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THE LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN PALESTINE AT THE TIME OF OUR LORD.

LET me preface the few remarks I have to offer upon Dr. Roberts's recent series of papers in THE EXPOSITOR, by saying that I have no wish to obtain a merely controversial victory. The subject is worthy of being discussed for its own sake, and as a question of scholarship or history should be, *sine irâ et studio*. There seem to me to be some serious gaps and defects in Dr. Roberts's train of reasoning. But if these can be removed—if the case can be made good to the satisfaction of competent judges—I think I can engage not to hold the ground a moment after it becomes untenable. To one who has the truth of things really at heart, there is no disgrace in such defeat. He does not profess to know all about the matter in hand, but certain objections occur to him, and he states them. If they are satisfactorily answered, he makes his bow and walks away. The fact remains upon a firmer basis than before.

And, first, to define somewhat more nearly the point at issue. The difference between the two opposing views is not really so very great. There is no question that the Jews of our Lord's time were practically bilingual. The only question would be as to the proportion in which the two languages were spoken. Dr. Roberts maintains that Greek was spoken more and

Aramaic less, and that our Lord Himself habitually spoke Greek and occasionally Aramaic. I should only wish to invert the qualifying expressions in this statement, and to say that Aramaic was spoken more and Greek less, and that our Lord used Aramaic habitually and Greek only occasionally.

No fairly well-read scholar would deny that Greek was largely spoken in Palestine at the time of our Lord. Greek was the language of universal intercommunication, just as, and even more than, Latin was in the Middle Ages. Many nations owned it as a second tongue. There are several causes which made it specially prevalent in Palestine. One main cause would be commerce. The Jews were, then as now, and at home as well as abroad, a very active commercial people. In Galilee especially, which was then densely populated and much better cultivated than it is at present, a thriving trade was driven in corn and oil with Phœnicia and Syria. This trade brought wealth, and wealth brought luxury, and luxury again encouraged trade: imports naturally balanced exports. Thus arose a large commercial class, who in their dealings with the foreigner would naturally speak Greek. Another cause, equally important, would be the constant intercourse with foreign Jews, occasioned by their coming up to attend the great religious feasts. To such an extent was this carried that, at the last Passover before the outbreak of the war, the number of people in Jerusalem is said to have reached the almost incredible total of three millions. Many of these would not be able to speak Aramaic. Hence both in Jerusalem itself, and in the main roads which led to it, especially from the west, Greek would be spoken. There were also permanent synagogues in Jerusalem for the use of these foreign

Jews, and very probably at Cæsarea and elsewhere. A third cause would be the direct influence of the dynasty of the Herods, who were especially addicted to Greek manners and customs. Foreigners themselves, they all courted the favour of Rome, and shewed but slight sympathy for Judaism. Herod Agrippa I. was the only exception to this. His short career (A.D. 41–44) was enough to win for him the enthusiastic regard of the people as the one truly patriot king. Herod Agrippa II. tried, but not quite successfully, to combine the two things. To the house of Herod was due the construction of wholly Greek towns such as Cæsarea, Stratonis, and Tiberias. The court and surroundings of Herod the Great and Archelaus at Jerusalem, and of Herod-Antipas in Galilee, would be centres of Hellenizing influences. Something must also be allowed for the influence of heathen colonies like Decapolis. The scattered cities that formed this confederation were founded by the Romans on their conquest of Syria in B.C. 65. No exact particulars have come down to us as to the language spoken by them. Isolated from each other as they were, and exposed to the influences of the neighbouring populations, we should naturally expect them to be bilingual, only in different proportions from the Jews. Many of the first inhabitants would probably be Syrians, who spoke a dialect of Aramaic very similar to that of Palestine. They would be therefore quite as likely to adopt Aramaic as Greek.[1] We must add, lastly, the in-

[1] Dr. Roberts lays too much stress upon the use of the words "Ελλην, "Ελληνίς. These must not be pressed as at all necessarily implying the use of the Greek language. The phrase Ἰουδαῖοί τε καὶ Ἕλληνες is constantly used in the New Testament as an exhaustive division of mankind. The word "Ελλην is frequently (and not in substance wrongly) translated in our Version by "Gentile:" *e.g.*, John

fluence of a few individuals like Gamaliel and Josephus, wiser and more liberal than the rest of their countrymen, who made a special study of the Greek learning.

