BETWEEN TRADITION AND INNOVATION: JOSEPHUS'S DESCRIPTION OF THE TABERNACLE (ANT. 3.108-150) AS AN IMPROVED ALTERNATIVE TO THE GREEK BIBLE*

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1. Introduction

For centuries scholars have been divided on the question of which biblical sources Josephus used in his Ἀρχαιολογία, as well as their original language.[1] Josephus knew the Greek version of the Bible. He alludes to it at the beginning of *Antiquities* (*Ant.* 1.10–12), and he retells the story of the *Letter of Aristeas* in *Ant.* 12.11–118. Moreover, for some books, such as *Esther* and *Daniel*, and in some cases of *1 Samuel, 1-2 Kings* and *Chronicles*, his text is close to that of the Greek Bible.[2] However, in light of some general tendencies, it seems that

[1] The argument has been made for Josephus's use of Hebrew sources, on the basis of his claim of translating from the Hebrew Scriptures; for his use of an Aramaic targum, as well as for the use of written Greek sources, integrated with local oral traditions. However, attempts to determine Josephus's *Vorlage* for specific sections of his Bible have proven largely inconclusive. See P. Spilsbury, "Josephus and the Bible," in H.H. Chapman and Z. Rodgers (eds.), *A Companion to Josephus* (London: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 123–134 [128]; for the irrelevance of the onomastics in this respect, see L.R. Lincoln, "The Use of Names as Evidence of the Septuagint as a Source for Josephus' *Antiquities* in Books 1 to 5," in J. Cook (ed.), *Septuagint and Reception* (SVT 127; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009), 179–94. The primary and most comprehensive study on the language of Josephus's Bible is that of É. Nodet, *The Hebrew Bible of Josephus. Main Features*, Cahiers de la Revue Biblique 92 (Leuven; Paris; Bristol: Peeters, 2018), which argues for the use of the Hebrew.

[2] On *Daniel*, see G. Vermes, "Josephus's Treatment of the Book of Daniel," *JJS* 42 (1991): 149–66; M. Segal, "The Book of Daniel and Its Character in Josephus," paper presented at the conference "Josephus Between the Bible and the Mishnah," Neve Ilan, 8 April 2019. On *Esther*, P. Spilsbury, "Josephus and Esther," paper presented at the conference "Josephus Between the

Josephus is presenting his historical work as an improved alternative to the work of Alexandria. That would not be new in Jewish circles. Natalio Fernández Marcos has pointed out that the publication of the Qumran fragments of the Twelve Prophets from Nahal Hever provide a definitive proof that from the first century BCE, "certain Jewish circles felt the need to revise the ancient Septuagint in order to bring it closer to the original Hebrew."[3] This tendency was not unilateral, since others such as Philo considered the Septuagint as inspired as the original, and the two opposing views continued to be present in Roman time.[4] As for Josephus specifically, Alison Salvesen has rightly remarked that if the Septuagint text is found wanting "Josephus takes the attitude that … it should certainly be revised, presumably towards the Hebrew of his day."[5] Yet, Josephus's case is peculiar. He wants his biblical account to be more suitable to the Greek standard of a first-century historical work and yet closer to the Hebrew.

His use of proper names in a declined form, as he points out in *Ant.* 1.129 in the context of the Table of the Nations, as well as his use of a less paratactic style go in the direction of improving the extant Greek Bible into a product of higher Greek standard. For the pleasure of his audience (πρὸς ἡδονὴν τῶν ἐντευξομένων) he Hellenized (ἡλλήνισται) the names in his account and used, for example, the declined form Νῶχος to translate the Hebrew Noah. Although he does not say it explicitly, he obviously preferred to avoid the indeclinable form Νῶε found in the Septuagint.[6] Likewise, Josephus often uses a less paratactic style than the Septuagint, and a more complex syntactic order, for

Bible and the Mishnah," Neve Ilan, 8 April 2019; T. Rajak, "Josephus and the Septuagint," in A.G. Salvesen and T.M. Law (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint*, Oxford University Press, 2021, forthcoming. However, Nodet, *The Hebrew Bible of Josephus*, 247–259, argues for the use of a Hebrew text for the book of Esther, based on the colophon of Esth 10:3. Likewise, Nodet argues for the use of a Hebrew source for 1 Macc: É. Nodet, "Josèphe et 1 Maccabées," *RB* 122.4 (2015): 507–539, against I. Gafni, "Josephus and I Maccabees," in I. Gafni, *Jews and Judaism in the Rabbinic Era. Image and Reality. History and Historiography* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 13–27 (previously published in L.H. Feldman and G. Hata (eds.), *Josephus, the Bible and History* [Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1989], 116–131).

[3] N. Fernández Marcos, "*Non placet Septuaginta:* Revisions and New Greek Versions of the Bible in Byzantium," in N. De Lange, J.G. Krivoruchko, and C. Boyd-Taylor (eds.), *Jewish Reception of Greek Bible Versions*, Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism 23 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 39–50 (40).

[4] On the two tendencies, see S.P Brock, "To Revise or not to Revise: Attitudes to Jewish Biblical Translations," in G.J. Brooke and B. Lindars (eds.), *Septuagint, Scrolls and Cognate Studies,* SCS 33 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 301–338 (309).

[5] A. Salvesen, "The Tabernacle Accounts in LXX Exodus and their reception in Hellenistic Judaism," in K. De Troyer, T.M. Law, and M. Liljeström (eds.), *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes. Studies in the Biblical Text in Honour of Anneli Aejmelaeus* (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 555–571 (571).

