

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY
OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY
Faculty of Arts



MACQUARIE
University
SYDNEY · AUSTRALIA

SSEC newsletter

ISSUE 90 — AUGUST 2019



Dr Paul Barnett:
2019 SSEC conference speaker —
His article is included at the end of this newsletter

SSEC PRESIDENT'S REPORT:



Welcome to the **August SSEC NEWS**. We have had some excellent events since our February 2019 newsletter.

In March there was a talk by Dr Peter Edwell (Macquarie University) on the topic of *Christian Churches in Georgia* which was very interesting and well attended.

SSEC Committee Nominations were held at the AGM at the Conference. Our thanks are extended to our departing members: Sam Cook, Lydia Gore-Jones, Leigh Hess, Paul March, Bronwen Neil and Sue Price for their past commitment and many years

of loyal service to the Society and wish them all the best, as well as our incoming Committee Members: Bruce Barnes, Lesley Mascall and Margaret Mowzcko for agreeing to join us.

In May there was the annual SSEC Conference, held this year in the Conference Room at Robert Menzies College, as Trinity Chapel had been double booked for a wedding.

The Curtain Raiser contained two exceptional talks by Laurence Welborn (Fordham/Macquarie University) and Lyn Kidson (Alphacrucis/Macquarie University).

Our Conferences are always of an excellent standard, but by all accounts, this Conference had a particularly cohesive and interesting range of talks and we received many compliments from members afterwards. The theme was **Growing the Early Churches: People and Places**.

As always, many thanks to our wonderful speakers, Paul Barnett, Rosemary Canavan, David Evans, Jim Harrison, Edwina Murphy, Gillian Spalding-Stracey, Greg Stanton and Laurence Welborn, who travelled from far and wide to teach and inspire us.

Also thanks to the staff at Robert Menzies College and to Dr Peter Davis for welcoming us so warmly and to our volunteers on the day, consisting of half a dozen enthusiastic committee members. Without you, our conference would not happen each year. Our thanks go also to Paul McKechnie for being our returning officer for Committee Nominations.

In August our guest speaker was Professor Ben Witherington (Asbury Seminary) who spoke on *Oral Texts and Rhetorical Contexts: The Nature of the NT* at our temporary home in the Australian Hearing Hub.

We have a few events coming up to round out the year. Full details are in the Calendar of Events on the last page of this newsletter. We hope you can attend and encourage you to print out that page and pin it to your fridge to help you stay informed.

In September our speaker will be Dr Eva Anagnastou-Laoutides (Macquarie University), Topic: *Drunk on New Wine (Acts 2:13): Drinking Wine from Plato to the Eucharist Tradition of Early Christian Thinkers*.

Our October talk will be given by Professor Craig Keener (Asbury Seminary), Topic: *The historiographic implications of the Gospels as ancient biography*.

November will see our Christmas Function, which includes a free champagne supper as our way of thanking our loyal members. The speaker will be Dr Gareth Wearne (ACU), Topic: *Hanukkah at Qumran*. It will also include the launch of SSEC Member Carole Ferch-Johnson's book *Telling Hands and Teaching Feet: Nonverbal Communication in Two of the Narratives of Acts*.

We hope to see you at one of these free public events. Feel free to bring along a colleague, neighbour or friend. All of SSEC will make them feel very welcome.

Thank you, as always, to our loyal membership for your incredible support and loyalty over the many years we have been running.

Dr Chris Forbes

SSEC Newsletter

SSEC Newsletter is published twice yearly for the Society of the Study of Early Christianity.

“The focus of the Society is on history: the study of Early Christianity in its Jewish and Graeco-Roman setting.”

August 2019 edition: Number 90

Editors: Lesley Mascall
Alanna Nobbs

Contributions: SSEC Members

Next newsletter is planned for
March 2020 —
deadline for contributions is
4 February 2020.

Opinions expressed in the articles reflect the views of the author. The Society takes no stand in such matters.