But in spite of all these Hellenizing influences, the great kernel of the nation remained true to its traditions. Jewish life was made up of violent contrasts. If there was one current setting strongly in the direction of Hellenizing, there was another setting just as strongly in the opposite direction. The fury which burst out in the great rebellion against Rome had long been secretly gathering. The frequent insurrections shewed that the old Maccabæan spirit was still not extinct. The mass of the nation hated all that was Greek. Along with some expressions of toleration are others which breathe the fiercest spirit of intolerance. "The later fanatical Rabbis, both before and after the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the death-struggle against Rome under Hadrian, excluded the friends of the foreign literature from eternal life; they laid the same curse upon those who educated their sons in the wisdom of the Greeks (*chochmat jewanit*) as upon the possessors of swine; while others, who were milder, permitted the reading of Homer as the reading of a [private] 'letter.'[1] But the stricter Rabbis merely expressed the national spirit. Not only Origen, but Josephus also — notwithstanding his coquetting with the foreigner—bear witness to the instinctive repugnance of the nation."[2]

vii. 35 ("The dispersed among the Gentiles"); Rom. iii. 9 ("Both Jews and Gentiles"); 1 Cor. x. 32 ("Neither to Jews nor Gentiles"), &c.

[1] *Tr. Sanhedr.* (R. Akibha): "Nec eum participem esse vitæ æternæ, qui libros alienigenarum legit. Execrabilis esto, qui alit porcos, execrabilis item qui docet filium suum sapientiam Græcam." Dr. Keim also refers to Gfrörer, *Jahrh. Heils.* p. 115; Herzfeld, iii. pp. 254 *et seq.*; Jost, iii. 99. For the English reader we may add Farrar's "Life of Christ," vol. i. p. 91, and *Excursus* iv.

[2] Keim, *Geschichte Jesu von Nazara*, i. 228 (E.T.).

This seems to me, I confess, a much truer picture of the real spirit of Judaism than that which is presented to us by Dr. Roberts. It is difficult to see how even a party in the nation can have uttered execrations on those who brought up their sons in the Greek learning when Greek was the habitual language of *all* the rest of their countrymen. I know that Dr. Roberts (in his larger work) repeatedly asserts that these expressions of violent antagonism belong only to the time of the war (or, I suppose, the two wars) with the Romans. But the whole tenour of Jewish history is decidedly against this. The Jewish character did not change backwards and forwards like a shuttlecock. The hatred of the foreigner and of things foreign was not begotten in a day. The line of Jewish history is marked by a constant succession of risings and struggles, in which national, religious, and social elements were combined, all the way from the death of Herod to the final destruction of the Jewish nationality under Hadrian.

History, however, bears but a secondary place with Dr. Roberts. The evidence for his views is chiefly literary. What that evidence is it now remains for us to see.

And here, in pursuance of the principles laid down at the outset, I propose first to put on one side a number of arguments that, trying to weigh them with candour, I cannot regard as decisive. All *a priori* arguments I willingly give up—with just the proviso that arguments drawn from the historical background cannot strictly be called *a priori*. I know that it has been usual to lay stress upon the Aramaic phrases—*Ephphatha*, *Talitha cumi*, &c. — occurring in the Gospels. These seem to me to be quite as compat-

ible with one hypothesis as with the other. They may represent an exceptional use of Aramaic, or they may represent an habitual use of it. No one can positively say which. Again, I do not wish to contest the possibility that the Syrophœnician woman may have spoken Greek. I think it more probable that she did not, but that may pass. No very great argument can be drawn either way from the inscription on the cross, because it does not mark the proportions in which the different languages were spoken. Dr. Roberts has given an ingenious explanation of the surprise of the Roman officer at finding that St. Paul could speak Greek (Acts xxi. 37), which is probably the right one. The surprise may have had its ground in the fact that the officer supposed him to be a certain obscure Egyptian. Dr. Roberts also seems to me to be suggesting a truth, though not the whole truth, when he makes the address of St. Paul to the Jews in Aramaic (Acts xxi. 40) an act of policy intended to remove the prejudice against him as a Greek.

