# DEFENDING MULTILINGUAL GALILEE FROM ITS LITERARY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBJECTIONS

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## *Introduction*

In his two influential monographs,[1] contrary to the assumptions of many New Testament scholars, Mark A. Chancey argues that there are several problems with the claim that Greek was widely used in Galilee. He derives such a conclusion by combining archaeological evidence and textual notices from ancient Palestine. Based on the evidence established by this approach, he suggests that the absence of early Greek artifacts and Greco-Roman architecture in the region indicates that the majority of first-century Galileans were Jews. Consequently, Chancey asserts that the native language of the Galilean population must have been Aramaic.[2] He also contends that those who argue that Greek was commonly utilized in Galilee make two methodological errors in handling the available linguistic evidence: the use of archaeological data from all over Israel to make conclusions about Galilee is

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   1.     Mark A. Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee: The Population of Galilee and New Testament Studies* (SNTSMS, 118; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); *idem*, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (SNTSMS, 134; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 122-65.

   2.     Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee*, pp. i, 4, 182; *idem*, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus*, p. 165.

flawed,[3] and the use of artifacts (i.e. inscriptions, ossuaries, rabbinic materials) from different centuries and from other parts of Israel to draw conclusions about first-century Galilee is not acceptable.[4] In sum, Chancey rejects a multilingual Galilee based on two grounds: (1) the incorrect use of artifacts and (2) the absence of Hellenistic archaeological evidence in Galilee.

As I have pointed out elsewhere,[5] Chancey has sought to properly evaluate to what extent Roman Galilee was Hellenized in the first century CE with a better methodological approach than that of the traditional approach. However, he did not go far enough—he fails to take into account the sociolinguistic dynamics that were almost certainly at play at the edge of the Gentile territory.[6] Since the sociolinguistic approach has been proven to be helpful in painting a more complete picture of one's linguistic ability,[7] Roman Galileans' linguistic ability cannot be determined from merely an archaeological or textual approach. There must be an interdisciplinary analysis that correlates archaeological materials, textual notices *and* sociolinguistic studies in order to elucidate the linguistic situation of Galileans. Thus, I view Chancey's methodology as an incomplete interpretive tool for validating the spoken language(s) in the first-century Galilean speech community.

In this article, I will further seek to argue for the multilingual Galilee, responding to Chancey's two criticisms mentioned above: (1) the incorrect use of artifacts and (2) the absence of Hellenistic archaeological evidence in Galilee. I will respond to the first objection by building an argument, based

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3.    Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture*, p. 124.

4.    Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture*, pp. 125-29.

5.    Sanghwan Lee, 'Reexamining the Greek-Speaking Ability of Peter in Light of a Sociolinguistic Perspective', *JGRChJ* 14 (2018), pp. 158-81 (160 n. 8, 167 n. 34).

6.    Stanley E. Porter, 'The Use of Greek in First-Century Palestine: A Diachronic and Synchronic Examination', *JGRChJ* 12 (2016), pp. 203-28 (224 n. 46) also correctly criticizes, 'Much of Chancey's argument relies too much on equating culture and language, without realizing the broader sociolinguistic patterns (he rejects sociolinguistics). His evidence shows a Greek trajectory but little evidence for Aramaic, which one might expect for his argument. The evidence for Greek in Galilee is clearly stronger than he admits.'

7.    For key developments in sociolinguistics, see Lee, 'Reexamining the Greek-Speaking Ability of Peter', pp. 161-62.

on Brian J. Wright's important but often neglected work,[8] for the presence of multilingualism in Galilee. I will then respond to the second objection by demonstrating Chancey's failure to evaluate several crucial evidences, namely the massive building projects of Herod the Great and the first- and second-century ossuaries that bear Greek inscriptions—in terms of their quantity *and* nature. Ultimately, I conclude that Chancey's use of these objections to argue for the Aramaic hypothesis does not stand.