For further information about the Society for the Study of Early Christianity, to update your contact details, or to subscribe to the SSEC Newsletter —

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9850.8833

Website: mq.edu.au/ssec/events



[Click here](#) for
Facebook link.

FROM the SECRETARY (Karyn Young)

SSEC supports students who are involved in the history of early Christianity, including The Tyndale scholarship, small travel grants, the various SSEC prizes and the Patricia Geidans Prize. See report in this newsletter.

SSEC has a very important role to play in investigating the history of early Christianity with its non-sectarian, historical approach, allowing a freedom to investigate this particular area of ancient history with academic rigour. Many SSEC members who were and are pursuing research in to the history of Early Christianity have been supported by SSEC and have won international recognition.

SSEC is indebted to Lesley Mascall, Kerrie Worboys, and members of the committee who handle much of the business of SSEC, and assist with the conference and seminars.

Thank you to Gareth Wearne, and Louise Gosbell for managing the SSEC Facebook site, and to Lyn Kidson and Louise Gosbell for managing the website.

On behalf of SSEC, I would like to thank all the speakers who so willingly present outstanding papers at our seminars and conferences on a completely voluntary basis.

Finally, a big thank you to our wonderful and loyal SSEC Members. Your support through membership and donations allows SSEC to make a valuable contribution to the study of early Christianity.

SSEC AGM 2019

At the SSEC AGM, held on Saturday, 4th May, 2019
the SSEC Committee for 2019-2020 was elected as follows:

President: Chris Forbes

Vice-President: Alanna Nobbs

Secretary/Treasurer: Karyn Young

Committee Members:

Don Barker,
Bruce Barnes,
Stephen Burford,
Malcolm Choat,
Peter Eyland,
Lyn Kidson,
Lesley Mascall,
Margaret Mowczko,
Ryan Strickler,
Gareth Wearne.

Many thanks to recent retirees from the committee --

Samuel Cook,
Lydia Gore-Jones,
Leigh Hess,
Paul March,
Bronwen Neil,
Sue Price,
Gillian Spalding-Stracey

– for your invaluable contribution to the Society

Reminder:

Membership fees are now due.

For online payments to the Society,
trybooking is now available.

For membership payments

<https://www.trybooking.com/BBWNW>

For donations

<https://www.trybooking.com/BBWNY>

Donations

For talks from the conference

<https://www.trybooking.com/BEZGD>

SSEC TREASURER'S REPORT

SSEC FINANCIAL REPORT — 1st July 2018 to 30th June 2019		
PRESENTED BY SSEC TREASURER KARYN YOUNG		
OPENING BALANCE		\$ 30,640.77
INCOME		
DONATIONS	\$ 11,005.00	
MEMBERSHIP	\$ 531.81	
CONFERENCE FEES	\$ 877.28	
TOTAL INCOME		\$ 12,414.09
EXPENDITURE		
CONFERENCE COSTS	\$ 2,494.00	
EVENT REIMBURSEMENT - C. FORBES \$238.63 A. NOBBS \$45.45	\$ 284.08	
HONORARIUM - SECRETARY	\$ 1,500.00	
IC PRJ	\$ 337.53	
PARKING	\$ 60.00	
PUBLISHING - BRILL	\$ 539.08	
SALARIES - K.YOUNG CONF.	\$ 2,341.10	
SSEC EVENING TALKS CATERING \$47.07 M CHOAT EVENT \$909.09 B WITHERINGTON \$372.62	\$ 1,328.78	
TRAVEL - L.WELBORN	\$ 1,718.82	
TRAVEL GRANT - S.MORRISON	\$ 500.00	
TYNDALE ACCOMM 2019	\$ 3,359.96	
TYNDALE TRAVEL 2019 - D.EVANS	\$ 1,500.00	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		\$ 15,963.35
CLOSING BALANCE		\$ 27,091.51