All these concessions I am prepared to make to Dr. Roberts. But, on the other hand, I am afraid he will think me rather exacting when I claim to be allowed to put aside as equally indecisive a great number of arguments of his own. Indeed, I can hardly regard any of the arguments that are derived from the New Testament as really very pertinent. Those, for instance, which are drawn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, seem to me to be singularly inconclusive. In the first place, it is very uncertain that it was written to Palestinian Jews at all. The points urged by Dr. Roberts in support of this amount to the barest probability, and are obviously quite insufficient to build

a further argument upon. Besides, in the case of a letter there are two persons or sets of persons to be considered—not only those to whom it is addressed, but also the person by whom it is written. Now, supposing the author to have been a thoroughly Hellenized Jew, like Apollos or St. Luke, why should he not write in Greek? On any hypothesis, quite enough of his readers would understand that language to make the letter worth writing. If a non-resident landlord wished to make some communication to a parish in Wales, he would write to the vicar or to his agent in English. But if the person of the writer may be taken to account for the Epistle to the Hebrews, that of the readers accounts for 1 Peter and the Epistle of St. James. Both these are written expressly to the Jews of the Dispersion, and the only language that most of these would understand would be Greek. St. James, by his position at Jerusalem, would naturally be brought much in contact with these Hellenized Jews, and would so acquire a more correct Greek style. Or, apart from this, there was dothing to hinder any individual from learning Greek with a greater or less degree of correctness. St. Peter, it is rather probable, did not write his Epistle for himself. A very old tradition, dating back from the early part of the second century, and repeated frequently in that century, says that he took Mark for his dragoman or interpreter (ἑρμηνευτής). St. Paul, we know, wrote little with his own hand. Not a few of the peculiarities of style in the apostolic writings are probably to be accounted for by the extent to which they made use of amanuenses. A greater amount of latitude was allowed to the scribe sometimes than at others. The Revelation

of St. John is a good example of the kind of Greek that would naturally be written by a native of Palestine. It abounds in solecisms that would jar upon a Greek ear. The Gospel represents the same style, refined by fifteen or twenty years of contact with a Greek-speaking people.

Nor can I attach any real conclusiveness to the arguments derived from the Gospels. All the main points can be explained quite easily on the other hypothesis. One is almost surprised to see an argument like that from the presence of people from Decapolis among the audience of the Sermon on the Mount seriously put forward. Dr. Roberts admits that Aramaic was the vernacular tongue of Palestine.[1] The cities of Decapolis were not collected together in a single district, but were scattered over a considerable extent of country. Surrounded, therefore, by the vernacular, they could not fail to be influenced by it. They must have been also more or less bilingual. But supposing the audience to have consisted partly of persons who understood Aramaic well and Greek only imperfectly (as many, if not most, of the Galilean villagers must have done), and partly of people who understood Greek well and Aramaic only imperfectly (as some of the Decapolitans may have done), why should the first class have been sacrificed to the second, any more than the second to the first? But I see that Dr. Roberts admits the hypothesis,[2] which is now held by a majority of critics, that the so-called Sermon on the Mount may not really have been delivered upon a single occasion. But if so, how shall we really deter-

[1] THE EXPOSITOR, vol. vi. p. 376.

[2] Ibid. vol. vi. p. 164. "Sermon (or, if you will, sermons)."

mine in what way the different parts of it were brought home to the hearers?

Again, Dr. Roberts lays much stress upon the fact that the quotations in the Gospels are, for the most part, taken from the Septuagint. But this can only be done by arguing from a series of assumptions, none of which have any certainty. Dr. Roberts is doubtless aware that the quotations from the Old Testament in the Gospels are thought almost universally by critics at the present day to be due, in their form at least, to the Evangelists. I know that he himself holds a peculiar view on that point, and that he has indeed peculiar views as to the composition of the Synoptic Gospels generally. I am quite ready to admit the great difficulty of the problem which these Gospels present, and I doubt very much whether it has received as yet the final solution. But I am afraid the theory put forward by Dr. Roberts will not bear detailed examination. It would take us too far from our present subject to enter into this here, but I will undertake to give the proof of what is said, in case it should be required. In the mean time it is not easy to see why the ordinary theory does not explain the facts as well as Dr. Roberts's. Two, certainly, of the Synoptic Gospels—the second and third—were written, the one by a Gentile, the other by an Hellenist, for Gentile or Hellenistic readers. It is therefore only natural that the Septuagint should be made use of in them. A third Evangelist, St. Matthew, wrote for Jewish Christians, and here we have the remarkable fact that the quotations from the Old Testament which are peculiar to this Evangelist shew a recurrence to the Hebrew text, while those which are common to him with the other Synoptists retain

their Septuagint colouring.[1] This would seem to shew, precisely what we should have expected, a Hebraizing tendency in the author. In the parts peculiar to himself he goes back to the Hebrew, in those which he has in common with the rest he keeps to the same Hellenized tradition, or draws from the same document. Thus, at the only point where we should have any reason to expect a study of the Hebrew, we find it.

