: Sicut locuti sunt, sic eis facite. Et nisi consenserint vobiscum mittere lapides, consumetis eos igne cum lapidibus vestris.</p> <p>(6) Et respondit lectan, qui erat primus princeps ducum: Non sic, sed dabitur eis spacium dierum septem, et erit si penituerint super consiliis suis pessimis, et</p>	<p>(1) Then all those who had been separated while inhabiting the earth afterwards gathered and dwelled together. Setting out from the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylon. They dwelled there and said to each other, "Behold, it will come about that we will be scattered from each other and in later times we will be fighting each other. Therefore, come now, let us build for ourselves a tower whose top will reach the heavens, and we will make for ourselves a name and a glory upon the earth."</p> <p>(2) They said to each other, "Let us take bricks and let each of us write our names on the bricks and burn them with fire; and what will be burned will serve as mortar and brick."</p> <p>(3) They each took their own bricks, aside from twelve men who refused to take them. These are their names: Abram, Nahor, Lot, Ruge, Tenute, Zaba, Armodat, Jobab, Esar, Abimahel, Saba, Augin.</p> <p>(4) The people of that land seized them and brought them to their chiefs and said, "These are the men who have violated our plans and refuse to walk in our ways." The leaders said to them, "Why were you not willing, every one of you, to contribute bricks together with the people of the land?" Those men answered and said, "We are not contributing bricks with you, nor are we joining in your wishes. We know only the Lord, and him we worship. Even if you throw us into the fire with your bricks, we will not assent to you."</p> <p>(5) The leaders were angered and said, "As they have spoken, so do to them. Unless they agree to contribute bricks with you, burn them in the fire together with your bricks."</p> <p>(6) Joktan, who was the chief of the leaders, answered, "Not so, but a period of seven days will be given them, and if they repent their evil plans and are willing to contribute</p>
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voluerint vobiscum mittere lapides, vivant. Si quominus, fiat et secundum sententiam vestram tunc comburantur. Ipse autem querebat quemadmodum salvaret eos de manibus populi, quoniam de tribu eorum erat et Deo serviebat.

(7) Et his dictis, suscepit eos et inclusit in domo regia. Et ut facta est vespera, precepit dux L viros potentes in virtute vocari ad se, et dixit eis: Proficiscimini et accipite hac nocte viros istos qui inclusi sunt in domo mea, et imponite stipendia eorum de domo mea super decem iumenta; et ipsos viros adducite ad me, et stipendia eorum cum iumentis adducite in montana, et sustinete eos ibidem. Et scitote quia, si quis scierit que dixi ad vos, igni vos concremabo.

(8) Et profecti viri fecerunt omnia que precepit eis princeps eorum. Et adduxerunt viros a domo eius nocte, et accipientes stipendia eorum imposuerunt iumentis, et duxerunt in montana sicut precepit eis.

(9) Et vocavit ad se princeps illos duodecim viros, et dixit ad eos: Confidentes estote et non timeatis, non enim moriemini. Fortis est enim Deus in quo confiditis; et ideo stabiles estote in ipso, quia liberabit et salvabit vos. Et ecce nunc precepi L viris qui vos educant, acceptis stipendiis de domo mea. Et precedite in montana et sustinete vos in valle, et alios vobis dabo L viros qui deducant vos usque illuc. Et euntes abscondite vos ibidem in valle, habentes aquam in potu defluentem de petris, et continete vos usque in dies triginta, donec pauset animositas populi terre, et quousque Deus mittat iracundiam super illos et dirumpat eos. Scio enim quia non permanebit consilium iniquitatis quod consiliati sunt facere, quoniam vana est cogitatio eorum. Et erit, cum consummati fuerint septem dies et quesierint vos, dicam eis: Exeuntes effracto ostio carceris, in quo erant inclusi, fugerunt nocte, et misi ego

bricks with you, they may live. If not, let it be done, let them be burned then in accord with your judgment." He, however, was seeking a way to save them from the hands of the people, since he was of their tribe and served God.