[6] In the prologue of *Ant.* Josephus addresses a general Greek-speaking audience (*Ant.* 1.5), but his fellow countrymen are openly mentioned in *Ant.* 4.197; see L.H. Feldman, "Rearrangement of Pentateuchal Material in Josephus' Antiquities, Books 1–4," in Id., *Judaism and Hellenism Reconsidered*, JSJSup 107 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006), 351–401. Such a composite audience is implied in this investigation. As for the tabernacle account, Josephus does not assume that his intended audience would be familiar with the Septuagint version of it.

example, in making extensive use of the genitive absolute, as at the beginning of the Genesis creation account (*Ant.* 1.27–28). The use of the genitive absolute is especially frequent in passages that Josephus elaborates more freely, such as some narrative passages of the Exodus account (*Ant.* 3.1–2 and 7–9). On the waters of Marah, for instance, Josephus makes the miracle happen through the synergic actions of Moses and the people. The syntax of *Ant.* 3.8, in particular, is complex: two genitive absolutes open the sentence, followed by one indirect question with ἄν and the octative. The main *verbum hortandi* (κελεύει) is followed by an accusative and infinitive, and then a secondary clause with a *verbum dicendi* in the participle form (λέγων), from which yet another accusative and infinitive clause depends, as well as a genitive absolute that closes the sentence. The use of declined forms for the biblical names and the tendency to use a more complex syntax throughout the *Antiquities* point to Josephus's attempt to present his audience with a product of higher Greek standard than the Septuagint.

What does Josephus do at the level of the vocabulary? The use of the Septuagint terminology would have made Josephus's enterprise easier in such a complex technical section as the tabernacle account. If Josephus does employ the terminology of the Septuagint, where does that occur, and how is it identified? If he does not, what may be the reasons? To which product does the overall picture point? This paper investigates and provides a tentative explanation of Josephus's terminological choices and motivations in his description of the tabernacle compound—notably the court and the framework of the tabernacle—and draws the conclusions that the evidence allows.[7]

2. The Tabernacle Description in the Hebrew and the Greek Bible

The description of the tabernacle is by its own right a complex passage in the Exodus account, found in two parallel versions (Exod 25–31 and Exod 35–40), featuring respectively God's orders and their execution by the Israelites. With regard to the second account in particular, the Septuagint differs radically from the Hebrew Bible. Scholars are divided over whether those differences are due to the Septuagint translators or whether they presuppose a different *Vorlage*.[8]

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[7] The text of Josephus used in this investigation is that of Niese's *editio maior*: *Flavii Iosephi Opera edidit et apparatu critico instruxit Benedictus Niese. Vol. I. Antiquitatum Iudaicarum Libri I-V* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1885; [2]1955). The text of the MT is that of the *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. The Septuagint is in the edition of Wevers: *Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum. Vol. II,1. Exodus* (Göttingen: Vanderhoek & Ruprecht, 1991). In spite of the late direct textual witnesses available to us—notably for Josephus and the Masoretic text—a comparison of the technical vocabulary used by Josephus, the Septuagint and the Masoretic text remains useful for highlighting some general tendencies within Josephus's biblical account.

[8] A list of the main discrepancies between the Hebrew and the Greek versions is found in W.H.C. Propp, *The Anchor Bible. Exodus 19–40. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 632–636. Scholars have explained these divergences in various ways. See J. Popper, *Der Biblische Bericht über die Stiftshütte. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Komposition und Diaskeue des Pentateuch* (Leipzig: Hunger,

However, the differences in order in the second tabernacle account of the Septuagint compared to the MT reflect such an extraordinary translational approach to the *Vorlage* compared to what is found elsewhere in the Septuagint that it is easier to suppose a different Hebrew *Vorlage*.[9] Not only is the Greek order of the second tabernacle account very different from that of the Hebrew. Within the Septuagint as well, chapters 35–40 differ considerably from chapters 25–31, also at the level of the terminology. On the explanation of this fact scholars likewise disagree, and describe it either as a deliberate effect of the translators, or as evidence of a different author.[10] I do not discuss these issues here, nor ask specifically which biblical text Josephus used in this passage. On these issues the reader may refer to the dissertations of Russell D. Nelson and Stuart D. Robertson.[11] In the next section (§ 3), I will first make some general considerations on how Josephus approached this complicated section of the Exodus account, and then turn more specifically to the terminology that he used for the court and some of its features (§ 4), and for the framework of the tabernacle (§ 5).

3. **Josephus's Account of the Tabernacle: General Considerations**

Josephus follows an order from the outside to inside—from court to tabernacle, from the tabernacle to its curtains, then the ark, the table of shewbread, the lampstand, the incense altar and the altar for the sacrifices. The section on the sacred robes is placed at the end of the description of the tabernacle, as in Exod 28, and as in the Masoretic version of Exod 39 (1–31).[12] Josephus concludes his description of the tabernacle and sacred robes with their allegorical explanation.

1862), 124–165; D.W. Gooding, *The Account of the Tabernacle. Translation and Textual Problems of the Greek Exodus*, TS n.s. 6 (Cambridge: University Press, 1959); G.J. Brooke, "The Temple Scroll and LXX Exodus 35-40," in G.J. Brooke and B. Lindars (eds.), *Septuagint, Scrolls and Cognate Writings. Papers Presented to the International Symposium on the Septuagint and its Relations to the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Writings*. Manchester 1990 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 81–106; A. Aejmalaeus, "Septuagintal Translation Techniques– A Solution of the Tabernacle Account," in Ead., *On the trail of the Septuagint Translators. Collected Essays* (Kampen: Kok Pharos,1993), 116–130.

[9] In these terms writes Alison Salvesen, whose opinion I share; see A. Salvesen, "Textual Criticism. Textual and Literary Criticism and the Book of Exodus: The Role of the Septuagint," in P.M. Joyce and K.J. Dell (eds.), *Biblical Interpretation and Method. Essay in Honour of John Barton* (Oxford: University Press, 2013), 37–51.

[10] Respectively, Aejmelaeus, "Septuagintal Translation Techniques," and J.W. Wevers, *Text History of the Greek Exodus*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse, 3d series, 192 (Göttingen: Vanderhoek & Ruprecht, 1992), 143–146.

[11] R.D. Nelson, *Studies in the Development of the Text of the Tabernacle Account* (Ph.D. Diss. Harvard Univ., 1986) and specifically S. Robertson, *The Account of the Ancient Israelite Tabernacle and First Priesthood in the* Jewish Antiquities *of Flavius Josephus* (Ph.D Diss. Annenberg Research Institute Philadelphia, 1991).

[12] On the other hand, in the second tabernacle account the Septuagint places the priestly garments (Exod 36:8–40) before the tabernacle (Exod 37:1–6). On the order, see A. Salvesen, "The Tabernacle Accounts," 570.