The reason why the Gospels that have come down to us are all in Greek is, that at the time when the Gospels were composed, the immense majority of Christians were either of Gentile or Hellenistic extraction. In hardly any part of the world did Christianity make so little way as among the native Jews. Even in Jerusalem itself, and but a very few years after our Lord's ascension, we already find that foreign Greek-speaking Jews formed an important part of the Church, so much so that a special order had to be appointed to see that justice was done them in the administration of alms. And yet the first Gospel of which we have any record was in Aramaic. No matter what the relation of this Aramaic Gospel to our present St. Matthew, there certainly *was* such a Gospel, and it was doubtless for a time the Gospel of the Aramaic-speaking Christians. Even the heretical branches of that body had Aramaic Gospels of their own. But, practically speaking, the great war broke up the Church of Judæa. From that time onwards the Palestinian section of the Aramaic Church sank into insignificance, while Christianity passed over from the Jews to the Hellenists and the Gentiles.

[1] See Holtzmann, *Die Synoptischen Evangelien*, p. 259; Westcott, "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," p. 211, &c.

So much having been said with a view to clear the ground of what I cannot but think irrelevant matter, we may come now to the positive side of the evidence. This, I venture to think, may really be compressed within small limits. There are two passages of Josephus which seem to me to decide the whole question; but before I come to them, I should be glad to make a few remarks on some other portions of the subject.

To take, first, the New Testament. There are several passages which Dr. Roberts thinks do not tell against his opinion, which, however, seem to me to be much more consistent with the view to which he is opposed. The Aramaic language is expressly mentioned more than once in the historical books. In one instance there is an allusion to the particular dialect spoken in Galilee. We are told in Matthew xxvi. 73, Mark xiv. 70, that St. Peter was discovered to be a Galilean by his dialect; and in exact accordance with this we learn from the Talmud that the Galileans were taunted by the Jews with their faults of pronunciation. They could not properly distinguish between the gutturals, and pronounced the *sh* with a lisp, and so on.[1] Here, we should have thought, was very fairly conclusive evidence upon the whole case. It seems to prove that Aramaic was the language *commonly* spoken—the vernacular tongue both in Galilee and Judæa. If Greek was spoken, therefore, it must have been as the exception, and not as the rule. Dr. Roberts, however, does not seem to admit this. He says, "Granting that" St. Peter spoke Aramaic on this occasion, "it proves nothing against the proposition which I have endeavoured to establish. It is, on the contrary, in

[1] See Meyer, *ad loc.*

closest accordance with the view which has been here exhibited of the relation subsisting between the two languages. It was exactly in such circumstances as those referred to that we should expect the vulgar tongue of the country to be employed; and it is surely nothing strange that the dialect of it which Peter was accustomed at times to speak in Galilee should now be stated to have been found somewhat different from that generally prevalent in Jerusalem."[1] Dr. Roberts just saves himself by inserting the words "at times." If he had said, "which Peter spoke habitually in Galilee," that would be all for which I should contend. But—I must needs ask the question—*Is* "the vernacular language," "the vulgar tongue" of a country (as Dr. Roberts himself calls Aramaic in Palestine), spoken only *at times?* Is not the *vernacular* language of a country *the* language? Was the language of England, after the Norman Conquest, French or English? Is the language of Wales, at the present day, English or Welsh? To come exactly to the point at issue, can we suppose that our Lord Himself habitually used any other language than the vernacular? If the field of his ministry had not been Palestine, but Wales, or the highlands of Scotland, as they are now, would He have habitually spoken English?

Again, we read in Acts i. 19, that the death of Judas "became known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is (rather 'was') called in their proper tongue (τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν) Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood." The word "Aceldama" is Aramaic. We therefore naturally argue that Aramaic was "the proper tongue" of Jerusalem: again, all for

[1] THE EXPOSITOR, vol. vi. pp. 366, 367.

which I should contend. Dr. Roberts has not (I think) noticed this passage in his papers in THE EXPOSITOR. He has, however, in his larger work.[1] He there explains it by saying that the words belong to the speech of St. Peter, and are not an added note or comment by St. Luke. He goes so far, indeed, as to argue that St. Peter himself is speaking Greek, because he introduces the Aramaic word as belonging to a tongue distinct from that in which he is speaking. All turns upon the point whether the words are really those of St. Peter. In form I do not deny that they are—in fact they can hardly be. Dr. Roberts must be aware that it is frequently the custom of the New Testament writers to mingle their own comments with the discourses they are recording, without any clear mark of distinction. This is especially the case in the Gospel of St. John. And so here, though the words in point of form are attributed to St. Peter, in substance they must really belong to the historian. The disciples could not need to be told of a fact which was already known to all Jerusalem, and which had happened only a few days before to a former member of their own body. Nor is it likely that such a fact could really have become known to all Jerusalem in so short a time, or that the Apostle could allude to the name given to the field as a past historical fact (*κληθῆναι*, aor., "was called"). Common-sense considerations like these must be taken account of in exegesis, especially with writers so little bound by the laws of formal literary composition as the Evangelists. The undistinguished mixture of narrative and comment is simply a crudeness of style.[2]

