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THE LORD'S PRAYER IN A WIDER SETTING:
A NEW HEBREW RECONSTRUCTION

ABSTRACT

This contribution introduces a critical translingual approach to the Hebrew reconstruction of the Lord's Prayer, based on the knowledge accumulated on the subject to date. The author attempts to demonstrate that, despite the established dominant usage of Aramaic in 1ˢᵗ-century Palestine, the text of the Prayer in Matthew reflects linguistic peculiarities of the broader setting of the Sermon on the Mount and the presumed Hebrew background of Mt. Besides, the paper uncovers the existence of the Hebrew and Aramaic diglossia in the New Testament, arguing that both languages were used, each in its own context.

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Subject

The present study researches the linguistic and poetic message of the Lord's Prayer in the multilingual context of the New Testament, on the back of the presumed Hebrew setting of the Gospel according to Matthew (Mt). A reconstruction of the "original" Hebrew text of the Prayer, as well as some collateral Hebrew and Aramaic verses will be the fruition of my effort. In other words, I am interested in knowing *how* it sounded, although it takes answering many "whys" first in order to get to the "how". I focus on the primary sources, that is, the internal evidence of the Greek text and its Syriac counterpart, the only early version of the New Testament in a Semitic language (Brock 2006:108), approaching them translingually. At the same time, drawing from the available external data will further underpin my intertextual findings. This contribution cannot embrace or explain all the nuances, but it attempts to outline the key points.

From the outset it should be made clear that the problem of the language milieu in Palestine during the Gospel timeframe is manifold. First, it is an established fact that Aramaic was widely spoken. This is a good starting point, given the vast literature on the subject, and this study inevitably analyses the Aramaic discourse bearing on the declared issue. Besides, recent studies have elucidated a more active role of Greek in 1ˢᵗ-

century Palestine (e.g. Chancey 2006). Most important, however, is that Hebrew is no longer considered a dead vernacular. Moreover, contemporary scholarship prefers to distinguish between the Biblical Hebrew of the Old Testament and the actual spoken Hebrew of the Gospel age, which is viewed as another dialect and a precursor of the so-called Mishnaic Hebrew.

The New Testament scholarship utilises reconstruction as a method, for the most recognised reference edition is *Nestle-Aland*. Containing a critically patched text, it represents an academic reconstruction with different degrees of certainty. A reconstruction of the presumed Semitic *Urtext*, however, besides serious source knowledge and criticism, entails more risks. The meanings have been more or less rendered via respective available versions. What they are not capable of doing, however, is revealing the authentic poetry and beauty of the Semitic subtext, or spontaneity of the conversations. In my research I have come across a number of evident Aramaic portions in some contexts, and Hebraic ones in others. Especially interesting in this respect is the Gospel according to John (Jn) – traditionally left out in limbo against the Synoptics – which betrays intriguing verses, both Hebrew and Aramaic.

At the same time I want to emphasise that any reconstruction faces a problem of being far-fetched. There are many difficulties and perplexities, and more questions than answers to deal with. In this case precautions need to be taken in order to safeguard the right approach, as well as the right *of* approach. At this point I do not discard either literal or, for lack of a better term, descriptive reconstruction methodology. Both represent the case in various books of LXX, and both are approached here, although the final judgment stands out. Therefore, the key principle and the footing, laid down in my research, imports that the best possible knowledge and *comprehensive* evaluation of the available source evidence ought to forego any definitive conclusion.

1.2   Language Dilemma

An important factor of the reconstruction is substantiation of the choice of the language. If Mt *Urtext* was written in Hebrew, one must ask in what type of Hebrew? Which Hebrew dialect should be employed in the context: Biblical, the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls (*terminus ad quem* 135 CE), or perhaps Mishnaic[1] (*terminus ad quem* 200-250 CE: Bar-

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1   According to Kutscher (1974:61), the language of the scribe of IQIsa[a] "was apparently similar if not identical with that of Mishnaic Hebrew".

Asher 2006:568), all of those being different phases, or dialects, of the same language?

The (Orthodox) Church tradition via the early Church Fathers unanimously states that the text of Mt was written in Ἑβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ, e.g. Papias, Irenaeus, Origen, Hieronymus (Grilikhes 1999:13). It is widely held that it implies Aramaic. For instance, recent fundamental research by Jesus Luzarraga, summing up the state of the art as regards the language of Jesus and the Lord's Prayer, states: "Que Jesús pronunciara la OD [Oración Dominical] en arameo es hoy la opinión casi unánimemente aceptada" (2008:25).[2] At the same time, Luzarraga has to admit that modern scholarship recognises a complex linguistic situation in the Palestine of the day, including "cierta presencia del hebreo" in the villages of Judea (2008:25). However, this "forced" reservation is opposed by the author's footnote on the Aramaic influence and a direct statement that the expression Ἑβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ should be understood as "el arameo". As a result, he believes, Jesus could have understood Hebrew but hardly spoke it (Luzarraga 2008:25 n. 57). Therefore, the author focuses exclusively on Aramaic. Some other contemporary Aramaists go even further in their scepticism about the Hebrew.[3] All of this creates a "vicious dichotomy" (either Hebrew or Aramaic), which is usually solved in favour of the latter.

1.3   Syriac Take

Hence the discussion of the Ἑβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ conundrum rests *ipso facto* upon the evidence of the mentioned Greek-Roman Church Fathers. Curious in this respect, however, is a neglected Semitic perspective – the evidence of the Syriac manuscript tradition:

> In addition to the statements made by the Church Fathers, there exists the manuscript tradition in Edessene Aramaic, which one reads at the end of the first of the four books of the gospel, "Concluded is the holy gospel, the proclamation of Mattai the apostle who spoke Hebrew in Palestine" (NCCCNT 2005:iii).

The original Aramaic text reads (NCCCNT 2005:ב):

שלם אונגליון קדישא כרוזותא דמתי שליחא דמלל עבראית בפלסטינא

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2   Translation: "That Jesus pronounced the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic is today the
        opinion accepted almost unanimously".
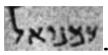
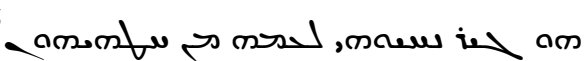3   "… nobody thinks he [Jesus] spoke Hebrew" (Brown 2004:241).

The clue is the word עבראית, about whose meaning Syriac lexicons differ substantially. For example, in *Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Smith 1903), it means Hebrew, *Syriac-French-English-Arabic Dictionary* (Costaz 2002) hesitates between Hebrew and Aramaic, whereas *Lexicon to the Syriac New Testament* (LSNT 1926) lists it only as Aramaic. The upshot is that everything hinges upon the mind-set of the scholars who compile such lexicons, because the conviction that Aramaic was supreme requires that Hebrew be a dead language. However, if עבראית implies Hebrew, what follows is that native Aramaic speakers and readers of the Aramaic scriptures counterweigh the dichotomy scales.