(7) After saying this, he took them and shut them in the royal house. When evening came, the leader ordered that fifty mighty warriors be summoned to him, and he said to them, "Go forth and take tonight those men who are shut up in my house, and put provisions for them from my house on ten pack-animals. The men themselves bring to me, but bring their provisions with the pack-animals to the mountains and await them there. Be aware that, if anyone learns what I have said to you, I will burn you in the fire."

(8) The men went forth and did everything that their chief had commanded them. They brought the men from his house at night, and they took their provisions and put them on the pack-animals and took them to the mountains as he had ordered them.

(9) The chief summoned to himself those twelve men and said to them, "Be confident and do not fear, for you will not die. For God in whom you trust is mighty, and therefore be secure in him, for he will free and save you. But now, behold, I commanded the fifty men to bring you forth, after taking provisions from my house, and to go ahead into the mountains and wait for you in the valley. Fifty other men I will give you to bring you all the way there. Go and hide yourselves in the same place in the valley; you will have water to drink that flows from the rocks. Keep yourselves there for thirty days, until the anger of the people of the land ceases and until God sends his wrath upon them and breaks them. For I know that the evil plan that they have planned to accomplish will not stand, because their devising is futile. When the seven days are complete and they will look for you, I will say to them,

centum viros qui eos quererent; et avocabo eos a presenti furore.

(10) Et responderunt ad eum undecim viri dicentes: Invenerunt gratiam servi tui ante oculos tuos, quia solvimur nos de manibus superborum horum.

(11) Abram autem solus tacuit. Et dixit dux ad eum: Quare non respondes mihi Abram serve Dei? Respondit Abram et dixit: Ecce ego fugio hodie in montana et, si evasero ignem, exient de montibus fere bestie et comedent nos, aut esce nobis deficient et moriemur fame, et inveniatur fugientes ante populum terre, cadentes in peccatis nostris. Et nunc vivit in quo confido, quia non movebor de loco meo in quo posuerunt me. Et si fuerit aliquod peccatum meum ut consumens consumar, fiat voluntas Dei. Et dixit ad eum dux: Sanguis tuus super caput tuum sit, si nolueris proficisci cum istis. Si autem volueris, liberaberis; nam si volueris remanere, secundumquod vis remane. Et dixit Abram: Non proficiscar, sed hic ero.

(12) Et accepit dux undecim illos viros, et alios L misit cum eis, et precepit eis dicens: Expectate et vos in montanis usque in dies quindecim cum illis L qui premissi sunt, et post revertimini et dicetis: Non invenimus eos, sicut illis prioribus dixi; et sciatis quia, si quis preterierit ex his omnibus verbis que locutus sum ad vos, igne comburetur. Et profectis viris, accipiens Abram solum recludit eum ubi fuerat inclusus.

(13) Et transactis diebus septem congregatus est populus, et dixerunt ad ducem suum dicentes: Redde nobis viros qui noluerunt consiliari nobiscum, et comburemus eos igni. Et miserunt duces qui adducerent eos, et non invenerunt nisi

'The door of the prison in which they were locked up broke and they went out. They escaped by night. I have sent a hundred men to search for them.' And I will turn them from the anger that is upon them."

(10) Eleven of the men answered him and said, "Your servants have found favor in your eyes, in that we are rescued from the hands of these arrogant men."

(11) But Abram alone was silent. The leader said to him, "Why do you not answer me, Abram servant of God?" Abram answered and said, "Behold, today I flee to the mountains. If I have escaped the fire, wild beasts will come forth from the mountains and devour us; or we will lack food and die of famine. We will be found to have escaped the people of the land, but to have fallen because of our sins. And now, as surely as God in whom I trust lives, I will not move from my place where they have put me. If there be any sin of mine such that I should be burned, let the will of God be done." And the leader said to him, "Your blood be upon your head if you refuse to go forth with these men. If however you are willing, you will be saved; but if you wish to stay, stay as you wish." And Abram said, "I will not go forth, but I will stay here."