[1] "Discussions on the Gospels." Second edition, p. 305.

[2] So the "majority of commentators," according to Dr. Hackett in his very sound and judicious Commentary on the Acts. Dr. Roberts, while quoting Alford

I have already said that Dr. Roberts's explanation of St. Paul's address to the Jews in Aramaic (Acts xxi. 40), and their consequent attention, seems to me to be a part of the truth. They did expect to be addressed in Greek, and it was therefore an act of policy in the Apostle to speak to them in their native Aramaic, and so shew that he was not a foreigner or a teacher of foreign doctrines. But their very repugnance to foreign doctrines extended also to foreign speech. We shall see this proved from oth r sources, but it might naturally be inferred from the present passage. The increased attention of the Jews was probably due at once to their satisfaction at hearing the Apostle speak in their own tongue, and also to the greater intelligibility of what was said. Still, as this cannot be proved for certain, I shall not press it against Dr. Roberts.

Of Talmud and Targums I shall say little, for two reasons; first, because I am no Rabbinical scholar myself, and should be obliged to collect all I had to say at second-hand; and, secondly, because I know (from the larger work[1]) that Dr. Roberts attaches only a slight weight to these sources. Yet I cannot but think that this is a mistaken estimate, and I doubt whether we shall ever have a satisfactory scientific statement of the case until the references in the Talmud have been more thoroughly examined and sifted, and the antiquity and antecedents of the Targums more fully ascertained. What is needed, in fact, is an examination of the whole Jewish literature, beginning with the fragments of Aramaic embedded in the canonical Books of Daniel and

in support of his view, forgets to notice that both Alford and Meyer (whom Alford closely follows) regard the two phrases, *τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν* and *τουτ' ἔστιν χωρίον αἵματος*, as *inserted into the speech* ("zwei eingewobene Erläuterungen:" Meyer) by St. Luke.

[1] "Discussions on the Gospels," p. 297.

Ezra, extending over the whole of the Apocrypha (and many of these books, though now preserved only in Greek, appear to have had undoubtedly Hebrew, *i.e.*, Aramaic, originals [1]), and ending with the final elaboration of the Jerusalem Talmud and the committing to writing of the Jerusalem Targum. If this were done, and all the allusions, direct and indirect, were carefully collected, it would be more possible than it is at present to trace the history of western Aramaic speech and its real relations to the Greek. It seems on the face of it highly improbable that there should be a great breach of continuity in this history. It would be very strange if at the beginning of the period parts of the Scriptures themselves should have been written in Aramaic, and at the end of the period the Aramaic paraphrases of Scripture, long orally transmitted, were fixed in writing, while in the middle of the same period the Books of the Old Testament were habitually read in another and foreign tongue. It would be especially strange if the interval in which this is said to have been the case was (as we know that it was) a time of passionate national aspirations and excited patriotic feeling. But indeed I suspect that, apart from probabilities, there is considerable evidence, direct or indirect, that this was not the case.[2] The Targum of the Book of Job is

[1] The Book of Ecclesiasticus is expressly stated in the prologue to have been translated from the Hebrew. The same statement is made in regard to the Book of Jubilees, by St. Jerome. The best scholars assign a similar origin to the Books of Judith ("procul dubio," Fritzsche), 1 Maccabees ("constat," Fritzsche), Psalms of Solomon ("satis certum," Fritzsche). The reason why these books have come down to us in a Greek form is because they have been transmitted through Christian or Hellenistic channels. The Jewish nationality was practically destroyed in the two great rebellions and in the persecutions by the Christian successors of Constantine.