SUMMARY OF AVAILABLE FUNDS - BANK ACCOUNT AND TRYBOOKING	
BANK ACCOUNT OPENING BALANCE	\$ 30,640.77
TOTAL INCOME - BANK ACCOUNT	\$ 12,414.09
TRYBOOKING (TO BE TRANSFERRED)	\$8,650.03
TOTAL EXPENDITURE - BANK ACCOUNT	\$ 15,963.35
SSEC AVAILABLE FUNDS	\$ 35,741.54

SUMMARY FROM TRYBOOKING	
2019 SSEC Donations - March 2019	\$1,020.30
2019 SSEC Membership - March 2019	\$1,584.80
SSEC 2019 Conference - May 2019	\$6,044.93
TOTAL Trybooking - May 2019	\$8,650.03

SSEC 2019 CONFERENCE REPORT

Our gratitude is expressed to our conference speakers for their insightful papers:

- **Rosemary Canavan**
Remembered and Honoured: Women of the Lycus Valley
- **Paul Barnett**
Did Paul speak Greek [see page ??]
- **Edwina Murphy**
Ministry in the Early Church: Deacons in Cyprian of Carthage.
- **Laurence Welborn**
How “Democratic” was the Pauline Ekklesia?” An Assessment with special reference to the Chris Groups at Corinth.
- **Greg Stanton**
Accommodating the Entourage that Founded Paul’s Churches
- **David Evans**
“Empty Athens” and the Establishment of the Athenian Church
- **Gillian Spalding-Stacey**
Doubting Thomas” Conjecture about the Early Church in India
- **Jim Harrison**
“Living as Believers in Heirapolis and Laodicea: Insights from Archaeological, Documentary, and Visual Evidence

And, at the conference curtain raiser, held on the previous Thursday evening, we were privileged to hear

- **Laurence Welborn**
“On the basis of equality, ...that there may be equality”: Paul between Protagoras and Rancière
- **Lyn Kidson**
The Prophetess Ammia of Philadelphia and the Rise and Growth of the Early Church in Asia Minor

All conference talks were filmed, and most will be accessible through “trybooking” for \$15 per talk. Just click here: <https://www.trybooking.com/BEZGD>.

If you attended the conference you can have access to these at no charge, by contacting karyn.young@mq.edu.au.

SSEC CONFERENCE 2020

For your diaries: next year’s SSEC conference will be on Saturday, 3rd May, 2020 — with the theme “**economic issues facing the early churches**”. (Title to be confirmed.)

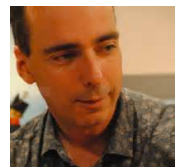
- ★ Call for papers by **20 November 2019**.
Please supply firm Topic, Bio, Hi-res portrait photo and abstract for consideration of the SSEC conference sub-committee.

SSEC PEOPLE, and other items of interest

The Society itself and a kind donor with family associated with **SSEC** have assisted in funding Coptic teaching in the department.

There have been many changes with staff. For details please consult the [staff list](#).

The Ancient History Department has a new head in Professor Ray Laurence, a Roman archaeologist with a particular interest in Pompeii.



SSEC events — for details, see Calendar of Events on the last page — printed there, in case you want to stick it on your fridge.

SSEC co-operates with the Sir Asher Joel Foundation which supports the participation of Macquarie people (and the public) in archaeological field work in Israel through our agreement with Tel Aviv University, and offers post graduate scholarships and brings a visiting fellow in Early Jewish studies to Australia each year.

Israel dig team announces spectacular news

The dig consortium at Khirbet el-Rai, Israel of Macquarie and Hebrew Universities and the Israel Antiquities Authority recently publicly announced their identification of the site as the lost biblical city of Ziklag. "The site fits all the criteria for identification as Ziklag which none of the other sites previously suggested can do" said Dr Kyle Keimer, Director of the dig from Macquarie. The news attracted enormous international interest especially in Israel where it is hot news. Finds include massive architecture, hundreds of intact vessels, cultic remains, thousands of animal bones and a huge stash of sickle blades. Currently the next dig team is being assembled for the forthcoming excavations in late January/February 2020. A team of around 30 staff and students will go from Macquarie. "We are very grateful to our donors, especially the Roth families and Mr Isaac Wakil for funding the dig" said Dr Gil Davis, Director of the Ancient Israel Program. "It is a huge opportunity for our students to conduct cutting edge research in a major archaeological site.