(12) The leader took those eleven men, sent another fifty with them and commanded them, saying, "You also wait in the mountains for fifteen days with those fifty who were sent on ahead; afterwards, come back and say, 'We have not found them,' as I told the former group. And be aware that if anyone disregards any of all these words that I have spoken to you, he will be burned by fire." After the men set out, he took Abram by himself and shut him up again where he had been shut up.

(13) When seven days had passed, the people assembled and spoke to their leader, "Deliver to us the men who refused to join in our plan, and we will burn them in the fire." The leaders sent men to bring them, but they found no one except Abram

solum Abram. Et congregati omnes ad duces suos dixerunt: Fugierunt homines quos inclusistis, evadentes consilium nostrum.

(14) Et dixit Fenech et Nembroth ad lectan: Ubi sunt viri quos inclusisti? At ille dixit: Frangentes fregerunt noctu; ego autem misi centum viros qui quererent eos, et precepi ut, si invenirent eos, non tantum igni concremarent, sed et corpora eorum darent volatilibus celi, et sic perdant illos.

(15) Et tunc dixerunt illi: Hunc ergo qui inventus est solus concrememus. Et acceperunt Abram et adduxerunt eum ad duces suos. Et dixerunt ad eum: Ubi sunt qui tecum fuerunt? Et ille dixit: Ego nocte dormiens dormiebam; ubi expergefactus sum, non inveni eos.

(16) Et accipientes eum, construxerunt caminum et incenderunt eum igni, et lapides concrematos igni miserunt in caminum. Et tunc lectan dux liquefactus sensu accepit Abram et misit eum cum lateribus in caminum ignis.

(17) Deus autem commovit terremotum grandem, et ebulliens ignis de camino exilivit in flammam et scintillas flamme, et combussit omnes circumstantes in conspectu camini. Et fuerunt omnes qui concremati sunt in die illa LXXXIIIIMD. Abrae autem non est nec modica facta leura in concrematione ignis.

(18) Et surrexit Abram de camino, et concidit caminum ignis. Et salvatus est Abram, et abiit ad undecim viros qui erant absconditi in montanis, et renunciavit eis omnia que contigerant illi. Et descenderunt cum eo de montanis gaudentes in nomine Domini, et nemo eos obvisans teruit die illa. Et cognominaverunt locum illum nomine Abrae et lingue Chaldeorum Deli, quod interpretatur Deus.

alone. All of them gathered before their leaders and said, "The men whom you locked up have fled and have evaded our plan."

(14) Fenech and Nimrod said to Joktan, "Where are the men whom you locked up?" But he said, "They broke out at night. But I have sent a hundred men to search for them and instructed them that, if they find them, they should not only burn them in fire but also give their corpses to the birds of the heavens; let them destroy them in this way."

(15) Then those men said, "This one who alone has been found, let us burn him." They took Abram and brought him to their leaders. They said to him, "Where are the men who were with you?" He said, "I was asleep during the night; when I awoke, they were not there."

(16) They took him and built a furnace and lit it with fire. They threw the bricks into the furnace to be fired. Then the leader Joktan, dismayed, took Abram and threw him with the bricks into the fiery furnace.

(17) But God stirred up a great earthquake, and burning fire leaped forth out of the furnace into flames and sparks of flame, and it burned up all those standing around in front of the furnace. All those who were consumed in that day were 83,500. But there was not even the slightest injury to Abram from the burning of the fire.

(18) Abram arose out of the furnace, and the fiery furnace collapsed. And Abram was saved and went off to the eleven men who had been hiding in the mountains, and he told them everything that had happened to him. They went down with him from the mountains, rejoicing in the name of the Lord. No one who met them frightened them that day. They named that place after the name of Abram and in the language of the Chaldeans "Deli," which means "God."