### *A Response to the 'Incorrect Use of Artifacts' Objection*

Chancey argues that the use of artifacts from different centuries and from other parts of Israel to understand the linguistic situation in first-century Galilee is flawed.[9] He is correct in suggesting that the use of later material to shed light on an earlier period could result in historical anachronisms, especially when the destruction of Jerusalem (70 CE) and the arrival of the Roman legions (120 CE) are taken into account. As Chancey points out, these two historical events almost certainly helped propagate the use of Greek among Jews who resided in Galilee.[10]

However, a new crucial piece of literary evidence has recently been discovered: the reproduced historical speech (*ipsissima verba*) of the Galilean Jesus in the New Testament. Recently, Wright has demonstrated that Greek syntax can be utilized as a viable criterion for establishing the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus.[11] He investigates a rare classical construction—the aorist third-person negated imperative—that appears on the lips of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels.[12] This syntactical construction, according to Wright, is

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8.    Brian J. Wright, 'Greek Syntax as a Criterion of Authenticity: A New Discussion and Proposal', *CBQ* 74 (2012), pp. 84-100. See also *idem*, 'Ancient Literacy in New Testament Research: Incorporating a Few More Lines of Enquiry', *TJ* 36 (2015), pp. 161-89.

9.    Wright, 'Ancient Literacy in New Testament Research', p. 124.

10.    Wright, 'Ancient Literacy in New Testament Research', pp. 140-41.

11.    Wright, 'Greek Syntax as a Criterion of Authenticity', pp. 84-100. See also *idem*, 'Ancient Literacy in New Testament Research', pp. 179-81. Chancey's study was completed prior to Wright's works.

12.    As Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), p. 487 n. 99, notes, 'There are, by my count, only 8 instances of the aorist imperative in prohibitions,

neither widely attested nor unconventional.[13] Instead, it is 'always the least likely option statistically, grammatically, and literarily, eventually disappearing from the language altogether'.[14] Thus, it is highly probable that this construction preserves the *ipsissima verba* of the speaker. For example, Mt. 6.3, which contains the first occurrence of the aorist third-person negated imperative, is 'not rhythmic, repetitive, varied, provocative, aphoristic, chiastic, or symmetrical. Nor does it involve key words, phrases, or constructions.'[15] Yet, the textual tradition of Mt. 6.3 has been retained through oral and written transmission.[16] Wright proposes that this observation almost certainly indicates the authenticity of the sayings.

Wright provides several compelling arguments that further strengthen his assertion. Among them, two arguments stand out: (1) in every occurrence, canonical or otherwise, this construction arguably appears in the earliest form of the particular tradition (e.g. Greek manuscripts of the *Gospel of Thomas*; *Did*. 16.1),[17] and (2) every New Testament verse containing this construction has a direct noncanonical parallel (e.g. Mt. 6.3), multiple attestations (e.g. Lk. 17.31) or both (e.g. Mt. 6.3).[18] Based on this discovery, Wright concludes that Greek syntax is a viable criterion for establishing the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus.[19]

Wright's methodology is helpful for painting a more complete picture of the linguistic situation of Roman Galilee because it almost certainly reveals

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all with Jesus as the speaker (Matt 6:3; 24:17, 18; Mark 13:15 [*bis*], 16; Luke 17:31 [*bis*]). Such multiple attestation, coupled with the criterion of dissimilarity (in that no one else uses this morpho-syntactical convention) suggests that such sayings are authentic.'

13. Wright, 'Greek Syntax as a Criterion of Authenticity', p. 87.

14. Wright, 'Greek Syntax as a Criterion of Authenticity', p. 99. Wright also notes that there are other ways of expressing the same idea, and the syntactical construction is always the least likely option.

15. Wright, 'Greek Syntax as a Criterion of Authenticity', p. 91.

16. E.g. Greek manuscripts of the *Gospel of Thomas*; *Did*. 16.1.

17. April D. DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation: With a Commentary and New English Translation of the Complete Gospel* (LNTS, 287; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2006), p. 10, suggests that Mt. 6.3 is probably among '[the] oldest witnesses to the words of Jesus, perhaps even pre-dating *Quelle*'.

18. Wright, 'Greek Syntax as a Criterion of Authenticity', p. 99.

19. Wright, 'Greek Syntax as a Criterion of Authenticity', pp. 99-100.

the language of the locutor, interlocutors and writer of the Q document. The followings are three simple arguments that promote the historical reality of Greek-speaking Galileans, drawing from Wright's work. First, the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus preserved in the Gospels strongly indicate that Jesus, a Galilean carpenter, was able to speak Greek.[20] Secondly, since a conversation requires at least two parties (locutor and interlocutor), those who listened to the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus must have understood Greek. Thirdly, the members of the Galilean Q community who wrote down sayings of Jesus (in the 30s–40s) must have been able to write in Greek.[21] This evidence suggests that Greek was utilized by Galileans in the early first century. Here, I will concentrate particularly on the language exchange between Jesus and his listeners. Daniel B. Wallace points out that the rare classical

20.    It should be noted that Wright rejects Aramaic influence on or the origin of this particular syntactical construction for the following reason: 'Since there is no negated third person imperative in Aramaic, the Greek syntax here cannot possibly go back to a Semitic original that shares the same syntax' (Wright, 'Greek Syntax as a Criterion of Authenticity', p. 90). On the Greek-speaking ability of Jesus, see Hughson T. Ong, *The Multilingual Jesus and the Sociolinguistic World of the New Testament* (Linguistic Biblical Studies, 12; Leiden: Brill, 2015).