"Volunteers interested in joining the dig should contact Drs. Davis (gil.davis@mq.edu.au) or Keimer (kyle.keimer@mq.edu.au) for more details."

Continuing Education Programme - Cost \$160 per unit. Dates for sessions, and the full list of units on offer will be available on the department's website. [click here](#).

One student remarked "This course provided a wonderful opportunity to learn about various aspects of ancient Greece, and gave access to top class teaching without the stress of exams."

SSEC awards

PATRICIA GEIDANS PRIZE FOR 2019

This prize is awarded for the best thesis in the Master of Research programme in the broad area of Early Christian and Jewish Studies. The prize was not awarded in 2019.

Patricia Geidans OAM received her Australia Day honours in 2009. She was a founding member of the Society, for many years SSEC's Secretary and attended many of the SSEC functions. Pat generously left a bequest to the society which will be put towards offering a future post-doctoral fellowship in the history of early Christianity.

SSEC SCHOLARSHIPS

The Macquarie/Tyndale Cambridge Travelling Scholarship is kindly funded by some SSEC members who designate donations for this purpose.

It is our pleasure to announce that the Macquarie/Tyndale Cambridge scholarship, for travel in 2020, was won by **Charles Thorne**. The project on which he will be working is "....."

Congratulations to Charles. We look forward to a short travel report, next year.

Previous winners of the Tyndale Scholarship are:

2009: Bernard Doherty and Gerald Donker	2015: James Unwin
2010: Murray Smith	2016: Lydia Gore-Jones and Rory Shiner
2011: Shin Min Seok	2017: Benjamin Overcash
2012: Bradley Bitner	2018: Marty Feltham
2013: Julien Ogereau	2019: David Evans
2014: Lyn Kidson	2020: Charles Thorne

Details on applying for this and other Ancient History scholarships is on the Ancient History website, [scholarship page](#).

Further enquiries: Phone 9850 8833 (Dept of Ancient History Office) Email: ancienthistory@mq.edu.au

SSEC POSTGRADUATE TRAVELLING GRANTS

Each year SSEC offers up to 4 travelling grants to members who are also postgraduates enrolled in higher degree work in Ancient History at Macquarie. These are awarded competitively and are worth up to \$500. Please apply to the secretary outlining your proposed travel, how it helps your thesis completion and how the money is to be spent. It may not, by University rules, be spent on air travel but can be used for conference registration or accommodation, for internal travel, etc. All refunds are given after the presentation of receipts. Winners are asked please to provide a short report for the following SSEC newsletter.

Non SSEC award:

The ALANNA NOBBS PRIZE

This prize is awarded for the best thesis by a woman student in the Master of Research programme — presented by Australasian Women in Ancient World Studies.

Ancient History Affiliates:

Macquarie Ancient History Association (MAHA) –

For enquiries 9850 9965, 9850 8833, or

email: ancienthistory@mq.edu.au

or website: www.ancienthistory.com.au/news.php

Macquarie Ancient Languages School (MALS) offers a wide range of courses in Classical & Koine Greek, Egyptian Hieroglyphs, Classical Hebrew, Akkadian, Coptic, Sanskrit and others, including Hieratic and Aramaic.

The program, timetable and application form will be available on the Ancient History website

at <http://www.anchist.mq.edu.au/mals.html>. To add your name to the MALS mailing list,

email: mals@mq.edu.au

Australian Centre for Egyptology

email: egypt@mq.edu.au

website: egyptology.mq.edu.au

ARTICLE by Paul Barnett, Honorary Associate Macquarie University.

DID JESUS SPEAK GREEK?

Until recently I had believed that the main language of the holy land in the time of Jesus was Aramaic. Aramaic had been the lingua franca of Israel since it had been part of the sprawling Persian empire. Even Alexander's conquests had not succeeded in displacing Aramaic for *Koine* Greek. The Jesus' words like *talitha kumi*, *ephaphtha*, *abba*, recorded in the Gospel of Mark seemed to support the Aramaic hypothesis.