The descriptive order from the outside to the inside is likewise followed for the Temple accounts of *Bellum* and *Antiquitates* (*Bell.* 5.184–226 and *Ant.* 15.391–420). Five times Josephus calls the tabernacle ναός in the section on the tabernacle and priestly clothing (§ 108-187). In one passage (3.103), he explicitly compares the tent to a portable and wandering temple, a comparison also found in Philo (*Quaest. in Ex.* 2.83 and *Mos.* 2.73).[13] Finally, in *Ant.* 3.113, he asserts that the curtain before the gate was embellished with many and variegated designs, not however in the forms of animals, with an extra-biblical remark obviously referring to his own time, since Exod 26:1 and 31 explicitly mention that the curtains of the tent were embroidered with representations of cherubim. Apart from these points, however, Josephus highlights that the tabernacle is a tent and not a temple which becomes clear through the analysis of the terminology he uses for court and tabernacle. Moreover, Josephus twice emphasizes that the tent was made stable against the force of the winds. Robertson is surely correct, therefore, when he writes that "in Josephus'*Antiquities*, the tabernacle narrative was no doubt influenced by his intimate acquaintance with the Temple, but he did not, it seems, deliberately call attention to parallels with the Temple and Temple worship of his personal acquaintance."[14]

4. Josephus's Terminology for the Court of the Tabernacle (*Ant.* 3.108–115)

4.1 The Court[15] (*Ant.* 3.108)

> When everything was in readiness—gold and silver and bronze and the woven fabrics—, Moyses, having first proclaimed a festival and sacrifices according to each one's ability, set up the Tent. First of all, he measured out a court, fifty cubits in width and a hundred in length.[16]

At the outset of his description, Josephus deals with the court (§ 108). Unlike the two Exodus's accounts, which start with the description of the ark (Exod 25:10) and the tabernacle (LXX Exod 37:1–6; LXX Exod 36:8–40 features first the priestly garments), Josephus turns first to the court. He calls it αἴθριον and not αὐλή like the Septuagint, a translation of the Hebrew חצר, Exod 27:9.[17] In his commentary, Feldman notes that αὐλή usually refers to a palace or to the

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[13] On the tabernacle's account in Philo, D. Schwartz, "Humbly second-rate in the diaspora? Philo and Stephen on the Tabernacle and the Temple," in R. S. Boustan et al. (eds.), *Envisioning Judaism. Studies in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 81–89.

[14] Robertson, *Tabernacle*, 3. Robertson continues by saying that "He [Josephus] apparently intended his Tabernacle narrative, which came early in the *Antiquities*, to call attention to the ancient shrine of his people, quite on its own intrinsic interest."

[15] See Exod 27:9–19; Exod 38:9–20 MT; 37:7–21 LXX.

[16] This and the following translations of Josephus's text are by L.H. Feldman, *Judean Antiquities 1-4. Translation and Commentary.* FJTC 3, ed. S. Mason (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), unless otherwise indicated.

[17] 1 Kings 6:36–36a use αὐλή also for the court of the Temple of Solomon.

courtyard of a secular space, likely a reason why Josephus prefers a different term here, but not the only one.[18] The use of αὐλή in a sacred context is not unknown in Josephus: in *Bell.* 5.227 αὐλή indicates the inner court of the Temple. αἴθριον, conversely, is used by Josephus only for the tabernacle of the desert (*Ant.* 3.108, 114, 204, 243), as well as in *Ant.* 19 in the context of the temporary wooden theatre put up every year on the Palatine Hill for the Palatine Games (*Ant.* 19.90). In the passage of *Ant.* 19, εἰς αἴθριον indicates "in the open."[19] The term αἴθριον, however, is repeatedly found in the Septuagint book of Ezekiel (9:3; 10:4; 40:14, 15, 19; 47:1), where it denotes an "inner court giving light to the adjacent rooms."[20] The fact that the court is an open-air space is also stressed by Philo (*Mos.* 2.80) – what is called αὐλή is ὕπαιθρος, that is, "open to the sky." I suggest, therefore, that not only did Josephus prefer αἴθριον as he mostly uses αὐλή in profane contexts to mean a "palace," but he also sought to provide a more specific term than the Septuagint of Exodus, and indicate a space open to the sky.[21]

4.2. The Shafts of the Court (*Ant.* 3.109)

> Then he set up pillars of bronze, five cubits in height, twenty on each of the two longer sides, ten in breadth on the sides lying behind; and rings were attached to each of the pillars …

In Josephus's account, "shafts" of bronze are placed all around the court. I prefer Thackeray's translation "shafts" to Feldman's "pillars," since "shafts" indicates, among other meanings, the body of a spear or arrow, the latter the image that Josephus wants to provide his audience with this passage.[22] The Septuagint uses στῦλοι ("pillars") both for the supports of the court (Exod 27:10 ff.) and the tabernacle (Exod 26:15 ff.). Philo (*Mos.* 2.89) has κίονες ("columns") for both the court and the tabernacle. The MT at Exod 27:10 (and 38:10ff.) has the word עמודים, which is usually translated as "pillars" (e.g., by the NRSV), but

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[18] Feldman, *Judean Antiquities*, 259, n. 245.

[19] θύρας ἔχει δύο φερούσας τὴν μὲν εἰς αἴθριον, τὴν δ᾽ εἰς στοάν. "It [the theatre] had two doors, one leading into the open, one into a portico"; transl. by T.P. Wiseman, *The Death of Caligula* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 14. In the case of *Ant.* 19, the Greek term is easily explained as a transposition of the Latin *atrium*; see Liddle-Scott-Jones (hereafter, LSJ), *s.v.* αἴθριον, which quotes for this meaning this passage of Josephus (*Ant.* 3.108), Lucian (*Anach.* 2) and a first-century papyrus (POxy.268.22). Feldman, *Judean Antiquities*, 259, n. 245, interprets αἴθριον in *Ant.* 19.90 as "portico." However, "portico" is clearly called στοάν in the same passage.

[20] J. Lust, E. Eynikel, and K. Hauspie, *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgard: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2015), 14, *s.v.* αἴθριον. This work will be referred hereafter as *LEH*.