21.    The scholarly consensus is that the Q material originated in Galilee after the ministry of Jesus. See Ben Witherington III, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), p. 235; Helmut Koester, 'Jesus' Presence in the Early Church', *CNS* 15 (1994), pp. 541-57; John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 171; Jonathan L. Reed, 'The Social Map of Q', in John S. Kloppenborg (ed.), *Conflict and Invention: Literary, Rhetorical and Social Studies on the Sayings Gospel Q* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), pp. 17-36 (18); *idem*, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), pp. 187-89; William E. Arnal, *Jesus and the Village Scribes: Galilean Conflicts and the Setting of Q* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), pp. 97-193; James D.G. Dunn, *The Oral Gospel Tradition* (Grand Rapid: Eerdmans, 2013), pp. 205-54; Bradley W. Root, *First Century Galilee: A Fresh Examination of the Sources* (WUNT, 2.378; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), p. 60; Sarah E. Rollens, *Framing Social Criticism in the Jesus Movement: The Ideological Project in the Sayings Gospel Q* (WUNT, 2.374; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), p. 104; Ky-Chun So, *Jesus in Q: The Sabbath and Theology of the Bible and Extracanonical Texts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017), p. 158.

construction (i.e. the aorist third-person negated imperative) occurs in six
verses in the Gospels, all with Jesus as the locutor (Mt. 6.3; 24.17, 18; Mk
13.15 [*bis*], 16; Lk. 17.31 [*bis*]).[22] Importantly, two different groups of in-
terlocutors are traceable where the construction is used.

First, in Mt. 6.3, the locutor is Jesus and the interlocutors are the Galile-
an multitude. The larger context (Mt. 5.1–7.29) shows that the speech event
takes place in a public setting where Jesus teaches a mixed group. In a situa-
tion like this, Jesus would have putatively chosen a language that everybody
would have been able to comprehend for their pedagogical benefit—the *lin-
gua franca*, that is, Greek.[23] As seen, the circumstantial evidence (i.e. Jesus'
necessity of choosing Greek for his interlocutors) supports the syntactical
evidence (i.e. the aorist third-person negated imperative in Mt. 6.3), sug-
gesting that a Galilean carpenter was able to teach in Greek and that some
Galilean people were able to comprehend it. This argument can be pressed
further by taking into account the complex topics of Jesus' teachings. After
identifying various topics recorded in the Sermon on the Mount (5.1–
7.29),[24] Hughson T. Ong correctly notes, 'Jesus' teachings on these various
topics seem to indicate a high level of information content'.[25] If so, Jesus
was able not only to speak but also to teach complex topics in Greek. Of
course, the mixed Galilean crowd was at least able to understand the com-
plex topics that Jesus delivered in Greek.

Secondly, in the rest of the occurrences where the rare classical construc-
tion appears (Mt. 24.17, 18; Mk 13.15 [*bis*], 16; Lk. 17.31 [*bis*]), the locutor
is Jesus and the interlocutors are his disciples, most of whom were from
Galilee. According to Mt. 24.3, unlike Mt. 6.3, where the teaching of Jesus
takes a place in a public setting, the teaching in Mt. 24.17-18 takes place in
a highly personal and intimate setting: Καθημένου δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ Ὄρους
τῶν Ἐλαιῶν προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ κατ' ἰδίαν λέγοντες· Εἰπὲ ἡμῖν, πότε
ταῦτα ἔσται καὶ τί τὸ σημεῖον τῆς σῆς παρουσίας καὶ συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος;
('As he [Jesus] was sitting on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to
him privately and said, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what
will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"' [NET]). Hence,
the language that Jesus used in such a situation may provide a glimpse into

22. See n. 12 above.
23. Ong, *The Multilingual Jesus*, pp. 284-85.
24. Ong, *The Multilingual Jesus*, pp. 285-87.
25. Ong, *The Multilingual Jesus*, p. 287.

his daily language(s). This line of reasoning raises an important question as to why Jesus chose Greek over Hebrew or Aramaic as the language used to exchange his thoughts with his closest disciples in a personal and informal setting. The simplest and most suitable explanation for his choice of Greek is that some Galilean people, including Jesus, were comfortable enough with Greek to choose it as a means of communication in a familial setting. Of course, this observation assumes that some Galileans, including Jesus' disciples, were at least able to comprehend Greek.

