

Cambridge University Press

0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus

Mark A. Chancey

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

GRECO-ROMAN CULTURE AND THE GALILEE OF JESUS

Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus, the first book-length investigation of this topic, challenges the conventional scholarly view that first-century Galilee was thoroughly Hellenized. Examining architecture, inscriptions, coins, and art from Alexander the Great's conquest until the early fourth century CE, Chancey argues that the extent of Greco-Roman culture in the time of Jesus has often been greatly exaggerated. Antipas's reign in the early first century was indeed a time of transition, but the more dramatic shifts in Galilee's cultural climate happened in the second century, after the arrival of a large Roman garrison. Much of Galilee's Hellenization should thus be understood within the context of its Romanization. Any attempt to understand the Galilean setting of Jesus must recognize the significance of the region's historical development as well as how Galilee fits into the larger context of the Roman East.

MARK CHANCEY is Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Southern Methodist University, Dallas. He is author of *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee* (2002, SNTS Monograph No. 118).

Cambridge University Press
0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus
Mark A. Chancey
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

SOCIETY FOR NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

MONOGRAPH SERIES

General Editor: John M. Court

Recent titles in the series

120. Belly and Body in the Pauline Epistles
KARL OLAV SANDNES
o 521 81535 5
121. The First Christian Historian
DANIEL MARGUERAT
o 521 81650 5
122. An Aramaic Approach to Q
MAURICE CASEY
o 521 81723 4
123. Isaiah's Christ in Matthew's Gospel
RICHARD BEATON
o 521 81888 5
124. God and History in the Book of Revelation
MICHAEL GILBERSTON
o 521 82466 4
125. Jesus' Defeat of Death
PETER G. BOLT
o 521 83036 2
126. From Hope to Despair in Thessalonica
COLIN R. NICHOLL
o 521 83142 3
127. Matthew's Trilogy of Parables
WESLEY G. OLMSTEAD
o 521 83154 7

Cambridge University Press

0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus

Mark A. Chancey

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

128. The People of God in the Apocalypse
STEPHEN PATTEMORE
o 521 83698 0
129. The Exorcism Stories in Luke–Acts
TODD KLUTZ
o 521 83804 5
130. Jews, Gentiles and Ethnic Reconciliation
TET-LIM N. YEE
o 521 83831 2
131. Ancient Rhetoric and Paul's Apology
FREDRICK J. LONG
o 521 84233 6
132. Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi
JOSEPH H. HELLERMAN
o 521 84909 8
133. Theological Hermeneutics and I Thessalonians
ANGUS PADDISON
o 521 84983 7
134. Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus
MARK A. CHANCEY
o 521 84647 1

Cambridge University Press

0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus

Mark A. Chancey

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

GRECO-ROMAN CULTURE AND THE GALILEE OF JESUS

MARK A. CHANCEY

Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus
Mark A. Chancey
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo
Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521846479

© Mark A. Chancey 2005

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2005

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN-13 978-0-521-84647-9 hardback
ISBN-10 0-521-84647-1 hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for
external or third-party internet websites referred to in this book, and does not guarantee that
any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus

Mark A. Chancey

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

For Tracy Anne

Cambridge University Press

0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus

Mark A. Chancey

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents*

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> xi
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xiii
<i>Map of Galilee and northern Palestine</i>	xvii
Introduction	I
1 Galilee's early encounter with Hellenism	24
Before Alexander	24
Galilee under the Greeks	26
The Hasmoneans, Hellenism, and Galilee	33
Conclusion	42
2 The Roman army in Palestine	43
The beginning of Roman rule	44
The Roman military presence in pre-70 CE Palestine	47
Jesus and the centurion	50
Direct Roman rule and the outbreak of the revolt	56
The arrival of the Roman garrison	61
Conclusion	69
3 The introduction of Greco-Roman architecture	71
The first Romans	71
Herod the Great: client of the Romans, patron of Greco-Roman culture	73
From Antipas until the War	82
Beyond Galilee	94
Conclusion	96
4 The transformation of the landscape in the second and third centuries CE	100
Civic titles and names	100
The spread of Greco-Roman urban architecture	105