[21] Robertson, *Tabernacle*, 60, suggests an influence of Ezekiel either via the liturgy of the synagogue, or via rabbinic tradition.

[22] Rightly Feldman, *Judean Antiquities*, 259, n. 247 remarks that κάμαξ refers to the shaft of a spear. He prefers, however, to translate "pillars," possibly as a variation from Thackeray's translation.

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which Propp, in his commentary on Exodus, translates as "posts."[23] Propp also highlights that their material is not specified, but that they were "presumably of acacia wood, the only lumber donated."[24] By contrast, Josephus's first remark about the "shafts" of the court is that they were made of bronze (χαλκέας). Josephus uses κάμαξ only in the context of the description of the tabernacle, and he seems to come closer to the classical meaning of "spear." In fact, he adds that the bases of the shafts were similar to spikes of lances and were likewise of bronze. In the Septuagint, the word is found only in 2 Macc 5:3, in the classical meaning of "spear."[25] LSJ provides the meaning of κάμαξ as "vine-pole," "pole or shaft," "shaft of a spear," and "tent-pole." Probably Josephus used κάμαξ for the description of the tabernacle to make clear that the עמודים were bronze shafts or poles, as is typical of temporary structures such as military camps. For this description he probably drew on his personal experience.[26]

4.3. The Capitals of the Shafts (*Ant.* 3.109)

> The capitals of the columns were of silver, their golden bases were similar to spikes of lances and were of bronze, having been attached to the ground.

At *Ant.* 3.109, Josephus mentions the capitals of the shafts and calls them κιονόκρανα. This is a later, not well attested form for κιόκρανον that means, in the words of Pollux and Suda, "the upper part of a column."[27] In Exod 27:10, the Greek Bible uses the word ψαλίδες which probably indicates the "rounded mouldings between the capital and the column,"[28] as a translation of the Hebrew חשוקים—a word itself of uncertain meaning.[29] In Greek, the word ψαλίδες is not common in this sense as it usually indicates a "pair of scissors" or a "vault," with the latter meaning employed by Josephus in his description of Drusus's Tower at Caesarea Maritima.[30] Further, to make matters more complex, in Exod 30:4, ψαλίδες is not the translation of Hebrew חשוקים, but of another Hebrew word, בתים, literally "housing." In this context, בתים describes the rings into which the poles are inserted to carry the incense altar. Probably because of the unclear meaning of the word ψαλίδες, the second tabernacle account (Exod 37:15; 38:20) prefers the word κεφαλίδες, indicating more clearly, among other meanings, the

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[23] Propp, *The Anchor Bible. Exodus 19–40*, 313.

[24] Propp, *Exodus*, 425.

[25] See T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain-Paris: Peeters, 2009), 361, *s.v.* κάμαξ. *LEH*, 304, *s.v.* κάμαξ.

[26] Robertson, *Tabernacle*, 63.

[27] Pollux (*Onomast.* 7.121): κιονόκρανα· αἱ κεφαλαῖ τῶν κιόνων. Suda, *Lexicon*, *s.v.* K, n. 1657: κιονόκρανον· τὸ ἄκρον τοῦ κίονος.

[28] This is the definition provided by LSJ. J.W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus*, SCS 30 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 436 interprets it as "a decorative band of some kind, possibly between capital and colums."

[29] Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus*, 436. Propp, *Exodus*, 425.

[30] *Ant.* 15.337 // *Bell.* 1.413. See J.W. van Henten, *Judean Antiquities 15*. FJTC 7B, ed. S. Mason (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 245, n. 2286.

capitals of a column.[31] κεφαλίδες is in fact well attested in Greek literature,[32] indeed well attested in the Septuagint as well. Exod 27:17, however, on the pillars of the court, has κεφαλίδες, "capitals," not as a translation of the Hebrew חשוקים, but as a translation of ווים, which is usually translated as "hooks, clasps."[33] The Septuagint is followed in this passage by the Peshitta and the Vulgate, which likewise interpret ווים as "capitals."[34] In other words, ψαλίδες and κεφαλίδες have no clear-cut reference in the Septuagint.

Josephus, as noted above, opts for κιονόκρανα, of which the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* gives only 17 occurrences in the whole of Greek literature. The word is found once in Philo in a profane context, four times in Diodorus Siculus to describe the capitals of temples, three times in Josephus (twice here and once for the capitals the Herodian Temple, *Ant.* 15.414), and a few times in lexicographers such as Hesychius and Photius.[35] In this case, Josephus disregards the words ψαλίδες and κεφαλίδες of the Septuagint and opts for a rarer word that indicates the "upper part of a column." The round shapes around the shafts of the court (the חשוקים) are interpreted as a kind of "capital," just as in the Septuagint. However, either Josephus consciously preferred to avoid the unclear ψαλίδες of Exod 27:10—unclear in Greek and with a double meaning in the Septuagint—and κεφαλίδες—that in LXX Exod 27:17 and 37:15 refers to two different Hebrew words. Alternatively, he may have overlooked the Septuagint at the outset, relying only on the Hebrew. He may have possibly used a dictionary. Although biblical *onomastica* from the time of Josephus are not extant, on the basis of two papyrus fragments dated to the second and third centuries, Tessa Rajak suggests that the availability of vocabulary lists to Josephus "can be reasonably assumed."[36]

4.4. The Cords (*Ant.* 3.110)

> Cords were attached firmly to the rings, having been tied at the end of pegs of bronze a cubit in length, which, having been driven into the ground in each pillar, were intended to render the Tent motionless in the face of the force of the winds.

Josephus writes in *Ant.* 3.110 that each shaft had rings and that cords were attached firmly to the rings. For each shaft, the pegs were driven to the ground,

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[31] On this point, see Gooding, *Tabernacle*, 26–27. Philo does not mention the capitals of the columns of the court.

[32] The *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (hereafter, TLG) signals 257 occurrences.

[33] E.g., "hooks" is translated by NRSV, NIV, KJV; "clasps" by Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus*, 440. Propp, *Exodus*, 313 and 426 interprets ווים as "Y-brackets," that is, vertical posts forking at the top.

[34] Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus*, 440.