Therefore, those who reject multilingualism in Galilee must provide an adequate answer to Wright's following question: '[I]f the use of Greek was confined to a limited segment of the population, namely, the elite, then what can explain Jesus' use of this construction or the nonelites' creation or retention of it?'[26] Since the textual tradition of Jesus' sayings was written in Greek and reflects a tradition of oral delivery, the simplest explanation is that Greek had some currency in Galilee. Having addressed Chancey's first objection, I proceed to tackle his second objection.

### *A Response to the 'Archaeological Absence in Galilee' Objection*

Chancey also asserts that the absence of pagan temples and gymnasia in Galilee suggests that the region's inhabitants were probably, for the most part, Jewish.[27] As he points out, it is doubtful that the Hellenistic evidence for Galilee was simply lost.[28] He then argues that it is fallacious to use archaeological finds from other locations in Israel to make conclusions about Galilee.[29] Chancey's observation seems to be compelling because Galilee was under the governance of Herod the Great (c. 37–4 BCE), a client-king who was widely recognized as a benefactor of many Greco-Roman building projects.[30] During his reign, he identified himself with Greco-Roman civilization and built Greek theaters and hippodromes in the Gentile cities that he governed. Thus, it naturally follows that evidence of pagan temples and

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26. Wright, 'Ancient Literacy in New Testament Research', p. 180.

27. Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee*, p. 50.

28. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture*, p. 150.

29. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture*, p. 124.

30. See Ehud Netzer, *The Architecture of Herod, the Great Builder* (TSAJ, 117; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

gymnasia would be present in Galilee if the inhabitants of the region were Gentiles. Based on the observation that pagan temples and gymnasia were *missing* from Galilee, Chancey argues that the Galilean population must have been primarily Jewish. Therefore, Aramaic would have been the primary language of the region.

However, the absence of more Greco-Roman architecture, I believe, does not necessarily reflect less Hellenization of a region when considering two important factors: (1) the massive building projects of Herod the Great and (2) the discovery of Greek inscriptions written on ossuaries. I now address these two topics in turn.

*The Massive Building Projects of Herod the Great*
The relatively lesser appearance of Hellenistic buildings in Galilee than in other areas is not an indicator of less Hellenization of the region, especially when Herod the Great's massive building projects of Caesarea Maritima and the Jerusalem Temple are taken into account.[31] In 22 BCE, Herod began

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31.   Ong, *The Multilingual Jesus*, p. 182. Numerous influential works on archaeological excavation in Galilee have been published since Chancey's work. The following works provide a good example of and shed different light on his archaeological objection against multilingual Galilee: Morten Hørning Jensen, *Herod Antipas in Galilee: The Literary and Archaeological Sources on the Reign of Herod Antipas and its Socio-Economic Impact on Galilee* (WUNT, 2.215; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2nd edn, 2006); David A. Fiensy, *Jesus the Galilean: Soundings in a First Century Life* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2007); S. Freyne, 'Galilean Studies: Old Issues and New Questions', in J.K. Zangenberg *et al.* (eds.), *Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity in Ancient Galilee: A Region in Transition* (WUNT, 210; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); Uzi Leibner, *Settlement and History in Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Galilee: An Archaeological Survey of the Eastern Galilee* (TSAJ, 127; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); Jürgen K. Zangenberg, 'Archaeological News from the Galilee: Tiberias, Magdala and Rural Galilee', *Early Christianity* 1 (2010), pp. 471-84; *idem*, 'Jesus der Galiläer und die Archäologie: Beobachtungen zur Bedeutung der Archäologie für die historische Jesusforschung', *MTZ* 64 (2013), pp. 123-56; Root, *First Century Galilee*; J. Andrew Overman, 'The Destruction of the Temple and the Conformation of Judaism and Christianity', in Peter J. Tomson and Joshua J. Schwartz (eds.), *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History* (CRINT, 13; Leiden: Brill, 2014); Richard Bauckham and Stefano De Luca, 'Magdala as We Know it', *Early Christianity* 6 (2015), pp. 91-118.