1.4   The First Instance

Indeed, being on this side, it is not impossible to at least partially establish the lines that did not constitute the presumed Hebrew *Urtext*. The first telling instance is Mt 1:21-23:

> τέξεται δὲ υἱὸν καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν, αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν. τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ· ὅ ἐστιν μεθερμηνευόμενον μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός.[4]

Ἐμμανουήλ = . The Great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran (1QIsaᵃ), unlike the standard Masoretic Text of the Old Testament based on the Leningrad Codex, spells it as one solid word, and there is no need for a Hebrew speaker to elaborate on its interpretation like ὅ ἐστιν μεθερμηνευόμενον μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός. At the same time the link between the name Ἰησοῦς and αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ is beyond Gentile (including Aramaean) understanding. The connection here is purely Hebraic: the use of the root ישע ("save") in the Aramaic language *per se* is doubtful to nil. For instance, the Peshitta and the Old Syriac Gospels, representing a non-Jewish Aramaic dialect, read

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4   "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel'– which means, "God with us"' (NIV).

5   The word ܚܝܘܗܝ stems from "life", "to live".

Metzger refers to Burkitt, Torrey and Black, who tend to see the origins of the Old Syriac Sinaiticus text in Antioch, whose features are more typical of Palestinian Aramaic rather than Edessene Syriac in its classical form (Metzger 1977:43), although Brock (2006:34) considers it a misunderstanding, without going into details why. Yet they have no trace of ישע. A valuable online *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* lists it as a Hebraism in Late Jewish Literary Aramaic, that is, far beyond the timeframe of the subject under discussion here (CAL 2013).

However, the word turned up once in Qumran Aramaic texts from the period roughly 200 BCE to 135 CE, published by Fitzmyer and Harrington. It is noteworthy that in the preface the authors point out the diverse character of the texts, and that, concerning some of them, "it is not at all easy to decide whether such texts are really written in Aramaic (and not in the Hebrew of the day)" (Fitzmyer & Harrington 2002:6). Besides, the context is that of a Targum with *waw* conversive, which indicates a clear Hebraism ויושע (Fassberg 1992:67).

1.5 Hebrew "Revival"

At a certain point in the past, the Hebrew in the 1st century CE was considered a dead vernacular, remaining a medium understood only by Bible experts. The role of the vernacular was apportioned almost exclusively and unanimously to Aramaic. This seems to be supported by the Aramaic-sounding references in the New Testament itself. The Gospel according to Mark (Mk) gained favour in this respect. The legendary *magnum opus* of Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, despite the severe critique of his third edition (1967) by Fitzmyer, as well as the abovementioned recent monograph by Luzarraga, are representative of the ordinary position on the Aramaic-Hebrew equation. It is also typical in this respect that Metzger, discussing the political and social background of the Palestinian Jews of the 1st century CE, does not mention Hebrew amongst the spoken Palestinian languages in his summary work, stating that it was a dead language for the majority of the unlearned dwellers (Metzger 2003:38-42).

This conclusion may have some basis, for even in Mt one comes across, to all appearances, an Aramaic locution, probably the most puzzling one: ηλι ηλι λεμα σαβαχθανι, as it is rendered in most manuscripts. As a scholar puts it, here the Gospels "are not reporting a Hebrew tradition" (Greenspahn 2003:8).

Birkeland (1954) once argued, though, that the word שבק, transliterated in Greek as σαβαχ- and common in Aramaic dialects, was also a Mishnaic

Hebrew one. Kutscher, however, refuted this in his book on the Great Isaiah Scroll, stressing that "the author's knowledge of Mishnaic Hebrew derives apparently from the Lexicons and the Grammars" and not from authentic manuscripts, whereas in reality "it [שבק] is not found in Tannaitic sources" (Kutscher 1974:11).

Nevertheless, there is a silver lining for Hebraists: e.g. Codex Bezae indeed reads λαμα ζαφθανει/*lama zapthani*, which is unequivocally Hebrew (including λάμα), giving away an assimilation of ע already weakened by the 1st century CE (Qimron 2008:25). Moreover, σαβαχθανι and ζαφθανει sound alike to a non-speaker of Hebrew, who might take the latter for the former: cf. a mixed form λαμα ζαβαφθανει elsewhere (see Aland 1996:487), e.g. in Codex Vaticanus in Mk 15:34, which locution has distinctly *more* Hebrew than Aramaic elements, pointing here to a certain Hebrew background in one of the best New Testament manuscripts on hand. An Aramaic speaker, not familiar with עזב but used to שבק, would naturally be inclined to make that correction.

The Hebrew of the day had been neglected until the early 20th century, when Segal (2001) set out to disprove the entrenched ideas. Although Segal's approach to Mishnaic Hebrew

> would not prove acceptable in every detail, his basic thesis received general acceptance, and clearly represents the standard position today. It was further strengthened in recent years by direct evidence of RH[6] provided by the Dead Sea Scrolls (the Copper Scroll and the Bar-Kochba letters) and by synagogue inscriptions. This material demonstrates that the language was used in daily life in matters unrelated to rabbinic activity, and cannot be viewed as merely a scholarly creation (Sáenz-Badillos 1996:163-164).

The finds of the Dead Sea Scrolls have changed the landscape of Semitic scholarship as regards Hebrew. There is no need to discuss their revolutionary impact here at any length. Today, it is generally accepted by Hebraists that the form of Hebrew close to Mishnaic was a spoken dialect in the Second Temple Judea or, more narrowly, in Jerusalem and its environs. Besides, "it is clear that RH was the language of the Pharisees" (Pérez Fernández 1999:9). That said, it is not to conceive that Hebrew of the day was the *main* vernacular in 1st-century Palestine, but rather to

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6   Rabbinic Hebrew, that is, Mishnaic Hebrew of the Tannaitic sources.

admit that it was spoken and understood, let alone written (cf. Fassberg 2012:263-280).

Consequently, the question is – how exactly was it spoken? To stress a peculiar detail, the Hebrew Bar Kokhba letters (*terminus ad quem* 135 CE) demonstrate an interesting feature of a living vernacular (Doering 2012:79): the prefixing of the direct object marker את without *aleph*, for example, תשמים instead of את השמים (Bar Kokhba B-276951; Benoit, Milik & de Vaux 1961:118-120, 158-161 Pl. XXXIII, XLVI). By reconstructing the Lord's Prayer and collateral texts, I hope to contribute towards a greater understanding of the problem.