Cambridge University Press

0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus

Mark A. Chancey

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

Contents

	Sponsorship, labor, and Roman imperial architecture	116
	Conclusion	120
5	The use of Greek in Jesus' Galilee	122
	Chronology, geography, and the interpretation of evidence	124
	Galilee's inscriptions	133
	The "epigraphic habit"	141
	The neighboring areas	150
	Greek and Latin names in first-century Galilee	155
	Conclusion	161
6	The coinage of Galilee	166
	The coinage of Hellenistic Galilee	167
	The coinage of the Roman period	170
	Herodian coins	177
	Civic coins	184
	Conclusion	192
7	Greco-Roman art and the shifting limits of acceptability	193
	Jewish art and figural representation in the first century CE	193
	Frescoes and mosaics	195
	Statues	204
	Other forms of figural representation	210
	Conclusion	216
8	Conclusion	221
	<i>Appendix: Galilean names in the first century CE</i>	230
	<i>Select bibliography</i>	236
	<i>Index of passages</i>	275
	<i>Selective index of places</i>	282
	<i>Index of people and topics</i>	284

Cambridge University Press

0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus

Mark A. Chancey

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

The need for a new synthesis and analysis of the evidence for Greco-Roman culture in Galilee during the time of Jesus became apparent to me while working on my study on Galilee's population, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee*. In particular, I was struck at the importance of context, both geographical and chronological, for understanding the region as a whole as well as the significance of individual artifacts and buildings. When reading about particular archaeological finds, I wanted to know if they were typical or atypical within Galilee, the larger area of Palestine, and elsewhere in the Roman East, as well as within their own time periods. I also wanted to contextualize investigations of Galilee within the larger scholarly conversation about Romanization. In this work, I have tried to collect and present the archaeological data from Galilee in a concise, accessible form, while also directing the reader to parallel finds from other regions and to standard reference works on specific categories of material culture. Fuller bibliographies for individual sites can often be found in my previous book, *Myth*. I have written primarily for scholars who are interested in understanding the setting of Jesus, but I also hope this book will prove useful to scholars specializing in Early Judaism, Syro-Palestinian archaeology, and the Roman Near East.

When discussing specific sites, I have sometimes used the Greek name and sometimes the Hebrew, depending on which is better known. My transliteration of Hebrew names usually follows the general-purpose style outlined in Patrick H. Alexander et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999), 28–29. Thus, *khet* is typically represented by *h* or *kh* and *alef* and *ayin* by a ';

Cambridge University Press

0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus

Mark A. Chancey

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

underdots are omitted. I have provided map coordinates for sites not included on the map, when possible. As for my use of Josephus, translations are typically from the Loeb edition.

I am greatly indebted to the people who read portions of the manuscript and offered suggestions for improvement: Tracy Anne Allred, Jeremy Bakker, Joshua Ezra Burns, Jaime Clark-Soles, Richard W. Cogley, Johan Elverskog, Steven Fine, Sean Freyne, Adam Marshak, Dale B. Martin, Byron R. McCane, Eric M. Meyers, and Adam Porter. I also owe special thanks to Mordechai Aviam, who helped me gather data on Galilee's inscriptions; Eric M. Meyers, Steven Fine, and David Hendin, for providing me with access to forthcoming works; and C. Thomas McCollough, James F. Strange, and Morten Hørning Jensen, all of whom provided me with copies of or information from conference papers. I continue to profit from the wise counsel of Eric M. Meyers and E. P. Sanders, my mentors at Duke University, and Richard W. Cogley, my department chair at Southern Methodist University. Eric M. Meyers first introduced me to the joys of archaeological fieldwork. The Dorot Foundation and the Endowment for Biblical Research helped fund my participation in the Sepphoris Regional Project in the 1990s, and the SMU University Research Council provided grants for research in the libraries of Duke University and for travel to Italy to study Roman architecture. A Research Fellowship from SMU allowed me to take a sabbatical semester in the fall of 2003 to devote to writing. This book would not have been possible without the invaluable assistance of Billie Stovall of the Fondren Library Interlibrary Loan Office. Katharina Brett, my editor, has been an extremely helpful source of guidance and advice, and I am grateful to John Court for the opportunity to contribute again to the SNTS series. I am extremely thankful for the careful attention my work received from copy-editor Tony Rainer. The members of my family continue to provide me with welcome support. My students are a perpetual source of inspiration.

I began work on this project a few weeks before my wedding, and it has been an all-too constant companion with me and my wife, Tracy Anne Allred, in the early years of our marriage. Tracy Anne has been an unfailing source of encouragement, good humor, and healthy perspective throughout the stages of this book's preparation. I dedicate this work to her.