the construction of Caesarea Maritima,[32] which featured well-planned streets, an aqueduct, an amphitheater, an underground sewage system and a harbor.[33] The restoration and renovation of the Jerusalem Temple, the largest building site in the Greco-Roman world, was another ambitious engineering project undertaken by Herod.[34] Indeed, Herod invested large sums of money to establish the foundational work of his project. Due to the size of the projects, it is highly probable that Herod the Great would have allocated his resources to places that were more important than Galilee.[35] If so,

32. Josephus, *Ant.* 13.313.

33. Avner Raban, 'Caesarea', in Ephraim Stern (ed.), *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (5 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), I, pp. 270-91 (283-84); Eric M. Meyers and Mark A. Chancey, *Alexander to Constantine: Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, III (AYBRL; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 63; Everett Ferguson, 'The Herodian Dynasty', in Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (eds.), *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), pp. 57-76 (57); Robert J. Bull, 'Caesarea Maritima: The Search for Herod's City', *BAR* 8 (1982), pp. 24-40 (29); Josephus, *War* 1.408-414; Josephus, *Ant.* 15.331-341; 16.136-141.

34. Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew* (ZECNT, 1; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), p. 762. Cf. Josef Lössl, *The Early Church: History and Memory* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2010), p. 58; Sharon Rusten and E. Michael, *The Complete Book of When and Where in the Bible and throughout History* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2005), p. 67; Gary M. Burge *et al.*, *The New Testament In Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament within its Cultural Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), p. 68; David Instone-Brewer, 'Temple and Priesthood', in Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (eds.), *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), pp. 197-206 (198); Kathleen Ritmeyer and Leen Ritmeyer, 'Reconstructing Herod's Temple Mount in Jerusalem', *BAR* 15 (1989), pp. 23-48.

35. James H. Charlesworth, 'Did Jesus Know the Traditions in the Parables of Enoch?', in James H. Charlesworth and Darrell L. Bock (eds.), *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift* (Jewish and Christian Texts, 1; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2013), pp. 173-217 (183), suggests that Herod used Galilee as one of his monetary sources for his building projects without including it in his building projects. 'Most devastating to the Galilean farmers', he remarks, 'were the exorbitant taxations and confiscations of farms to fund Herod's massive, and impressive, building projects, including Caesarea Maritima, the Herodium, Masada, Jericho, Sebaste, Hyrcanium, the Temple, and the Antonian Fortress. Notably, he constructed no cities or

the absence of pagan temples and gymnasia in Galilee does not necessarily indicate that the population was largely Jewish or that Aramaic was the primary language of the region.

In addition, the presence of Jewish communities in Galilee can be interpreted differently than what Chancey asserts. Instead of taking the absence of pagan temples and gymnasia as an indication of an exclusively Jewish population, such an absence can be understood as allowing for a diverse population in Galilee. As Milton Moreland remarks, 'The archaeological and literary data point to a diverse population that lived in the region from the Persian to the Early Roman period ... The existence of Jewish ethnic markers in the region ... does not mandate a Judean origin for the majority of its in habitants during the ER period.'[36] Moreover, when the sociolinguistic dynamics of Galilee are taken into account, it is almost certain that Greek would have been the primary language of the Galileans.[37] In addition,

monuments in Galilee ... Thus, Herod financially drained Galilee to build up Sebaste, Caesarea Maritima, and most impressively Jerusalem and its environs.'

36.   Milton Moreland, 'The Inhabitants of Galilee, in the Hellenistic and Early Roman Periods: Probes into the Archaeological and Literary Evidence', in J. Zangenberg *et al.* (eds.), *Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity in Ancient Galilee: A Region in Transition* (WUNT, 210; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), pp. 133-59 (133-34). Cf. Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC–AD 135)* (ed. Geza Vermes *et al.*; 4 vols.; New York: T. & T. Clark, rev. edn, 2014), p. 13.

37.   Galilee was surrounded by multiple cities and sub-regions where the mixed populations were known to be proficient in Greek (i.e. Samaria, Tyre, Scythopolis, Ptolemais, the Decapolis, Phoenicia, the Golan and especially Sepphoris and Tiberias). Eric M. Meyers, 'Jesus and His Galilean Context', in Douglas R. Edwards and Christine Thomas McCollough (eds.), *Archaeology and the Galilee: Texts and Contexts in the Greco-Roman and Byzantine Periods* (SFSHJ; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), pp. 57-66 (58, 60); Joseph. M. Fitzmyer, 'The Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D.', *CBQ* 32 (1970), pp. 501-31; J.N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* (NovTSup, 19; Leiden: Brill, 1968), pp. 96-97; Eric M. Meyers and James F. Strange, *Archaeology, the Rabbis, and Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), pp. 38-47. Given the fact that Galilean Jews interacted with various Greek-speaking ethnic groups from neighboring and foreign towns, those towns 'must have been instrumental in the dissemination of Greek throughout Galilee', their inhabitants spreading Hellenistic influences 'even in the rural areas throughout