[2] Let me commend to Dr. Roberts more especially Deutsch's "Literary Remains," p. 328, from which it appears that the Mishnah, which itself dates from

known to have been written before the destruction of the Temple. A writer like Credner, examining the quotations from the Old Testament with a care and thoroughness of which it would be well if there were more in some of our English scholars, finds in several of them such marked coincidences with the text of the Targums as prove to his satisfaction the use of a Targum by the Evangelist. Thus in Matthew xii. 18 the Evangelist, like the Targum of Isaiah xlii. 1, has *θήσω* where the LXX. have *ἔδωκα*, and both the Evangelist and the Targum give to the passage a Messianic application. Similarly, in the application of Jeremiah xxxi. 15, Credner thinks that a Targum has been used. In the quotation of Micah v. 2 he traces to this source the insertion of *οὐδαμῶς* (*οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη* for *ὀλιγοστός*) and also the insertion of *ἡγούμενος*—two very marked peculiarities. Credner sums up his researches on this section of quotations thus: "In several places the materials still at our command are sufficient to prove the intervention of a Targum, so that we are justified in coming to the conclusion that, wherever a connection with the Hebrew appears, this has not been caused by a direct recourse to the original, but has been brought about through the medium of a Targum."[1] I merely quote this as the opinion of a scholar unsurpassed in this particular department, and not because I am in a position to check it myself. The coincidences, however, are striking.

But though, as I believe, the more accurate determination of the relation of Greek to Aramaic belongs specially to the Hebraist, the erroneousness of Dr.

about A.D. 200, contains repeated references not only to oral but to written Targums, and these, it is known, came into use very gradually.

[1] See Credner, *Beiträge*, ii. 144–55.

countrymen. But even if the exaggeration were greater than it is, it is surely a very hasty logic to argue, as Dr. Roberts does,[1] that because the statement proves too much, it really proves nothing at all. The inference seems to me absolutely unavoidable that the Jewish deserters *did* as a rule speak Aramaic, and not Greek, just as he himself spoke Aramaic and not Greek when he addressed his besieged countrymen.

The other passage is the very well-known one at the end of the "Antiquities," which should be given entire, in order that the full force of it may be appreciated. "I am so bold as to say, now that I have completed the task set before me, that no other person, either Jew or Greek, with whatever good intentions, would have been able to set forth this history to the Greeks as accurately as I have done. For I am acknowledged by my countrymen to excel them far in our national learning. I also did my best to obtain a knowledge of Greek by practising myself in the grammar, though native habit prevented me from attaining accuracy in its use.[2] For it is not our custom to honour those who learn the languages of many nations, and adorn their discourse with smoothly-turned phrases; because this is considered a common accomplishment, not only to any ordinary free man (*ἐλευθέρων τοῖς τυχοῦσι*), but also to such servants as care to acquire it;

[1] "Discussions on the Gospels," p. 291.

[2] *τὴν δὲ περὶ τὴν προφορὰν ἀκρίβειαν πάτριος ἐκώλυσε συνήθεια.* "Use" seems to be the nearest English word for *προφορά*, though it is not a very satisfactory rendering. The word covers both oral and written "production," in the one case "pronunciation," in the other case "style." *πάτριος συνήθεια* is referred by Dr. Roberts (*Disc.* p. 288, &c.) to the habit of speaking *Greek*, and not Hebrew. It is, however, hardly necessary to point out that Josephus is apologizing for the incorrectness of his Greek, on the ground that the Jews did not encourage the study of *foreign* tongues, of which Greek is obviously the one more especially in his mind.

while those only are accounted wise who are well versed in our law, and are skilled in interpreting the meaning of our sacred books. It has thus happened that though many have taken pains to obtain this learning, only two or three have succeeded, and they were not long in being rewarded for their trouble." [1] The statements of this passage are remarkably definite. A knowledge of Greek was common enough among the middle and lower classes (*i.e.*, the classes that would naturally be engaged in traffic, either with Hellenistic Jews or with foreigners): among the upper classes (except, we should probably have to say, the Herodian court and party) it was rare, and few spoke it correctly; but the idea that Greek was the current language of the country, is contradicted in every line.

I should be quite content to rest the case on these two passages. They are both direct, precise, clear, and positive. And they seem to me to tally exactly with the view put forward in these pages, while they alone would be sufficient to overthrow the paradox maintained by Dr. Roberts. I have selected these two passages as a simple, plain, and compact way of stating the case, and I think I might safely challenge Dr. Roberts to produce anything at all comparable to them on the other side. At the same time I believe the conclusion to which they lead to be in the strictest accordance with the rest of the evidence both literary and historical. So far as I can see at present, Dr. Roberts appears to have been misled by a few obvious difficulties to which the history of the time affords an easy solution.

W. SANDAY.

[1] *Antiq.* xx. 11, 2.