[35] Philo, *Somn.* 2.55, l. 3. Diod. Sic., *Bibl. Hist.* 3.47.6, l. 9; 5.47.4, l. 9; 18.26.6, l. 7; 18.27.2, l. 3. Photius, *Hom.* 10, p. 101, l. 28; Hesychius, *Lexicon*, E, n. 7647, l. 4.

[36] See T. Rajak, "Josephus and the Septuagint." Rajak bases her conclusion on D. Rokéah, "A New Onomastikon Fragment from Oxyrhynchus and Philo's Etymologies," *JTS* 19.1 (1968): 70–82.

and were intended to render the tent stable against the winds. Neither the Septuagint of Exodus nor Philo hint at the cords of the court or are concerned with the stability of the structure. The cords are mentioned, however, in MT 35:18: "the pegs of the tabernacle, and the pegs of the court, and their cords," MT 39:40, as well as in Num 3.26, 37 and 4:26, 32.[37] The Septuagint of Exodus lacks the correspondent for MT Exod 35:18[38] and 39:40, and therefore does not mention the cords of the court in the Exodus account. In Num 3:37 and 4:32, however, the cords of the court are called τοὺς κάλους by the Septuagint.[39] Josephus seems to rely here on the Hebrew description of the second account of Exodus, and, possibly, to be influenced in his lexical choice by the Septuagint rendering of "cords" in the book of Numbers. Moreover, he chooses a word that is widely attested in the Greek of his own time. While the Septuagint employs the term καλώδια only for the story of Samson (Judg 15:13, 14; 16:11, 12), the word is often found in classical and Hellenistic Greek, especially in comedy and inscriptions.[40] Finally, Josephus probably draws once again on his experience of making a structure stable in a military camp, which would explain the additional consideration of the force of the winds (*Ant.* 3.110).

4.5. The Hangings of the Court and the Basin for Lustral Water (*Ant.* 3.110, 113–114)

> (110) A much flowing, most artfully made cloth of fine linen extended over all, hanging down from the capital of the column until the base, surrounding all the place in a circle so that it seemed to differ not at all from a wall … (113) Before the gates was a curtain twenty cubits in length and five in height of purple and scarlet made with hyacinth and fine linen, embellished with many and variegated designs but that did not represent the forms of animals. (114) Within the gates was a bronze vessel for lustral water having a base similar to it, from which it was possible for the priests to wash their hands and to pour water on their feet. The periphery of the court was arranged in this fashion.

The vocabulary for the hangings of the court confirms Josephus's divergence from the terminology of Exodus. The Septuagint uses the terms τὰ ἱστία for the cloths of the court in Exod 27:14-15, corresponding to the Hebrew קלעים, and both ἱστία and αὐλαῖαι in Exod 37:10-15 (38:12-16 MT קלעים). The screen at the gate is called κάλυμμα in Exod 27:16.19, corresponding to the Hebrew מסך, and καταπέτασμα in Exod 37:16.[41] While καταπέτασμα is used by Josephus for the curtain at the gate of the Second Temple in *Bell.* 5.212, in *Ant.* 3.110, by contrast,

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[37] Num 3:26 LXX mentions no cords.

[38] See Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus*, 579. Propp, *Exodus*, 640.

[39] From κάλος, -ου, "rope;" att. κάλως. See LSJ, *s.v.* κάλος.

[40] Cfr. LSJ, *s.v.* καλῶδιον.

[41] Exod 38:18 MT has likewise מסך. The Septuagint is followed by Philo (*Mos.* 2.84–88) in its use of καταπέτασμα. In Exod 26:31.33.34 and 37:3 καταπέτασμα is also used for the curtain of the tabernacle.

the cloth that runs all along the shafts is designated as σινδών, a well attested word in classical, Hellenistic and Roman Greek literature, that usually indicates a "fine cloth."[42] The screen at the gates, on the other hand, is called by Josephus ὕφος (*Ant.* 3.113), a word he uses for the Temple of Solomon in *Ant.* 8.72 to designate the curtains of the inner sanctuary. In other words, in the context of the tabernacle, Josephus intentionally chooses words different from those used in *Bellum* and found in the Septuagint.

In this case, however, there may be a sort of "dialogue" with the Septuagint, or with Philo. Josephus may have been influenced in this choice of ὕφος by the Septuagint word ὑφαντόν. The word is found in the first tabernacle account at Exod 26:31 in which ἔργον ὑφαντόν "woven work" is a translation of מעשה חשב.[43] In the second tabernacle account (Exod 37:3, 5), ἔργον ὑφαντόν is the translation of מעשה רקם, "embroiderer's work" of MT 38:18 (cf. Exod 26:36). Philo, likewise, uses ποικίλον ὕφασμα for the screen at the gate in *Mos.* 2.93 as a synonym of κάλυμμα which is found in *Mos.* 2.87. Moreover, he uses ὕφος in *Mos.* 2.109 in the plural to specify the vesture of the high priest.[44] However, we cannot decisively conclude that in this choice of ὕφος Josephus was inspired by the translation ἔργον ὑφαντόν of the Septuagint or by Philo.[45]

Finally, the bronze basin for lustral water is in Josephus περιρραντήριον (*Ant.* 3.114), while the Septuagint (both in Exod 30:18 and 38:26) has λουτήρ, "washing-tub," corresponding to the Hebrew כיור, "laver," of Exod 30:18. The word περιρραντήριον is a *hapax legomenon* in Josephus, although it is well attested in Greek literature in the description of temples and inscriptions of sacred sites such as Delos and Delphi.[46] It is likewise well attested in Philo, especially together with λουτρόν "bathing place."[47] Possibly, in this case also, Josephus was influenced by Philo.

We can therefore conclude that Josephus's terminology for the tabernacle court mostly diverges from that of the Septuagint of Exodus, and is largely justified by an interpretation closer to the Hebrew, that occasionally may imply a certain "dialogue" with the Septuagint or with Philo. Moreover, Josephus's

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[42] See LSJ, *s.v.* σινδών.

[43] Exod 26:31 MT: "it [the curtain] shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it" (NRSV); "webster's work one shall make it, Griffins" (Propp, *Exodus*, 312).