Herod the Great's Romanophilic tendencies, including the promotion of the Greek language, should not be ignored. It is important to realize not only that Greek was the *lingua franca* of the Roman world, but also that Herod made Greek the official language of the Palestinian government.[38] Thus, Galileans may have inherited the Greek language without being beneficiaries of Herod's building projects.[39] These observations indicate that there is no necessary connection between the absence of Greco-Roman buildings and the Aramaic hypothesis.

In addition, there is archaeological evidence that some pagan architectural structures were present near Galilee. As Marc Turnage points out, 'Herod ringed the Galilee with temples dedicated to the imperial cult and other

Galilee and Decapolis in the first century CE'. G. Scott Gleaves, *Did Jesus Speak Greek? The Emerging Dominance in First-Century Palestine* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2015), pp. 66, 71. Thus, the existence of different languages side by side, within close proximity of Greek, strongly suggests that the Greek culture and language made much more inroads into the life of Galilean Jews than Chancey wishes to accept. Scott D. Charlesworth, 'The Use of Greek in Early Roman Galilee: The Inscriptional Evidence Re-examined', *JSNT* 38 (2016), pp. 356-95 (356), provides a helpful note on the subject: 'Scholars must first understand the various kinds of ancient bilingualism, then look for indications of these, including (written) Greek literacy. Literary and other evidence, especially factors that might encourage bilingualism, such as the influence of the administrative cities of Sepphoris and Tiberias and the surrounding Hellenistic cities, the state of the Galilean economy, and rural-urban dynamics, can then help to fill in the gaps.' Cf. Marc Turnage, 'The Linguistic Ethos of the Galilee in the First Century C.E.', in Randall Buth and R. Steven Notley (eds.), *The Language Environment of First Century Judaea: Jerusalem Studies in the Synoptic Gospels—Volume Two* (Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series, 26; Jerusalem Studies in the Synoptic Gospels, 2; Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 110-82 (181).

38. Hughson T. Ong, 'Language Choice in Ancient Palestine: A Sociolinguistic Study of Jesus' Language Use Based on Four "I Have Come" Sayings', *BAGL* 1 (2012), pp. 63-101 (89, 93).

39. Ong, *The Multilingual Jesus*, p. 177, correctly points out, 'The fact that scholarly opinions are divided between a Gentile Galilee and a Jewish Galilee does not constitute a barrier in determining the linguistic landscape of the Galilean community'.

projects reflecting Greco-Roman culture'.[40] For example, the temple dedicated to the Greek god Pan was located in Caesarea Philippi in upper Galilee, a religious center from the third century BCE to the fifth century CE. When Herod received control over the territory from Caesar Augustus, he erected a large temple out of white marble near the sanctuary of Pan and dedicated it to Augustus to show his gratitude (20 BCE).[41] After Herod's death, the territory passed to his son Phillip the Tetrarch, who extended the temple.[42] Importantly, Galilee was located in close proximity to its surrounding cities, and such a geographical situation almost certainly necessitates that 'some interaction between Galileans and non-Galileans indisputably occurred'.[43] Although Chancey grants this view,[44] he rejects multilingual Galilee because '[n]othing in the literary or archaeological record suggests that such contact was especially frequent'.[45] However, as I have argued elsewhere, Chancey fails to take into account the sociolinguistic approach, which can help reconstruct a person's linguistic ability in significant ways.[46] As a result, Chancey's methodology is an incomplete interpretive tool for validating the spoken languages in the Galilean speech community. Since Galilee was located in close proximity to its surrounding cities and the sociolinguistic dynamics were almost certainly at play at the edge of the Gentile territory, it is reasonable to conclude that some Galilean residents acquired some knowledge of Greek.

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40.    Turnage, 'The Linguistic Ethos of the Galilee', p. 157. Cf. Josephus, *War* 3.41.

41.    Moreland, 'Inhabitants of Galilee', pp. 133-59 (155, 339). The exact location of the temple is debated. For a succinct and helpful treatment of this issue, see Moreland, 'Inhabitants of Galilee', p. 339 n. 6.

42.    For Josephus's account of the temple, see *War* 1.404-406; *Ant.* 15.363-364.

43.    Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee*, p. 120.