I had been researching *The Making of the Gospels* and focusing on the sources of Matthew and Luke, namely, an early version of Mark and the collections known as Q, L and M. I was concentrating on the appearance of these sources in the letters of Paul, James and (First) Peter, which were written in the few years between Jesus and the writing of Matthew and Luke. The striking thing is that these gospel fragments embedded in these early letters are Greek and close chronologically to Jesus and they do not back translate into Aramaic.

I was struck, too, by the fact that only three Aramaic words are found in Paul's letters, our earliest Christian texts: *abba*, *Maran atha*, *amen*. Furthermore, of the thousands of gospel manuscripts going back to the early second century, not one is written in Aramaic.

I had understood correctly that Jesus would have spoken Greek with the Syrophenician woman, with the centurion in Capernaum and with Pontius Pilate. But now it appears we can think of Jesus speaking Greek with eight people, as argued by Stanley Porter. Nor should we forget that three of the disciples had Greek names — Simon, Andrew, Philip.

The two pre-formatted traditions Paul repeats in First Corinthians — the Last Supper tradition, and the Easter tradition — are in Greek (11:23-25; 15:3-7). Some scholars claim to have found traces of the original Aramaic in these texts, but the stubborn reality is that they survive in First Corinthians in *Greek*.

The rival missionaries from Jerusalem whom Paul called, 'Peddlers', 'False Apostles', 'Super Apostles' who came to Corinth from Jerusalem to displace Paul (in c. AD 56) excelled in public speaking and

rhetoric, which would have been in Greek. The linguistic skill of these men provides indirect evidence for the currency of the Greek language and education in Jerusalem.

Many believe that Peter's amanuensis, Silvanus, shaped the language in the First Letter of Peter, a view to which I subscribe (1 Peter 5:12). Silvanus (aka Silas in Acts) was evidently an accomplished scholar with superior skills in Greek language. He was also a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37). Since Silvanus was from Jerusalem it is another reason to believe in the high level of Greek usage at that time in the Holy City. The same holds true for John Mark, who was a competent writer of Greek, with an understanding of Aramaic, and Latin (as revealed by his numerous Latinisms in the Gospel that bears his name). Not least, Paul, a Jerusalemite from his early teens, spoke Aramaic and was an accomplished writer of Greek, and most likely also Latin (being a Roman Citizen).

G. Scott Gleaves:

A late exposure to G. Scott Gleaves's monograph, *Did Jesus Speak Greek?* (Wipf and Stock, 2015) tended to confirm my new sense of Greek usage in Israel at the time of Jesus. He reminded me that eminent scholars have supported the Greek hypothesis — Stanley Porter, Nigel Turner and J. N. Sevenster — and among older scholars, Thomas Abbott and Edward Grinfield.

- Galilee was surrounded by cities that were culturally and linguistically Greek:
 - The cities of Phoenicia
 - Cities established by the Seleucids: Pella, Gadara, Hippos, Dion, Philotera
 - Cities established by Herod Philip: Caesarea Philippi, Bethsaida
 - Cities founded or re-founded by Herod Antipas: Sepphoris, Tiberias.
- Jesus' home, Nazareth, was close to Caesarea Maritima, Dora, Ptolemais, Tiberias, Sepphoris.
- Widespread currency of Greek is confirmed by archaeological remains:
 - Of the twenty-nine Mt Olivet ossuaries eleven are Greek.
 - The Theodoret Inscription in Jerusalem
 - The Letter of bar Kochba
 - The Temple warning
 - Martin Hengel, an authority on Hellenization in Israel, had long ago described Jerusalem as a 'Greek city'.
- Jesus travelled extensively in Hellenized regions to the north and east of Galilee where Greek was dominant. Galilee was ringed with Greek-speaking city-states — Tyre and Sidon to the northwest; Hippos and Gadara to the east; Scythopolis to the south. Sepphoris and Tiberias, the major cities of the tetrarchy of Galilee, were culturally Hellenistic.
- Buying and selling in Galilee depended on a capacity to understand Greek due to travelers streaming along the Via Maris that passed through Galilee. Likewise, the proximity of nearby city-states to Galilee implied travel to and from them to buy and to sell. The degree to which Palestine had been Hellenized is evident in the inscriptions and papyri from that era.
- Three of the disciples, Philip, Simon and Andrew had Greek names and came from Bethsaida in Gaulanitis, a Greek-speaking tetrarchy. This was the obvious reason that Philip was sought out by some "Greeks" who wanted to meet Jesus — and why he quickly involved Andrew (John 12:20-22).