[44] Philo, *Mos.* 2.109: "[the vesture] consisted of two garments (τὰ δ᾽ ὕφη διττὰ ἦν), one of which he called the robe (ὑποδύτης), and the other the ephod (ἐπωμίς)."

[45] Most scholars argue that Josephus must have known at least some of Philo's works. A discussion in L.H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937-1980)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), 410–18, 936–37. In favour of at least a partial dependence of Josephus on Philo are É. Nodet, *Le Pentateuque de Josèphe* (Paris: Cerf, 1996), 13–14; L.H. Feldman, *Judean Antiquities*, *passim*; D.T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature. A Survey* (Assen: van Gorcum, 1993), 13; G. Sterling, "Recluse or Representative? Philo and Greek-Speaking Judaism Beyond Alexandria," *SBLSP* (1995): 613. A challenging discussion on the actual knowledge of Philo's work in the first century is found in J.R. Royse, "Did Philo Publish His Works," *SPhiloA* 25 (2013): 75–100.

[46] E.g., Hdt 1.51; on inscriptions it is attested as early as the fourth century BCE: see LSJ, *s.v.* περιρραντήριον.

[47] The expression λουτροῖς καὶ περιρραντηρίοις, "by ablutions and lustration," is found in Philo, *Mos.* 1.14; *Dec.* 45; *Spec.* 1.191, 261; 3.63.

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vocabulary for the court of the tabernacle emphasizes that the tabernacle was a temporary structure, a tent, similar to that which is built for a military camp.

5. The Framework of the Tabernacle (*Ant.* 3.116–121)

> (116) Twenty pillars (κίονες) of wood were formed on each side, constructed in the form of a square, one and a half cubits wide and four fingers deep. (117) Plates of gold were mounted on them on all sides, on the inner and the outer sides. Each of them had two pivots (στρόφιγγες) fitted into two bases. These were of silver, and for each of them there was a socket (πυλίς) admitting the pivot.

While the court was marked off by "shafts" (κάμακες) in Josephus, similar to a military camp, the tent is supported by κίονες, rectangular pillars of one and a half cubits wide, and four fingers deep. The Septuagint, on the other hand, has στῦλοι ("pillars") for both the court *and* the tabernacle (Exod 26:15; 37:4.6).[48] The word κίονες is attested 37 times in Josephus, of which 16 occur here in connection with the tabernacle supports. It is used to designate the pillars supporting a house in Samson's story (*Ant.* 5.314–316), as well as the columns of the Temple of Solomon (*Ant.* 8.77–78, 98, 133, 145) and those of the Second Temple (*Ant.* 15.395, 413, 416; *Bell.* 5.190, 200, 204; *Bell.* 7.149, 290). Unlike the general tendency pointed out in § 3, in this specific case of the "pillars" it is probable that the Temple description influenced Josephus's description of the tabernacle.

Κίονες is also the word used by Philo in *Vita Mosis* both for the supports of the court (*Mos.* 2.89) as well as those of the tabernacle (2.91). In this instance, Feldman suggests an influence of Philo on Josephus.[49] That is surely a possibility; indeed, we have pointed out some coincidences for περιρραντήριον and ὕψος (§ 4.5). Moreover, Josephus closes the description of the tabernacle and priestly garments with an allegorical explanation (*Ant.* 3.179–187), unusual in Josephus, yet common in Philo. Alternatively, Josephus may have looked for a specific and independent translation for the Hebrew קרשים. A different word from עמודים —the term used by the Hebrew for the supports of the court— Josephus may have preferred an alternative word, opting therefore for κίονες.

Josephus is more explicit than both the Hebrew and Greek Bible in explaining how the plates of gold were mounted on the pillars (§ 117). Exod 26:19 MT repeatedly interprets the two bases as placed under the pillars, and made "for its

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[48] On the term στῦλοι, see *La Bible d'Alexandrie. 2. L'Exode*. Traduction du texte grec de la Septante, Introduction et Notes par Alain De Boulluec et Pierre Sandevoir (Paris: Cerf, 1989), 269. The problem of the biblical account, however, seems to be the meaning of the Hebrew קרשים in Exod 26:15. Propp, *Exodus*, 410, points out that while the traditional understanding (attested also by Josephus) is that of a solid board or pillar, the קרשים of Exodus are more likely to be a ladder-like trellis.

[49] Feldman, *Judean Antiquities*, 262, n. 270.

two pegs (or tenons)."[50] Presumably this means that the two pegs were at the bottom of the קרש and fitted into the two bases. The Septuagint, on the other hand, interprets ידתיו not as "its pegs," like MT, but as "its two sides," and translates εἰς ἀμφότερα τὰ μέρη αὐτοῦ "for its two sides," interpreting the word יד as "side".

> καὶ τεσσαράκοντα βάσεις ἀργυρᾶς ποιήσεις τοῖς εἴκοσι στύλοις, δύο βάσεις τῷ στύλῳ τῷ ἑνὶ εἰς ἀμφότερα τὰ μέρη αὐτοῦ καὶ δύο βάσεις τῷ στύλῳ τῷ ἑνὶ εἰς ἀμφότερα τὰ μέρη αὐτοῦ.

> And forty silver bases you shall make for the twenty pillars, two bases for the one pillar for both its ends and two bases for the one pillar for both its ends (LXX Exod 26:19; transl. NETS).[51]

The second Septuagint account lacks these details altogether and is much shorter than the corresponding Hebrew version: the only verse that deals with the framework of the tent is Exod 37:6. In this passage Josephus is clearly closer to the interpretation of the Hebrew, and provides more specific details on the bases of the pillars and how they functioned.

In Josephus, the supports of the tabernacle have pivots (στρόφιγγες). The word στρόφιγξ is used by Josephus only here and for the ark in the same section (*Ant.* 3.117, 120, 135). However, it is a widely used term, especially in the Hellenistic and Roman age; in the Septuagint it is found in the book of Proverbs (26:14).[52] Josephus also adds the reference to a socket in each base, which he calls a πυλίς. The word is a *hapax legomenon* in Josephus with this meaning.[53] Neither the Masoretic Text nor the Septuagint mention a socket.