44.    Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee*, pp. 120-66.

45.    Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee*, p. 166.

46.    Lee, 'Reexamining the Greek-Speaking Ability of Peter', pp. 163-68.

*The Discovery of Greek Inscriptions Written on Ossuaries*

There is also valuable archaeological evidence that Chancey dismisses too quickly: a number of early ossuaries[47] that bear Greek inscriptions. In his influential work, Alan R. Millard demonstrates that various writings (e.g. name, curse) on ossuaries existed in Herodian Palestine—and, importantly, they are multilingual (i.e. Hebrew, Aramaic, Latin and Greek).[48] For example, it would not have been uncommon for Greek transliterations of Hebrew names, such as ʾΙΗΣΟΥΣ for Jeshua or Jehoshua, "Jesus, Joshua" or ΑΝΑΝΙΑΣ for Hananiah',[49] to have appeared on such ossuaries. To consider another example, twenty-two ossuaries have been found in a tomb near Jericho, a tomb that covers three generations of one family. The Greek writing on some ossuaries in the tomb include (1) the Greek names, (2) the Greek transliteration of a Semitic word and (3) the status of the deceased when he was alive.[50] '[T]his tomb', Millard notes, 'presents the bilingual situation clearly'.[51] There are other inscriptions written on an ossuary that have been found on a hill in Jerusalem. These inscriptions also demonstrate multilingualism. For example, one phrase, 'Mariam wife of Matyah', is written in Hebrew and Greek, and a Hebrew word for 'blindness' is written in Greek letters (ΟΥΡΟΥΝ).[52] In addition, the first- and second-century ossuaries that bear Greek inscriptions at *Kefar Baruh* (Ἰούδας Θαδδαίου, 'Judas, son of Thaddaeus') and *Qiryat Tivʾon* (Μαίας| Σαοῦλος, 'of Maia, daughter of Saul')[53] further reveal the presence of Greek in Galilee.

In a more recent work, Michael O. Wise reports that there have been about three thousand ancient ossuaries at our disposal, and the majority of them are regionally associated with either Jerusalem or Jericho.[54] Among

47. Ossuaries are small stone coffins or burial boxes that are used for the reburial of bones after a dead body has decomposed for a certain length of time.

48. Alan R. Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (BibSem, 69; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 132-40.

49. Millard, *Reading and Writing*, p. 134.

50. Millard, *Reading and Writing*, pp. 134-36.

51. Millard, *Reading and Writing*, p. 136.

52. Millard, *Reading and Writing*, p. 135.

53. Charlesworth, 'The Use of Greek in Early Roman Galilee', p. 360.

54. Michael Owen Wise, *Language and Literacy in Roman Judaea: A Study of the Bar Kokhba Documents* (AYBRL; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 14.

those ossuaries, less than one thousand bear inscriptions, which 'potentially furnish an important window into language usage in Judaea, and many of them are in Greek'.[55] Wise also helpfully notes that 236 out of 587 inscriptions (40.2 per cent) bear Greek inscriptions.[56] Although Wise correctly warns that one should cautiously deal with such evidence with reference to geography and date, it is undeniable that Greek had some currency in ancient Palestine.

At this point, it is appropriate to discuss the nature of ossuaries. Yifat Peleg provides a helpful window into which modern readers can look concerning the nature of ossuaries:

> In burials of this kind, there are personal references to the dead: the names of those interred are sometimes incised, not very carefully, on the sides of the ossuaries. This is done as an expression of bereavement and grief or for the purpose of identification, to enable the family members to know who is buried within the ossuary in order to know if the bones of any of his or her relatives could be interred in the same ossuary.[57]

The highly personal, familial and intimate nature of ossuaries, which represents the emotions of the deceased person's family members, raises a serious question as to why the owners of the Greek inscriptions at Galilee chose Greek over Hebrew or Aramaic as the language with which to commemorate their deceased loved one? Since ossuaries carry an intimate and familial nature representing the everyday life of the deceased,[58] the simplest answer to this question is that Greek had some currency in Galilee.

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55.   Wise, *Language and Literacy in Roman Judaea*, pp. 14-15.

56.   Wise, *Language and Literacy in Roman Judaea*, p. 15.

57.   Yifat Peleg, 'Gender and Ossuaries: Ideology and Meaning', *BASOR* 325 (2002), pp. 65-73 (66-67).

58.   Markus Cromhout, *Jesus and Identity: Reconstructing Judean Ethnicity in Q* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2007), p. 144, correctly notes, 'The use of Greek in burial sites is significant as funerary inscriptions are the best evidence for the everyday language of the people'. Willem Smelik, 'The Languages of Roman Palestine', in Catherine Hezser (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 122-41 (136), also remarks, 'There is no question that Greek enjoyed prestige amongst all strata of Jewish society'.