Cambridge University Press

0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus

Mark A. Chancey

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Abbreviations*

<i>ABD</i>	David Noel Freedman et al., eds., <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> , 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992)
<i>ADAJ</i>	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AJC</i>	Ya'akov Meshorer, <i>Ancient Jewish Coinage</i> , 2 vols. (Dix Hills, N. Y.: Amphora Books, 1982)
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1970–present)
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BAR</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>Beth She'arim</i>	<i>Beth She'arim</i> Benjamin Mazar, vol. 1, <i>The Catacombs 1–4</i> (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1973) Moshe Schwabe and Baruch Lifshitz, vol. 2, <i>The Greek Inscriptions</i> (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1974) Nahman Avigad, vol. 3, <i>The Excavations 1953–1958</i> (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1976)
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>

Cambridge University Press

0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus

Mark A. Chancey

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv

List of abbreviations

CHJ

*The Cambridge History of Judaism*W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein, eds.,
vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1984)W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein, eds.,
vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1989)William Horbury, W. D. Davies, and John
Sturdy, eds., vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1999).Steven T. Katz, ed., vol. 4 (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, in press)

City-Coins

Ya'akov Meshorer, *City-Coins of Eretz-Israel
and the Decapolis in the Roman Period*
(Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1985)

CRBS

Currents in Research: Biblical Studies

ESI

Excavations and Surveys in Israel

GLI

Clayton Miles Lehmann and Kenneth G.
Holum, eds., *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions
of Caesarea Maritima* (Boston, Mass.: The
American Schools of Oriental Research,
2000).

Gush Halav

Eric M. Meyers, Carol L. Meyers, with James
F. Strange, *Excavations at the Ancient
Synagogue of Gush Halav* (Winona Lake,
Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990)

HA

Hadashot Arkheologiyot

HSCP

Harvard Studies in Classical Philology

HTR

Harvard Theological Review

HUCA

Hebrew Union College Annual

IEJ

Israel Exploration Quarterly

INJ

Israel Numismatic Journal

JBL

Journal of Biblical Literature

JJS

Journal of Jewish Studies

JPOS

Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society

JSJ

*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian,
Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*

JSS

Journal of Semitic Studies

Cambridge University Press

0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus

Mark A. Chancey

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*List of abbreviations*

xv

- Khirbet Shema'* Eric M. Meyers, A. Thomas Kraabel, and James F. Strange, *Ancient Synagogue Excavations at Khirbet Shema', Upper Galilee, Israel, 1970–1972* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1976)
- LA* *Liber Annuus*
- Meiron* Eric M. Meyers, James F. Strange, and Carol L. Meyers, *Excavations at Ancient Meiron, Upper Galilee, Israel 1971–1972, 1974–1975, 1977* (Cambridge, Mass.: The American Schools of Oriental Research, 1981)
- Millar, *RNE* Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East: 31 BC–337 CE* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1993)
- MPI* Ruth Ovadiah, and Asher Ovadiah, *Hellenistic, Roman, and Early Byzantine Mosaic Pavements in Israel* (Rome: Lerva di Bretschneider, 1987)
- Nagy, *Sepphoris* Rebecca Martin Nagy, Carol L. Meyers, Eric M. Meyers, and Zeev Weiss, eds., *Sepphoris in Galilee: Crosscurrents of Culture* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996)
- NEA* *Near Eastern Archaeology*
- NEAEHL* Ephraim Stern et al., eds., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, 4 vols. (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society and Carta, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993)
- NTS* *New Testament Studies*
- OEANE* Eric M. Meyers, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, 5 vols. (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
- PEQ* *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
- QDAP* *Quarterly of the Department of the Antiquities in Palestine*
- RB* *Revue biblique*

Cambridge University Press

0521846471 - Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus

Mark A. Chancey

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xvi

*List of abbreviations**RPC**Roman Provincial Coinage*

Andrew Burnett, Michel Amandry, and Pere Paul Ripollès, eds., vol. 1 (London: British Museum Press, Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1992)

Andrew Burnett, Michel Amandry, Ian Carradice, eds., vol. 2 (London: British Museum Press, Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1999)

*SEG**Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum**TA**Tel Aviv**TJT**Toronto Journal of Theology**Treasury*Ya'akov Meshorer, *A Treasury of Jewish Coins* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi Press; Nyack, N.Y.: Amphora Books, 2001)*WA**World Archaeology**ZPE**Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

Josephus:

*Ant.**Jewish Antiquities**War**Jewish War*

Rabbinic works:

The abbreviations for rabbinic references are taken from Patrick H. Alexander et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999).

Galilee and northern Palestine