To sum up, in the case of the framework of the tabernacle, Josephus interprets קרשים as solid pillars covered by golden plates with each plate having two pivots fitted into two bases, and each base a socket. Josephus uses a specific terminology that is different from that of the Septuagint and attested rather in the Hellenistic and Roman age. He seems to come closer to the Hebrew in his interpretation of the pivots.

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[50] Exod 26:19: "and you shall make forty bases of silver under the twenty frames, two bases under the first frame (תחת־הקרש) for its two pegs (לשתי ידתיו), and two bases under the next frame for its two pegs" (NRSV).

[51] Transl. by A. Pietersma and B.G. Wright (eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 69–70. According to Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus*, 422, the Septuagint translator with "sides" indicates the ends of the pillar. The pillars of the tabernacle would thus be constructed with an identical base on each end, and would therefore be turned end to end in assembly.

[52] LXX Exod 26:17 has instead ἀγκωνίσκοι, which corresponds to the Hebrew ידות. See LSJ, *s.v.* στρόφιγξ: Eur. *Phoen.* 1126; Thphr. *Hist. plant.* 5.5.4; P. Cair. Zen. 782(a)7 (III se. a.C.); Plut. *Rom.* 23; Gal. *De usu partium* 1.15.

[53] In *Ant.* 5.5 πυλίς designates an "opening" in the walls of Jericho, and is therefore used in the more common meaning of the diminutive of πύλη, that is "small door" as is typical of the historiography (see Hdt. 1.180, 186; Thuc. 4.110; but also Onos. Tact. 10.20).

Josephus concludes the passage on the framework of the tabernacle (*Ant.* 3.121) by explaining that

> in the rear wall there was a single beam (φάλαγξ) that went through all the pillars (διὰ πάντων ἰοῦσα τῶν κιόνων), into which the last of the rods (σκυταλίδων) were inserted laterally on each of the two longer walls, and it happened to be secured by pegs (γιγλύμοις), the "male" fitting exactly into the "female" (τῷ θήλει τοῦ ἄρρενος συνελθόντος). This secured the Tent against being swayed by the winds or by another cause and was intended to preserve it unmoved in great stability.

As noted by Nodet and Feldman,[54] Josephus does not write about the middle bar, as does Exod 26:28, but instead about a beam that goes through all the pillars (διὰ πάντων ἰοῦσα τῶν κιόνων), seemingly emanating from his interpretation of the Hebrew, in line with the tendency that I have highlighted for the words στρόφιγγες and πυλίς. Secondly, the "beam" is called φάλαγξ and not μοχλός as in the Septuagint. The word is unique in Josephus with this meaning; in *Bellum* (3.95, 124; 5.48) it is used with the military meaning of "battle-array."[55] But the meaning of "round piece of wood, trunk, log" is attested both in classical and Hellenistic Greek.[56]

The bars are not μοχλοί as in Exod 26:26–28, but σκυταλίδες, a word that is used by Josephus only in this context of the tabernacle. Yet the word σκυτάλη is used in LXX Exod 30:4–5 to indicate the small bars of the incense altar. The single beam is secured by pegs, γίγλυμοι, a word that indicates mostly a "hinge," or a "metal pivot" on which a door turns (a synonym for the already mentioned στρόφιγξ). Γίγλυμος is mostly used as a technical construction term,[57] and is not attested in the Septuagint. Finally, the interlocking mechanism is called ἄρρεν-θῆλυ, that is "male-female." Such a mechanism, to which Josephus alludes for the curtains of the tent as well (*Ant.* 3.130), is described for example by Hero of Alexandria (1st century CE), who likewise calls ἄρρεν and θῆλυ the two parts of the interlocking mechanism of a crossbow (*Bel.* 5.11).[58]

We can therefore conclude that Josephus's terminology for the framework of the tabernacle mostly diverges from that of the Septuagint, apparently justified

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[54] É. Nodet, *Les Antiquités Juives. Livres I à III. Texte, traduction et notes par Etienne Nodet avec la collaboration de Gilles Berceville et Élisabeth Warschawski*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Cerf, 2000), 166, n. 8. Feldman, *Judean Antiquities*, 263, n. 277: Exod 26:28 הבריח התיכן (see also Exod 36:33); LXX Exod 26:28 ὁ μοχλὸς ὁ μέσος.

[55] With this significance it is used in 1 Macc 6:35, 38, 45; 9:12; 10:82.

[56] Cfr. LSJ, *s.v.* φάλαγξ: Hdt. 3.97; Ap. Rh. 2.843 and 2.848; IG 11(2), 287 B145. On the term φάλαγξ, see L. Huitink, "Xenophon, Professional Military Vocabulary, and the Formation of the Koiné," in C. Monaco and R. Machado (eds.), *Beyond Standards: Attic, the Koiné and Atticism* (Berlin: De Gruyter), forthcoming.

[57] See LSJ, *s.v.* γίγγλυμος.

[58] On the language of Hero of Alexandria, see F. Schironi, "Scientific Vocabulary," in G. Giannakis (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistic*, vol. 3 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 262–265.

by an interpretation closer to the Hebrew, as well as being attested in the technical literature of the Graeco-Roman age.