Chancey, however, disregards these evidences because he thinks that there are too few ossuaries from which to draw conclusions.[59] Although there are few Greek inscriptions that date to the first century, Chancey's approach is inadequate because the evidence must be evaluated by its quantity *and* nature. In other words, the scarcity of evidence cannot simply overrule its importance; there must be a balanced approach in examining the evidence. Scott D. Charlesworth correctly warns:

> (1) The unrepresentative nature of the extant evidence does not allow general conclusions to be drawn about Greek literacy by comparing the quantity of inscriptions dated to each century. (2) The nature and context of individual pieces of evidence is important and may reveal much more than a mere survey of the evidence can show.[60]

In addition, it is also important to recognize that the development of languages does not simply happen overnight; it is a gradual process that takes at least three generations.[61] Hence, some Galileans would have used Greek as their everyday language in a much earlier period than Chancey suggests. In this regard, I concur with Stanley E. Porter's observation regarding first- and second-century ossuaries with Greek inscriptions: 'At the most private and final moments when a loved one was finally laid to rest, in the majority of instances, Jews chose Greek as the language in which to memorialize their deceased. Greek ... took precedence over the Jewish sacred language, even at a moment of highly personal and religious significance.'[62] Hence, Greek must have been more common in the first-century CE than Chancey suggests.

Finally, it is worth noting that the presence of multiple Greek ossuaries may also reflect the writer's linguistic ability or the ideological preference

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59. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture*, p. 131.

60. Charlesworth, 'The Use of Greek in Early Roman Galilee', p. 357.

61. See Tasaku Tsunoda, *Language Endangerment and Language Revitalization: An Introduction* (Trends in Linguistics. Studies and Monographs, 148; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), p. 73.

62. Stanley E. Porter, 'Did Jesus Ever Teach in Greek?', *TynBul* 44 (1993), pp. 199-235 (222). See also Cromhout, *Jesus and Identity*, p. 144.

of the family.[63] For example, some Greek inscriptions on ossuaries bear marks indicating that people outside the family were probably involved in creating them. Wise remarks, 'The artistic integration of ornamentation and inscription would count here. So, too, would instances of monumental scripts, expertly incised.'[64] In this case, the ossuary language—Greek—reflects the writer's linguistic ability. It is also possible that some people chose to put the Greek inscriptions on their ossuaries in order 'to associate themselves and their families with Rome and the dominant Mediterranean culture'.[65] In this case, ossuary languages reflect the deceased's and/or his family's ideology. Such understandings of the Greek inscriptions on ossuaries are helpful for grasping a more complete picture of the linguistic situation in Roman Galilee. First, the Greek inscriptions on ossuaries reveal the language of the diseased and/or his family. Secondly, the inscriptions indicate the language of the preparer. Thirdly, the inscriptions disclose the language of people outside of the family who view the inscriptions.

Although first-century Galilee does not yield the Hellenistic architecture and the quantitative Greek literary evidence that would be useful in proving the Greek hypothesis, there are a number of reasons to suggest that Greek was, indeed, more common than Chancey is willing to allow.

*Conclusion*

The purpose of this article was to respond to Mark A. Chancey's two objections to a multilingual Galilee: (1) the incorrect use of artifacts and (2) the absence of Hellenistic archaeological evidence in Galilee. I responded to the first objection by arguing that the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus preserved in the Gospels serves as literary evidence strongly supporting the notion that many Galileans utilized Greek as one of their spoken languages. I replied to the second objection with two arguments. First, the absence of pagan buildings does not necessarily indicate the lesser Hellenization of the region when taking into account the massive building projects of Herod the Great.

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63.   I am thankful for the anonymous reviewer from *JGRChJ* for offering this valuable insight. See also Wise, *Language and Literacy in Roman Judaea*, pp. 15-16.

64.   Wise, *Language and Literacy in Roman Judaea*, p. 16.

65.   Wise, *Language and Literacy in Roman Judaea*, p. 16.

Secondly, the presence of first- and second-century ossuaries with Greek inscriptions indicates that Greek must have been the everyday language of some Galileans. Based on the evidences presented in this article, I conclude that Greek was more common than Chancey asserts.