Jesus' Bilingualism:

Large crowds from Greek-speaking regions — 'all over Syria' (Matt 4:24); 'the Decapolis' (Matt 4:25); 'the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon' (Luke 6:17) came to hear Jesus teach. They would not have made that journey unless they knew Jesus would be speaking their language, Greek.

We can readily imagine that Jesus taught in both languages when attended by large crowds. Jesus would have ensured that both language groups understood his message. Those who understood in both languages would have the additional benefit of memory enhanced by repetition.

Recording the words of Jesus

The popular view that Jesus' followers were illiterate artisans has rightly been discarded. The four fishermen (Simon, Andrew, James and John) ran a business cooperative. Several at least among his disciples were both literate and numerate, for example the customs collector, Matthew. Furthermore, archaeological discoveries have opened a window for our understanding of the creation of written records. We are well able to envisage the narratives of 'the things that have been fulfilled among us' (Luke 1:1) being written post-Easter. This process, however, may well have begun during the brief pre-Easter years.

The Gospels were written in Greek; the sources underlying Matthew and Luke were written in Greek; echoes of these sources in the letters of Paul, James and Peter were most probably written in Greek. The most logical conclusion is that the sources of the Gospels were also written in Greek *from their beginnings* based on the likelihood that Jesus taught often in Greek (as well as Aramaic). Jesus' words and deeds were committed to writing in Greek from earliest times. Our understanding is that this process began during those few years Jesus was active in his messianic ministry, accompanied as he was by the twelve disciples.

The consequence of this is significant and controversial: Aramaic-based oral transmission played only a temporary role in early Christianity. If this explanation is correct it means that the elaborate theories of oral transmission developed by Kenneth Bailey and followed by James Dunn, for example, need to be reconsidered. Jesus delivered his message of the kingdom in both Aramaic and Greek and from the beginning may have been written in both. However, the case is strong that the message was soon written in Greek.

A Brief Lead-time

As stated, the brevity factor should be recognized. Because we are able to date the letters of Paul that echo many of Jesus' words (especially 1 Corinthians in 55 and Romans in 56) we are able to set the practical limits by which Paul had access to these source traditions. We are able to plot the lead-time of thirty or so years between Jesus and the writing of Mark's Gospel, and forty years for Matthew and Luke. This is a brief and limited period, certainly not the timespan in which a radical refashioning of Jesus would have occurred. The deviating, Gnostic re-portrayals of Jesus occurred in the *second* century. Valentinus, for example, wrote his *Gospel of Truth* more than a century after Jesus.

Conclusion

This paper has offered suggestions about the languages of first century Palestine and the languages in which Jesus taught. Widely held are the twin views that the Aramaic was the principal language, that Jesus conversed in Aramaic, and that his teaching was remembered in Aramaic.

The evidence, however, points to the currency of *both* Aramaic and Greek but with the latter gaining the ascendancy. This, it is argued, is reflected in Jesus use of both but with his greater use of Greek. From the beginning, therefore, Greek became the vehicle for the new faith including in the creation of the sources that would evolve into the text of the four Gospels.

As to the mode of transmission there is a better argument for transmission by individual eyewitnesses than for some form of community-based story telling. Oral transmission doubtless had a role, but it was secondary and diminished with the passing of the years.