2.   APPROACH

2.1   Bilingual Approach

I noticed that some portions of the New Testament text could be best explained and/or understood in Hebrew, and some in Aramaic. Below I present the respective examples. Concerning Mt as a whole, I like the solution recently suggested by a Russian scholar, Leonid Grilikhes (1999), in his *Археология текста* ("Archaeology of the Text"), who cogently argues that Greek Mark (Mk) betrays a distinct Aramaic *Urtext*, most likely oral. It is secondary to the Hebrew *Urtext* of Mt, whose initial scope was about the same as the Synoptic nucleus. In turn, Greek Mt took shape based on Greek Mk, and this fact gave rise to numerous linguistically identical sections.[7] This transition, *inter alia*, is made tangible through a number of language markers with a regular correspondence. Despite the train of thought introduced by Black that the "translation" may seem to be not literal but literary (Black 1998:274), Mt often translates the Old Testament directly from Hebrew without borrowing from the known text of LXX. Below is a telling comparison (Grilikhes 1999:15), where Mk agrees with it in the preposition (= Syriac ܡܢ), whereas Mt renders the Hebrew ב (בכל לבבך):

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7   Grilikhes suggests a new frame that allows surmounting the dominant in the West two-source (Q), two-gospel (Griesbach-Farmer) and Farrer-Goulder theories, on the one hand, and yet remaining in touch with the Church tradition, on the other hand. It is not my task to elaborate on it in detail here, but fluent Russian speakers are highly recommended to peruse the book in full for the complete perspective and argumentation.

LXX (Deut 6; 5)	Mt 22; 37	Mk 12; 30
καὶ ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς δυνάμεώς σου	ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐν ὅλη τῇ καρδία σου καὶ ἐν ὅλη τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλη τῇ διανοία σου	καὶ ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς διανοίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ἰσχύος σου

A frequent and rather difficult Markan marker is also εὐθὺς = Aramaic אדין or באדין (Fitzmyer 2004:35, 296, 298; Grilikhes 1999:68). It is curious that the Hebrew καὶ ἰδοὺ = והנה accounts for 28 times in Mt alone, and is absent in Mk (Grilikhes 1999:19). The same pertains to λέγων = לאמר, omitted in Mk on a regular basis. Although these are not unknown, they need to be approached anew in the light of the two-language frame: crucial is the Semitic *bilingual* take on the problem, transcending the Hebrew-Aramaic dichotomy.

2.2   Poetry Approach

In my research I use some available translations to Hebrew. These include translations by Delitzsch, Salkinson-Ginsburg and a translation of the Bible Society in Israel. Very interesting is a reconstruction of Young (1989), who obtained his degrees in Judaism and Early Christianity at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and thus represents a modern Israeli approach. Furthermore, I can point to a curious 14th-century Rabbinic manuscript called *Even Bokhan*, or "Touchstone", which contains a Hebrew text of Mt with a few interesting readings, albeit the Lord's Prayer version is rather nondescript (Howard 1998). All of those as a rule lack the pun, which can be called a "Hebrew rhyme", and which is especially strange against the background of the Sermon on the Mount (and Mt as a whole), whose pun saturation is striking, in line with the ancient Hebrew and Syriac concept of good literary style. For example, Black noted:

> Alliteration, assonance, paronomasia, the latter including not only the pun proper but word-play in general, the opposition and juxtaposition of similar sounding words, are characteristic features of all early poetry. They are especially prominent in the poetry of the Semites: the pun, in particular, which is completely out of favour in modern literature, was regarded as an almost indispensable feature of good literary taste (Black 1998:160).

Once scholars began to perform reverse translations into Hebrew and/or Aramaic, it turned out that

> … под медлительным ритмом привычного греческого текста проступает сжатая, упругая речь, более похожая на энергичные стихи, чем на прозу, играющая корнесловиями, ассонансами, аллитерациями и рифмоидами, сама собой ложащаяся на память как народная присказка (Averintsev 2006:696).[8]

As for the mentioned language markers, there is another prominent marker γῆ. Once uncovered against the Hebrew ארץ, it betrays perfect Hebrew poetry, impossible in Aramaic, as we know it (cf. ארעא). It should be noted that Semitic tongues favour interplay of the radical "load-bearing" consonants, which is not habitual for Indo-European languages.

Besides, one should distinguish between "history" in the text and "literature" of the text. With regard to the Gospels, it is sometimes impossible to draw a clear-cut boundary between the author of the text and the respective character (e.g. Jn 1:29). Therefore, when I write, "Jesus said" or "John spoke", I do so without engaging in the discussion whether certain statements belong to the specified New Testament characters or to the text author. To avoid the misunderstanding, I add inverted commas (e.g. John "spoke").

2.3 A Hebrew Approach to Paul

Apart from the external evidence, some internal textual findings can be adduced. Among these, there is a striking scene of Paul speaking τῇ Ἑβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ/ܒܥܒܪܝܬ in Acts 21-22, whose logical interpretation in favour of Aramaic is, in my view, misleading.[9] For instance, Levinskaia, a Russian expert on Acts, simply brushed this issue aside in her extensive recent commentary: "Имеется в виду арамейский язык, который был разговорным языком Палестины этого времени" (Levinskaia 2008:458).[10]

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8   Translation: "[…] under the slow rhythm of the customary Greek text, there transpires a compressed, resilient talk which is more like energetic verses than prose, playing on the word roots, assonance, alliteration, rhymes, and which is easy to remember like a popular proverb".

9   I take Poirier (2003) as a point of reference.

10   Translation: "It implies Aramaic, which was a spoken vernacular of Palestine at the time".

In the respective section of Acts, a crowd grabbed and dragged Paul in Jerusalem, and the Roman commander "could not get at the truth because of the uproar". To solve the situation, he orders to arrest Paul (NIV):

> As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, "May I say something to you?" "Do you speak Greek?" he replied. "Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?" Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people." Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic (τῇ Ἐβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ) …When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic (τῇ Ἐβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ), they became very quiet.

Here, the NIV translates τῇ Ἐβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ as "Aramaic", although it is clear from the context that we deal with three different languages:

1) the first one can be identified as a Semitic tongue of the crowd, also spoken by the commander and Paul;

2) the second one is Greek, spoken by the commander and Paul;

3) the third language is τῇ Ἐβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ, a Semitic tongue spoken by Paul and not understood by the commander (Acts 22; 24), although understood by the crowd.