Text 14: Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 7

Translation: Jacobson 1996

<p>(1) Et factum est post hec verba, populus terre non conversus est a cogitationibus suis malignis, et convenerunt iterum ad duces et dixerunt: In secula non vincetur populus. Et nunc conveniemus et edificemus nobis civitatem et turrim que numquam auferatur.</p> <p>(2) Et cum cepissent fabricare, vidit Deus civitatem et turrim quam fabricabant filii hominum, et dixit: Ecce populus unus et lingua una omnibus,¹ et hoc quod ceperunt facere, non sustinebit terra neque celum videns patietur. Et erit ut, si modo non prohibeantur, in omnia audeant que presumpserint facere.</p> <p>(3) Et ideo ecce ego dividam linguas eorum et dispergam eos in omnes regiones, ut non cognoscat unusquisque fratrem suum, nec audiant singuli quique linguam proximi sui. Et commendabo eos petris, et edificabunt sibi tabernacula in calamis stipularum, et effodient sibi speluncas et quemadmodum fere campi habitabunt ibi. Et sic erunt ante conspectum meum in omni tempore ut numquam cogitent hec, et tamquam stillicidium arbitror eos, et in sputo approximabo eos, et aliis in aqua fms veniet, alii autem siti siccabuntur.</p> <p>(4) Et ante omnes hos eligam puerum meum Abram, et eiciam eum de territorio eorum, et adducam in terram quam respexit oculus meus ab initio. Cum peccaverunt ante conspectum meum omnes inhabitantes terram et adduxi aquam diluvii, et non exterminavi eam sed conservavi illam. Non enim dirupti sunt in illa fontes ire mee, neque descendit in ea aqua consummationis mee. Ibi enim faciam inhabitare puerum meum Abram, et disponam testamentum meum cum eo, et semini eius benedicam, et dominabor ei Deus in eternum.</p>	<p>(1) After these events the people of the land did not turn from their evil thoughts and they came together again to their leaders and said, "Let not the people ever be defeated. And now let us come together and build ourselves a city and a tower that will never be taken away."</p> <p>(2) When they had begun to build, God saw the city and the tower that the sons of men were building, and he said, "Behold they are one people and there is one language for all. As for what they have begun to do, upon seeing it neither will the earth endure nor will the heavens hold out. If they are not restrained now, they will be daring in all the things they propose to do.</p> <p>(3) Therefore, behold, I will divide up their languages and scatter them into all regions so that one man will not recognize the other nor will people understand each other's language. I will assign them to the cliffs, and they will build for themselves abodes in nests of stalks and will dig caves for themselves and live there like the beasts of the field. And so they will be before me all the time, so that they will never make such plots, and I will consider them like a drop of water and liken them to spittle. For some the end will come by water, but others will dry up from thirst.</p> <p>(4) In preference to all these I will choose my servant Abram, and I will bring him out from their land and will bring him into the land upon which my eye has looked from the beginning. When all the inhabitants of the earth sinned before me and I brought the waters of the flood, I did not destroy it but preserved it. For neither did the fountains of my anger burst forth in it, nor did the waters of my wrath descend on it. There I will settle my servant Abram and I will establish my covenant with him and will bless his seed and be called by him the eternal God."</p>
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(5) Populi autem inhabitantes terram cum initiassent edificare turrim, divisit Deus linguas eorum, et mutavit eorum effigies, et non cognovit unusquisque fratrem suum, nec audiebant singuli quique linguam proximi sui. Et sic factum est ut, dum edificatores ministris suis iuberent affere lapides, illi afferrent aquam. et si deposcerent aquam, illi afferrent stipulam, et sic intercisa cogitatione eorum cessaverunt edificare civitatem. Et dispersit eos Dominus inde super faciem totius terre. Et propterea vocatum est nomen loci illius Confusio, quoniam ibi Deus confudit linguas eorum, et inde dispersit eos in faciem totius terre.

(5) When the people inhabiting the earth had begun to build the tower, God divided up their languages and changed their appearances, and so they did not recognize each other nor did they understand each other's language. And so, when the builders would order their assistants to bring bricks, those would bring water; and if they requested water, they would bring straw. Thus, their plan was broken, and they stopped building the city. The Lord scattered them from there over the face of all the earth. For this reason the name of that place was called "Babel," because there God confounded their languages and from there scattered them over the face of all the earth.