If indeed Jesus spoke mainly Greek, with some surviving usages of Aramaic (mainly in the Gospel of Mark), it means that we can draw very much closer to the historical Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth than would otherwise be the case.

Afterword: Josephus and 'the language of our country'

Josephus initially wrote the *Jewish War* 'in the language of our country', Aramaic, and sent it to people of 'Parthia, Babylonia, and Arabia and the Jewish Dispersion in Mesopotamia and the inhabitants of Adiabene' (*Jewish War* 1.6).

In Rome, Josephus determined to translate the *Jewish War* into the Greek tongue 'for the sake of such as live under the government of the Romans' (*Jewish War* 1.3).

Josephus made these comments regarding Greek:

I have also taken a great deal of pains to obtain the learning of Greek, and understand the elements of the Greek language, although I have so long accustomed myself to speak *our own tongue*, that I cannot pronounce Greek with sufficient exactness . . . (*Jewish Antiquities* 20.11)

Note that Josephus refers to Aramaic as 'our own tongue'.

This is how Josephus worked on the rewritten Greek version of the *Jewish War*:

Then, in the leisure that Rome afforded me, with all my materials in readiness, and *with the aid of some assistants for the Greek*, at last I committed to writing my narrative of the events (*Against Apion* 1.50).

Josephus may be understood to be saying that Greek was unknown to him and that Aramaic was 'our own tongue' and 'the language of our country'.

Is it possible, however, that his background as an aristocrat and a Pharisee cloistered him in an Aramaic-speaking world so that he was not schooled in writing Greek?

The vast expanses of Greek in *Antiquities*, *War*, *Apion* and *Life* make it difficult to believe that Josephus had to learn to write Greek *de novo*. The quality of the Greek of these extensive texts does not reflect the labours of a late learner. It is more likely that Josephus had at least a rudimentary knowledge of spoken Greek before his 'assistants' supported him through the writing of the *Jewish War*.

It appears that *Jewish War* is thoroughly Greek and reflects no dependence on an Aramaic original, but is an independent, re-written work that does not translate his Aramaic original.

Paul Barnett

SSEC CALENDAR OF EVENTS AS AT 22nd AUGUST 2019

DATE AND TIME	EVENT
Wednesday 18 September, 2019 - 7pm Museum of Ancient Cultures	Speaker: Dr Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides (Macquarie University) Topic: <i>Drunk On New Wine (Acts 2:13): Drinking Wine from Plato to the Eucharist Tradition of Early Christian Thinkers</i>
Wednesday 2 October, 2019 - 7pm Museum of Ancient Cultures	Speaker: Professor Craig Keener (Asbury Seminary) Topic: <i>The historiographic implications of the Gospels as ancient biography</i>
Wednesday 13 November, 2019 - 7pm, Christmas Event Museum of Ancient Cultures	Speaker: Dr Gareth Wearne (ACU) Topic: <i>Hanukkah at Qumran</i> Includes launch of SSEC Member Carole Ferch-Johnson's book "Telling Hands and Teaching Feet: Nonverbal Communication in Two of the Narratives of Acts."

Parking - It has been advised that parking after 6pm is now free. Members should park in the X3/W4 Carpark for easy access to both the Museum of Ancient Cultures, 29 Wally's Walk and the Australian Hearing Hub, 16 University Avenue.

There is easy public access to the University by both bus and train.

Costs: The SSEC Committee voted to abolish all entry costs for meetings. There is instead a strictly optional gold coin donation.

Unless otherwise indicated, all events will be held at the Museum of Ancient Cultures, Level 3, 29 Wally's Walk (former X5B), Macquarie University commencing 7pm.

For further details, please visit the SSEC Website: <https://www.mq.edu.au/about/about-the-university/faculties-and-departments/faculty-of-arts/departments-and-centres/departments-of-ancient-history/engage/the-society-for-the-study-of-early-christianity> or contact us as follows: **T: +61 (2) 9850 8844, E: SSEC@mq.edu.au** (preferred)