As John Poirier puts it (2003:112):
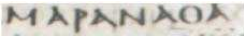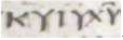
> The narrative seems to suggest that the tribune himself spoke to the crowd in a non-Greek language, which could scarcely be anything other than Aramaic: in making a connection between Paul's ability to speak Greek and his identity as "the Egyptian", the tribune implies that the ability to speak Greek was fairly rare among the crowd in 21, 33-34, yet he personally questions the crowd about Paul's offense. The obvious implication is that the tribune could converse with the crowd in its native tongue … Yet he could not understand Paul's subsequent address "in the Hebrew dialect".

Similar 1st-century evidence comes from *War* VI.2.1 §96, in which Josephus mentions a speech delivered by him ἑβραΐζων before the besieged Jerusalemites, because of "the special attention Jerusalemites gave to that language" (Poirier 2003:110-111 n. 7).

2.4   An Aramaic Approach to Paul

With respect to some other cases, Paul was also an Aramaic thinker. 1 Cor 16:22 writes, according to Codices Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrinus:

ΕΙΤΙΣΟΥΦΙΛΕΙΤΟΝΚΝΗΤΩΑΝΑΘΕΜΑΜΑΡΑΝΑΘΑ

Codex B clearly has a comma inside whereas Codex א seems to underline the two last letters highlighting the meaning according to their source. Codex A reads . After a close-up scrutiny, the two lines beneath the word in Codex א and a line in Codex A appear to be diacritic titles of the sentence below, pertaining to , ΚΥΡΙΟΥ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ. Hence, the meaning seems pithy and double-edged, and it is difficult to espouse only ΜΑΡΑΝ ΑΘΑ ("Our Lord has come"), or ΜΑΡΑΝΑ ΘΑ ("Come, our Lord!"). In the Peshitta it can be found that this verse reveals a beautiful Aramaic idiom, playing with the words "love" and "anathema":

<div dir="rtl">ܡܢ ܕܠܐ ܪܚܡ ܠܡܪܢ ܢܗܘܐ ܚܪܡ ܡܪܢ ܐܬܐ ܡܪܢ ܐܬܐ</div>

The form מראנא is not known in Syriac Aramaic, (whence ܡܪܢ ܐܬܐ "our Lord has come"), but it is found in Nabataean inscriptions dated 4 CE (Cooke 1903:224), and in Qumran in *The Books of Enoch* as מראנא רבא (Greenfield & Sokoloff 1992:94). Apart from that, Palestinian Aramaic would never read ܢܗܘܐ but rather להוה or להוא, or even יהוא as is evidenced by Bar Kokhba letter 5/6 HevEp 14: ידיע יהוא לכן (Fitzmyer & Harrington 2002:160). There is no doubt, however, that 1 Cor as a whole was penned in Greek. I suggest the following reconstructions of the underlying Aramaic thought:

<div dir="rtl">מן ד[י] לא רחם למריא יהוא חרם מראנאתא</div>

<div dir="rtl">מן ד[י] לא רחם למריא יתחרם מראנאתא</div>

Another peculiar Aramaic wordplay transpires from Rom 14:17, although this time it is not quite adequately rendered in the Peshitta:

οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ βρῶσις καὶ πόσις[11]

<div dir="rtl">ܡܠܟܘܬܗ ܓܝܪ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܠܐ ܗܘܬ ܡܐܟܠܐ</div>

The word ܡܐܟܠܐ is used in no less than 19 different verses across the Peshitta according to my calculation, but only in four of them is it consistent with the Greek usage in Jn. The remaining examples reveal a

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11   "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink" (KJV).

change in translators' preferences. Thus, Rom 14 utilises the word ܡܐܟܘܠܬܐ in vv. 15 and 20 for βρῶμα. In v. 17 (βρῶσις), it is ܡܐܟܠܐ – contrary to the usage in Jn 4:32, Jn 6:27, 55 and Heb 12:16. However, in my opinion, it is this very verse that underlines the link between the notion of "Kingdom" and "food", not simply on the thought level, but also through selection of special terminology. My suggested reading of this succinct text therefore is:

מלכותא ד[י] אלהא לא היא מאכולתא

There are both Aramaic and Hebrew portions in Jn too. It is beyond the scope of this contribution to go into much detail in Jn, albeit Hebrew portions (e.g. Jn 8), are of great interest. Here, I confine my comment to an Aramaic example on food, which calls for attention in connection with Paul's saying. That Paul in Romans might allude to the words of Jesus, paraphrasing them under different circumstances, is not new. I want to indicate how the Aramaic text creates a transition from "food" to "Kingdom":

ἐγὼ βρῶσιν ἔχω φαγεῖν ἣν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε[12]

ܐܢܐ ܠܝ ܡܐܟܘܠܬܐ ܕܐܟܘܠ ܐܝܕܐ ܕܐܢܬܘܢ ܠܐ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ

The pupils offer their Teacher some food. Jesus replies in his usual manner with a riddle – he has the "food" ܡܐܟܘܠܬܐ and it sounds like the "Kingdom" ܡܠܟܘܬܐ. This is evident, when reading this text in Aramaic. The point is continued in Jn 6:27: ἐργάζεσθε μὴ τὴν βρῶσιν τὴν ἀπολλυμένην.[13] The Peshitta renders it in a somewhat obscure way: ܠܐ ܬܦܠܚܘܢ ܡܐܟܘܠܬܐ ܕܐܒܕܐ. My reconstruction is אל תעבדו[14] מאכולתא ד[י] אבדא, for there is a clear interplay between the Palestinian Aramaic words "do" and "perdition". Overall, Jn allows for a number of additional wonderful intertextual discoveries worthy of a separate discussion.

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12   "I have food to eat that you do not know about" (NASB).

13   The NIV translation "Do not work for food that spoils" is not satisfactory. There is no "work for". The reconstructed Aramaic text helps establish the reading that makes sense: "Don't do the food of perdition".

14   In dialects of the discussed period, other than Qumran Aramaic, the jussive negation would be carried out through לא. Besides, in Qumran Aramaic the plural form in jussive is without the final -n: hence תעבדו and not תעבדון. See Cook (1992:13).

2.5   *John the Baptist "Spoke" Hebrew*

Here is a famous poetic utterance of John the Baptist (Mt 3:9):

καὶ μὴ δόξητε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς πατέρα ἔχομεντὸν Ἀβραάμ.

λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ[15]

Black (1998:145) offered the following Aramaic reading:

dᵉyakhel ᵃᵉlaha min 'abhnayya hallen laᵃqama bᵉnayya lᵉ'abhram

In my view, this is fine, although in Hebrew it sounds better; in fact, even perfect (Grilikhes 2002:21):

יכול האלהים מן האבנים האלו[16] להרים בנים לאברהם

yakhol ha'elohim min ha'abhanim ha'ellu leharim banim l'abhraham

האלו – האלהים

בנים – אבנים

לאברהם – להרים

John the Baptist's "speaking" Hebrew is further confirmed by an example taken from the same context (Mt 3:11): οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι.[17]   Lk   and   Mk   read   plural: λῦσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ. Jn reads singular: λύσω αὐτοῦ τὸν ἱμάντα τοῦ ὑποδήματος. Jean Carmignac (2005:47) discusses λῦσαι (= *lâshèlèt*) τὸν ἱμάντα in Mk and Lk versus βαστάσαι (= *lâs'ét*) in Mt, arguing that the latter is a scribal error and less natural. I believe this is the other way around, and the Hebrew employed here is specific. First, it is hardly the Biblical Hebrew לשאת, but rather the "Mishnaic" לישא. Secondly, I deem it to be a typically "Mishnaic" idiom using the infinitive after verbs of preventing/restraining action, which takes the preposition מן before ל (= מל) (Segal 2001:166; Pérez Fernández 1999:144). I receive

איני ראוי מלנשאו תמסנו[18]

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15   "And think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (KJV).

16   I prefer האלו to האלה, as it stands even closer to האלהים and is truly "Mishnaic".

17   "I am not worthy to carry his sandals" (NET). Given the Hebrew discourse, "to carry" here should better be translated as "to lift up".

18   Or the full form: את מסנו. Cf. תשמים from the Bar Kokhba letters.

The plural form ὑποδήματα is likely to be the 1ˢᵗ-century pronunciation of מסנו of the presumed Hebrew original as *plural*, although the more usual plural ending remains -יו as in the Tiberian system. In Qumran manuscripts, and in the Samaritan tradition, there are numerous cases of ו- (regular Tiberian singular) read as plural (Tibetian -יו), and some cases *vice versa* (Kutscher 1974:51). It means that the plural diphthong -יו (= -aw) was contracted, and both forms read alike (= -o), and therefore were often confused (Qimron 2008:33-34, 59). Thus, it is not impossible that the meaning is singular, and the pronunciation should be *'eyny r'auy millenas'o tamesano*.

The upshot is that such a problem can occur in *writing*. Besides, the expression "to bear/lift up shoes", employing a typical Hebrew verb נשא, seems to represent the original variant by virtue of being a Hebrew idiom of the day that was not clear to Gentiles, which is why Lk and Jn had to provide a detailed interpretation of it. As a linguistic parallel, one can think of an English idiom "hit the road", which would be interpreted as "set out on a journey" for foreign readers. Another locution with נשא in Jn can serve as a perfect instance of Hebrew poetry of the day (Jn 1:29):

ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου[19]

הנה שה אלהים הנושא תעברת[20] העולם

I have two pun pairs making up an almost ideal wording (with ע = א):

הנה שה - הנושא

אלהים - העולם

For "sin" I use עברה (and not [ת]חטא), for it interplays with γεννήματα (= עוברי) ἐχιδνῶν; ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς (= מן העברת הבא) and πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου (= בעבר הירדן), and thus solves the crux as to where it all happened: ἐν Βηθανίᾳ (= בית־עניה) or ἐν Βηθαβαρᾶ (= בית־עברה). Concerning Βηθανίᾳ, chosen for *Nestle-Aland* 27 and *UBS* 4, the textual committee marked this reading with a {C} level of certainty, which indicates that the editors had a difficulty in deciding in its favour (*UBS*

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19   "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (NET). In both Greek and Hebrew, it is not "takes away" but "lifts up".

20   Or the full form את העברת. Cf. the Bar Kokhba letters.

4:3*). The result of the present intertextual research is in favour of Βηθαβαρᾶ.[21]

3. *HEBREW AS A CLUE*

The Lord's Prayer is found in the Sermon on the Mount, which requires separate research, although a few observations concerning some outstanding Hebrew markers need to be made here in addition to the above. The most important has to do with ארץ, whose role in Mt is pivotal. In order to correctly evaluate the Hebrew of Mt, one has to remember that צ, unlike the modern standard pronunciation "ts," was pronounced similar to שׁ, and ס, like "s". Close similarity can be also observed as regards ה-ע-א consonants, on the one hand, and ע and ח,[22] on the other hand. Below there are some instances revealing the beauty of Hebrew poetry (where Aramaic fails to match up). The first chosen verse immediately follows the Prayer:

Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (Mt 6:19)[23]

(Grilikhes 2002:21) אל תאצרו לכם אוצרות על הארץ

Here, the wordplay is ideal, as the words consist of the same consonants. It is striking therefore that the term אדמה, chosen by the Bible Society in Israel, fails to provide the reading.

μακάριοι [אשרי] οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ [אשר] κληρονομήσουσιν [יירשו] τὴν γῆν [ארץ] (Mt 5:5).[24]

אשרי הענוים אשר[25] יירשו תארץ[26]

ὑμεῖς ἐστε τὸ φῶς [אור] τοῦ κόσμου. οὐ δύναται πόλις [עיר]

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21   The usual translation of Βηθανίᾳ is "house of the poor" (בית־עניה). It is not impossible, however, that the geographic place under discussion had *two* names at the same time: both Βηθανίᾳ and Βηθαβαρᾶ, but they were indeed synonymic: the former means "house of the boat" and has a different spelling (בית־אנייה), and Βηθαβαρᾶ means "house of the ferrying". If this assumption is true, it solves the crux.

22   On the pronunciation of ח, cf. e.g. Βηθλέεμ, Βηθεσδά.

23   "Do not accumulate for yourselves treasures on earth" (NET).

24   "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" (NET).

25   Or the colloquial form שׁ, albeit the biblical אשר better fits in the context (cf. Ps 1).

26   Or the full form: את הארץ. Cf. the Bar Kokhba letters.

κρυβῆναι ἐπάνω ὄρους [הר] κειμένη (Mt 5; 14).[27]

אתם אור העולם עיר יושבת על הר אינה יכולה לתעלם[28]

οὕτως λαμψάτω [יאר] τὸ φῶς [אור] ὑμῶν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων,

ὅπως ἴδωσιν [כדי יראו] ὑμῶν τὰ καλὰ ἔργα καὶ δοξάσωσιν [פאר]

τὸν πατέρα ὑμῶν τὸν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς (Mt 5:16).[29]

כן יאר אורכם לפני האנשים

כדי יראו תמעשים[30] הטובים שלכם

ויפארו תאביכם[31] שבשמים

ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν μὴ ὀμόσαι ὅλως· μήτε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὅτι θρόνος ἐστὶν τοῦ θεοῦ, μήτε ἐν τῇ γῇ, ὅτι ὑποπόδιόν ἐστιν τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ, μήτε εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, ὅτι πόλις ἐστὶν τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως, μήτε ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ σου ὀμόσῃς, ὅτι οὐ δύνασαι μίαν τρίχα λευκὴν ποιῆσαι ἢ μέλαιναν (Mt 5:34-36).[32]

ואני אומר לכם אל אסר שום איסר

לא בשם השמים שכסא של האלהים המה

ולא בשם הארץ שהדום רגליו היא

ולא בשם ירושלם שעיר שלמלך הגדול היא

ואל אסר איסר בראשך שאינך יכול מלעשות שער אחד לבן או שחור

Concerning the word רגליו, I have to repeat: plural diphthong יו- (= *-aw*) was contracted, and was read like *-o* (= *raglo*). It therefore creates a pun with גדול (= *gadol*) + הדום (= *hadom*), which proves that the term רב (= *rav*), chosen by the Bible Society in Israel, Delitzsch and Salkinson-

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27 "You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill cannot be hidden" (NET).

28 It is a shortened Hitpaʿel form (the full one is להתעלם), in line with the Dead Sea scrolls tendency (Qimron 1998:48).

29 "In the same way, let your light shine before people, so that they can see your good deeds and give honor to your Father in heaven" (NET).

30 Cf. the Bar Kokhba letters.

31 See above.

32 "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black" (KJV).

Ginsburg, is misleading. Their choice of terminology for "city" (*qiryah*) is also inaccurate, for it is *'ir-she-lammelech* that creates a wordplay with *yerushalem* (not *yerushalayim*). שער and שחור (and שעיר) sound alike, due to the closeness of ח and ע (Kutscher 1974:509). The following portion continues the topic:

οὐχὶ δύο στρουθία ἀσσαρίου [אסר] πωλεῖται;

καὶ ἓν ἐξ αὐτῶν οὐ πεσεῖται ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν [ארץ] (Mt 10:29).[33]

It is clear that the locution is not random. Another typical Hebrew example is:

ἢ τίς ἐστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν ἄνθρωπος,

ὃν αἰτήσει ὁ υἱὸς [בן] αὐτοῦ ἄρτον μὴ λίθον [אבן] ἐπιδώσει αὐτῷ (Mt 7; 9).[34]

היש מכם איש שיש לו בן שואל לחם ויתן לו אבן

This is a wonderful flow of the "Hebrew rhyme", covering almost all parts of the utterance. The key markers are "son" (*ben*) and "stone" (*'ebhen*), and the ש alliteration:

ha-yesh mikkem ha-'ish she-yesh lo bhen sho'el lekhem we-yitten lo ('e)bhen.

Another, more literal, version is:[35]

מי מכם הוא האיש שישאל בנו לחם האבן יתן לו

In addition, there is a representative instance, though culled not from the Sermon of the Mount:

καὶ ὃ ἐὰν δήσῃς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς[36] ἔσται δεδεμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς

(Mt 16:19//cf. Mt 18:18).[37]

וכל אשר תאסור על הארץ אסור יהיה בשמים

Further examples can be provided.

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33   "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground […]" (NIV).

34   "Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone?" (NAU).

35   Suggested by Grilikhes in private correspondence.

36   The use of the definite article in ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς is not supported in the Prayer (ἐπὶ γῆς). Does it make a difference between "in the Land/Palestine" (על הארץ), in the first case, and "on earth" in general (על ארץ), in the second?

37   "Whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven" (NET).

4.   VERSIONS OF THE PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer makes up part of the Sermon on the Mount, and is known in two versions of Mt and of Lk. I focus on the wording in Mt, and the Prayer text found in *Didache*,[38] a late 1st-century CE source, is without doubt culled from a slightly different and perhaps earlier translation of Mt (PMA 2003:7, 51).

Mt 6	Lk 11	Did8 (PMA 2003:113)
πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς	πάτερ,	πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ
ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου	ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου	ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου
ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου	ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου	ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου
γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς		γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς
τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον	τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν	τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον
καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν	Καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφίομεν παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν	καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἡμῶν ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν
καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ	καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν	καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ

A few points here need attention. The first problem is about what Jesus actually "said". The second problem deals with the presumed Hebrew *Urtext* of Mt, and how it was compiled or redacted by the author, in particular.

At this angle, it can be that πάτερ ἡμῶν, like the whole Prayer in Mt, is a *liturgical* (plural) form utilised by the primitive Church in Jerusalem, whereas πάτερ (singular) seems to have been the *historical* variant

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38   "En dehors de variantes de second ordre, le didachiste s'accorde pour l'essentiel avec Matthieu contre Luc" ["Apart from secondary variants, the Didachist essentially agrees with Mt vs. Lk"] (Tuilier 1995:114).

clarified in Lk with attention to detail (cf. Lk 1:3). The word πάτερ denotes אבא (cf. Rom 8:15//Gal 4:6), which is both Aramaic and Mishnaic Hebrew (Pérez Fernández 1999:5). On the other hand, אבא of the Aramaic Targums is an established regular marker for the Hebrew אבי, which correlation is also evidenced in the New Testament, e.g. πάτερ μου in Mt 26:39 and αββα ὁ πατήρ in Mk 14:36 (Grilikhes 1999:50-51).

Πάτερ μου = אבי, whereas αββα entails a literal translation "the Father". In this connection, the Peshitta fails to recognise the context, and reads ܐܒܐ ܐܒܝ in Mk, instead of ܐܒܐ. Another feature in Mt and *Didache* is: γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς. It may also pertain to the liturgical practice, since the shortening of Jesus' *own* words by the faithful disciples is hardly imaginable. Besides, it is possible that the Prayer in Mt took shape in connection with the extensive commentary in Mt 18, with striking parallels to the Prayer.

Didache is very similar to Mt, but not identical, and the version in Mt may stand closer to the roots, since ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς (plural in the first instance) and ἀφήκαμεν (aorist active plural) rather point to Hebrew, that is, שמים (plural in the form of dual), and Qal versus present active plural of Lk and *Didache* (= RH participle).

5.   HEBREW RECONSTRUCTION

5.1   Beginnings

Taking into account the above, the present reconstruction shall not be deemed to represent the final word on the subject, but rather *a* reconstruction. I analyse the key parts of the Prayer, although I do not insist on some auxiliary details of the text, such as suffixes/prefixes or the word order, but focus on the roots.

The beginning of the Prayer is traditional: אבינו שבשמים. "Our Father" interplays with אל־תביאנו at the end, possibly pronounced like *tebhiy'nu*, rather than *tebhiy'enu*, in accordance with the Dead Sea scrolls and RH tendency: e.g. מאודה of Qumran was pronounced as *modah* (Qimron 2008:26, 39); טוב מאד was pronounced as טוב מות in the 2nd century CE; Origen = μωδ (Kutscher 1974:52).

Ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου is to be read as *yithqaddesh shmakh* (or, maybe, *yithqaddash*). *Shmakh* is the most likely pronunciation for שמך, as reflected in Origen's *Hexapla* and reliable manuscripts of the Mishnah, as well as in Sephardi and Yemenite oral tradition (Pérez Fernández 1999:30). Otherwise, the usual Masoretic vocalisation would be rendered as שמכה. This illustrates an old textual problem of divergence between

spelling and vocalisation of Semitic texts. It is clear after the study of ancient transliterations, and especially after the Qumran finds and discovery of more reliable manuscripts of the Mishnah, that the ending ך- at the outset of the first millennium was pronounced the way it was spelled. Otherwise, it was inscribed as כה- (Tov 2001:104; Pérez Fernández 1999:12), about 900 times in the Dead Sea scrolls (Qimron 2008:58). In this respect, the traditional Masorah-based vocalisation of the ך- ending, including Modern Hebrew, is at odds with historical sources (Cross & Freedman 1952:65-70).

I render ἐλθέτωή βασιλεία σου literally as תבוא מלכותך, which creates a play with the root אב ("Father"). I also reconstruct γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου as יהי רצונך (via יהי of Gen 1, playing with היום and חיים). The root רצה is attested in the Dead Sea scrolls and in the Old Syriac Gospel (Sinaiticus) according to Luke, in the Aramaic form ܪܨܝܢܟ (Lewis 1910). Moreover, it interplays with the key marker ארץ. In ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς, I utilise a popular RH word כמו (כמו בשמים כן על ארץ) found both in the Pentateuch (Exod 15:5) and the Dead Sea scrolls.

5.2   "Epiousios"

τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον

The controversial word ἐπιούσιος is in place in both variants of the Prayer. This word has caused a division within the academic world between those supporting the understanding of "for subsistence", from ἐπί and οὐσία, and "of tomorrow" from ἐπιοῦσα. In the 3rd century CE Origen pointed out that the Greek language knew nothing about ἐπιούσιος (Stewart-Sykes 2004:178-179). It has been found nowhere else in Greek literature. As a rule, the known translations, including Hebrew (חוקנו), favour "supersubstantial" or the like (Shem Tov's manuscript reads תמידית). In my view, such interpretation is more in line with the era of the first Ecumenical Council, when the Creed was being discussed, and the term *homoousios* was being developed, rather than with the middle of the 1st century. Jerome, who mastered both Greek and Hebrew, wrote about a contemporary Hebrew text he had seen, containing the word *mahar*:

> *In Evangelio quod appellatur secundum Hebraeos, pro supersubstantiali pane, reperi mahar* [מחר], *quod dicitur*

crastinum; ut sit sensus: Panem nostrum crastinum, id est, futurum da nobis hodie (PL 26:43).[39]

This is well known. Less noticed is the wordplay למחר – לחם. It also has to be pointed out, however, that the words לחם and מחל (utilised by Young), also create a pun and are worth consideration. Besides, the very context contains a correlation between "today" and "tomorrow", and the latter notion winds up Mt 6 along with κακία (רעה), the abstract counterpart of the personal πονηρός of the Prayer (הרע):

μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε εἰς τὴν αὔριον [מחר], ἡ γὰρ αὔριον [מחר] μεριμνήσει αὐτῆς

ἀρκετὸν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἡ κακία [רעה] αὐτῆς (Mt 6:34).[40]

The reconstructed Hebrew text is: דיו ליומו הרעה שלו. It has been noted that in Palestine, and in Galilee in particular, the bread dough for the morning had to be leavened on the evening before; that is, without the dough "today", there will be no bread "tomorrow": in this context, there is no contradiction between σήμερον and Mt 6:34 (Kassian 2003:65). Therefore, the petition in the morning prayer pertains to today, and in the evening prayer pertains to tomorrow (Marshall 2004:133).

Origen left technical evidence that in Greek the word ἐπιούσιος could be derived not from ουσία, favoured by Origen himself, but rather from επιεναι, that is, consisting of επι and ειμι (Marshall 2004:133 n. 1). Thus, the meaning of ἐπιούσιος is "for the coming [day]", which is commensurate with the Hebrew/Aramaic למחר, as noted by Jerome. Lachs, however, argues that the original reading was "*de mahsarenu* 'sufficient for what we lack' (for our needs)". According to him,

> it is possible that a confusion arose between *de mahsarenu* "sufficient for our needs" and *de maharenu* "sufficient for our tomorrow." This explanation holds as well in understanding Jerome's reading *mahar* (Lachs 1987:120-121).

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39   Translation: "In the Gospel which is called According to the Hebrews, instead of *super-substantial* bread [the word] *mahar* [מחר] is found, which is translated as *tomorrow*; wherefore the meaning: Our tomorrow's, i.e. future, bread, give us today". Better manuscripts read *maar*, betraying the actual pronunciation of מחר at the time of Jerome (see Aland 1996:87).

40   "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (NKJ).

This reading is interesting, but it seems to overstretch the meaning of מחסר, as it normally implies "deficiency" or "poverty". The Hebrew reading *lemakhar* has an Aramaic counterpart *limkhar*. A number of scholars utilise it in their Aramaic reconstructions, as *lahmán d^elimkhár* (Luzarraga 2008:342-353). Nevertheless, this raises a question: could the Lord's Prayer (and, in a broader sense, other locutions) have had a "double" sounding, both Hebrew and Aramaic, depending on circumstances? In this case, at least, the roots are all shared: *lakhmenu she-lemakhar* (Hebrew) and *lakhman d^elimkhar* (Aramaic). In fact, it could be specifically asked if the Prayer in Lk, unlike Mt, was based on an Aramaic text, given πάτερ (= אבא) in the beginning?

Finally, another compelling way to approach the conundrum is to understand ἐπιούσιος as an attempt of a literal rendition of both Hebrew and Aramaic על for ἐπι and חיים (חיין) for οὐσία.[41] Luzarraga has disagreed with it, without substantiating his position as to why: "Pero es aribitrario el entender ἐπιούσιον como 'vital,' identificado οὐσία con 'vida'" (Luzarraga 2008:121).[42] In my view, על for ἐπι goes without saying. As for חיים (חיין), οὐσία *can* imply "being" in the Greek philosophical language (e.g. Plato), and thus it can reflect translator's education. Therefore, the word "life" would be applicable: literally, "upon [for] life". In this case, *'al-khayyim* preserves the radicals of "bread" (לחם), supporting the wordplay, whereas חיים perfectly interplays with היום.

5.3   "Debts", "Sins", "Temptation"

One of the most pivotal terms of the given reconstruction is the roots נשא and נשה (נשי or משה also משאה "debt", נסה "tempt" and מסה "temptation"). Carmignac (2005:43) points out that this wordplay was noticed and suggested by Bibliander (Buchmann) back in 1548. However, before proceeding, special attention must be paid to Mt 18:23-35, which is an extensive commentary on the Prayer.

> Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted (ἠθέλησεν = רצה) to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him (ὀφειλέτης = נשה בו) ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children

41   על חיי is attested in Aramaic, see Yardeni (2000:[89] and 53), who dates it 99 CE. See also Beyer (1984:578); and Beyer (1994:347).

42   Translation: "However, the understanding of ἐπιούσιον as 'vital', identifying οὐσία with 'life', is arbitrary".

and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before him. "Be patient with me", he begged, "and I will pay back everything". The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled (ἀφῆκεν = נשא) the debt (δάνειον = נשי) and let him go.

The word δάνειόν occurs only once in the New Testament, but it was used for the root *nashah* in Deut 24:11:

ἔξω στήσῃ καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗ τὸ δάνειόν σού

ἐστιν ἐν αὐτῷ ἐξοίσει σοι τὸ ἐνέχυρον ἔξω[43]

The verb עשה in the Hebrew narrative can be coupled with נשא, which initially means to "lift up, to take, to carry", whence "to forgive" and even "to marry", as is seen in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:32):[44]

πᾶς ὁ ἀπολύων τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ παρεκτὸς λόγου πορνείας ποιεῖ [עושה] αὐτὴν μοιχευθῆναι καὶ ὃς ἐὰν ἀπολελυμένην γαμήσῃ [נושא] μοιχᾶται[45]

There is another way to tackle the "divorce" problem. The Aramaic Elephantine documents on divorce, quoted by Cowley (1923:26, 28, 45, 49) and re-studied by Fitzmyer (1997c:244, 263), contain special legal terminology for "divorce" – שנא, whose literal meaning (both Aramaic and Hebrew) is "hate". "I divorce you" literally meant "I [have come to] hate you", and "divorce fee" (כסף שנאה) would mean "fee of hatred". The word *san'a* "divorce" perfectly corresponds to the word *nas'a* "marry", consisting of the same radicals, but meaning the opposite. If this legal term was in use in 1st-century Palestine, it could have been employed to make the parable on marriage and divorce sound unforgettable.

The word "debt" is usually understood as Aramaic חובא, also meaning "sin", which, as we have seen, is not always the case. The book of Deuteronomy employs נשה to express how one should tackle the debt and the debtors:

> When you make a loan [נשה משאה] of any kind to your neighbour, do not go into his house to get what he is offering as

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43   "You shall remain outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you" (NAS).

44   Cf. 11QT 57:17-19; see Fitzmyer (1998:93).

45   "[…] whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced commiteth adultery" (KJV).

a pledge. Stay outside and let the man to whom you are making
the loan [נשה] bring the pledge out to you (Deut 24:10-13).

The petition καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν[46] seems strange, for it
speaks about God's leading people into temptation. However,
"temptation" here is not a philosophical concept, but a hint at the well-
known riot of the Hebrews against Moses and the Lord, described in Exod
17:1-7, whose final lines contain the following information:

> And he called the place Massah [מסה = "temptation"] and
> Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they
> tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"
> (NIV)

Asking the Lord not to lead his people back to Massah, the place where
they lost their faith and revolted, the Prayer rather refers to the Old
Testament history, drawing parallels on a spiritual level. The
reconstructed Hebrew text is as follows: ואל־תביאנו אל מסה.

6.   CONCLUSION

The reconstructed Hebrew text of the Lord's Prayer in Mt is very dense
and syllabic:

אבינו שבשמים

יתקדש שמך

תבוא מלכותך

יהי רצונך כמו בשמים כן על ארץ

תלחם שלנו שעל־חיים [שלמחר] תן לנו היום

ושא־נא לנשים שלנו

כשנשאנו לנושים שלנו

ואל תביאנו אל מסה

אלא הושענו מן הרע

In the last "liturgical" line, I use a popular RH word אלא instead of
Classical Hebrew כי אם, which interplays twice with אל above. Thus, a
few words seem to be left out, e.g. כמו and, depending on the case, היום.
Both before and after the text of the Prayer, however, one comes across
πρῶτον (Mt 5:24; Mt 6:33; Mt 7:5), which can be rendered via כיום and

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46   "And lead us not into Temptation".

create a special link with both, as do כן and תן. Besides, the whole text is penetrated by the "sh" and "l-n" alliteration. It is the first and the last strophe that crown the Prayer. These are available in Hebrew only, since the root ישע of "Jesus" (ישוע), implied in the Prayer, is unattested in Aramaic (Fassberg 1992:67).

I use הושענו due to the precedence of ὡσαννά (= הושע־נא), a play with ושא־נא and כשנשאנו, and because it is translated ῥύεσθαι in LXX (Luzarraga 2008:174 n. 777). The Prayer's supplication אבינו הושענו thus refers to the Father, and implies salvation in the Son (Mt 1:21):

καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ[47]

ותקרא תשמו ישוע כי הוא יושע[48] תעמו

Hence, my research has revealed both Aramaic and Hebrew portions under New Testament Greek, which I attempted to explain and substantiate. I based my study upon intertextual findings and external evidence that let me restore a number of beautiful Aramaic and Hebrew idioms. Many, if not all, sound like perfect poetry.

The reconstruction process has revealed a bilingual order of things in the New Testament. The reconstructed Hebrew *Urtext* of the Prayer in Mt, and Aramaic and Hebrew reconstructions of some other verses reflect my understanding of the process of the New Testament writing. My analysis points at Hebrew as the literary language of the Gospel according to Matthew and the liturgical language of the primitive Church in Jerusalem. On the other hand, it confirms the role and importance of Aramaic in the New Testament.

I have only touched on some selective issues of interest. The findings presented here are of course tentative, and they need to be further confirmed, reconsidered or rejected against *comprehensive* materials. Unsubstantiated rhetoric, for example, that "theories of Mt in Hebrew are wrong" or "arbitrary", will not suffice.

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47   "And thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (KJV).

48   יושע – not יושיע – seems to be the actual pronunciation of this form, given the precedent ὡσαννά.

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