6. Coincidences Between Josephus's Terminology and the Septuagint in the Tabernacle Account

We have, however, cases where Josephus's terminology coincides with that of the Septuagint, as the paper presented by Tessa Rajak at the Neve Ilan conference has shown.[59] For example, both Josephus and the Septuagint call the tabernacle σκηνή; the rings placed on top of the shafts of the court and of the pillars of the tabernacle are called κρίκοι by Josephus as in the Septuagint (Exod 27:10); the ark is called κιβωτός (*Ant.* 3.134–138; LXX Exod 25:10–22); the table τράπεζα (3.139-143; LXX Exod 25:23–28; 38:9–12); the lamp λυχνία (*Ant.* 3.144–146; LXX Exod 25:31–39; 38:13–17). In these cases, Josephus's vocabulary coincides with that of the Septuagint of Exodus. But the coincidence seems to be limited. The altar of the sacrifices is called βωμός by Josephus, unlike the Septuagint, which has the same word – θυσιαστήριον – used for the incense altar. Moreover, the coincidences seem to be more at the macroscopic level, while most of the details in the description of the single objects present significant discrepancies. If we take for example the description of the ark (*Ant.* 3.134–138), except for the name, we again find major differences. Although using the Septuagint word κιβωτός, Josephus provides the transliteration of the Hebrew ארון of Exod 25:10—in a trend he follows systematically for the priestly garments—designating the ark as ερων.[60] The cover is ἐπίθημα *only* in Josephus, while in the Septuagint it is called ἱλαστήριον ἐπίθεμα. The rings of the ark are in Josephus κρίκοι, just like those of the court and the tabernacle, while they are called δακτυλίοι by Exod 25:15. The small bars are σκυταλίδες in Josephus—again like those of the tabernacle—and not ἀναφορεῖς as in Exod 25:14–15 or διωστήρεις, as in Exod 38:4. Finally, in the ark the tables of the covenant are placed, which Josephus calls πλάκας rather than the μαρτύρια of Exod 25:16 (καὶ ἐμβαλεῖς εἰς τὴν κιβωτὸν τὰ μαρτύρια; cf. Exod עדת). However, the expression πλάκας τοῦ μαρτυρίου is used by the Septuagint for Exod 31:18, or possibly is reminiscent of 1 Kings 8:9//2 Chron 5:10 and Deut 10:1–3, 5 where πλάκες, "tables" is combined with κιβωτός, "ark."[61]

7. Conclusions

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[59] T. Rajak, "Josephus's Greek and Hebrew Bible," paper presented at the conference "Josephus Between the Bible and the Mishnah," Neve Ilan, 10 April 2019. See also T. Rajak, "Josephus and the Septuagint."

[60] By contrast, the ark of Noah, which in the Septuagint is likewise κιβωτός (Gen 6:14), is called by Josephus λάρναξ, possibily because the Hebrew has a different word (תבה).

[61] On these passages, see D. Markl, "The Wilderness Sanctuary as the Archetype of Continuity Between the pre- and postexilic Temples of Jerusalem," in P. Dubovsky, D. Markl, and J.P. Sonnet (eds.), *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Rise of the Torah* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 227–251 (233).

As a general tendency, Josephus's writings show more terminological divergences from, than coincidences with, the Septuagint of Exodus in the description of the tabernacle. Although the use of the vocabulary of the Greek Bible would have made Josephus's enterprise easier in such a complex technical section, he mostly employs a different lexicon. In several cases, his terminology is more up-to-date and indeed attested in technical sources of the Hellenistic and Roman time, as we have seen notably in the description of the framework of the tabernacle (§ 5).[62] In the case of the court, Josephus's terminology emphasizes that the tabernacle was a tent and not a temple—made clear from his diction, the word for "shafts" (§ 4.2), as well as the references to the cords, and to winds (§ 4.4). By Josephus's lights, writing in this manner, the account of the tabernacle would be historically and terminologically more accurate than that of the Greek Bible.

I have also argued, notably for the capitals of the shaft (§ 4.3) and the framework of the tabernacle (§ 5), that Josephus's words provide a clearer interpretation of the Hebrew in cases where the latter does not convey a straightforward meaning. These cases also suggest that, for Josephus, the Septuagint did not render the Hebrew in the most suitable way.

There are also cases of terminological coincidence between Josephus and the Septuagint (and Philo). In those cases, Josephus seems to engage more closely in a dialogue with the Septuagint. The coincidences, however, are primarily at the macroscopic level, and, as we have seen with the names of the tabernacle furniture, although the same individual objects may be present, they are designated with different words (§ 6). For the description of the court and the framework of the tabernacle, the strongest case of coincidence with the Septuagint seems to be that of the word ὕφος, from ἔργον ὑφαντόν of LXX Exod 26:31 and 37:3.5. In that case, however, an influence of Philo or an independent rendering cannot be excluded either (§ 4.5).

In sum, the analysis of Josephus's terminology for the tabernacle account confirms and complements the tendency that Josephus shows in other aspects of his *Antiquities*, such as the use of declined names and the presence of a less paratactic syntax compared to the Septuagint. Josephus's account of the tabernacle is closer than the Septuagint to the up-to-date technical terminology which was required by this specific narrative. Such a use has been pointed out by Jonathan Roth also for military terms: for example, Josephus chooses τάγμα to indicate a Roman legion, which was the commonly attested word in contemporary Greek inscriptions and texts.[63]

However, in the very section of the description of the tabernacle where Josephus aims at a more updated and more specific terminology, he also makes a concerted effort to come closer to the interpretation of the Hebrew, likely

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[62] In the technical section of the tabernacle, Josephus may also have been helped by an assistant. On the role of Josephus's συνεργοί, see T. Rajak, *Josephus. The Historian and His Society* (London: Duckworth, 1983), 47–63; 233–236; Nodet, "Josèphe et 1 Maccabées," emphasizes the role of Josephus's assistants in his account of 1 Macc.

[63] Jonathan Roth, "Josephus as a Military Historian," in H.H. Chapman and Z. Rodgers (eds.), *A Companion to Josephus* (London: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 204.

deeming that the Greek translators did not always express the Hebrew appropriately. In his prologue to *Antiquities*, the historian indicates that he has superseded the work of the Septuagint by covering not only the Pentateuch but also the rest of the Bible: "For not even he [Eleazar] anticipated me in obtaining the entire Scripture, but those who were sent to Alexandria to translate it transmitted this portion alone, namely of the Law" (*Ant.* 1.12).[64] Yet, Josephus goes a step further than the Septuagint by not only encompassing the entire Scripture, but also by 'revising' it according to a higher Greek standard and an interpretation closer to the Hebrew of his time.

I have mentioned in the introduction that from the first century BCE certain Jewish circles felt the need to revise the ancient Septuagint in order to bring it closer to the original Hebrew. That practice occurred in multifarious ways. For example, in commenting on the translation of the Torah promoted in Alexandria, Josephus acknowledges, and even seems to promote, the practice of "private emendation."[65] While the *Letter of Aristeas* 311, echoing Deut 4:2 and 12:32, curses anyone who would alter any word of the Law by addition, alteration, or omission,[66] in Josephus's reinterpretation there is no curse: whoever sees an addition or an omission to the written text of the Law is expected to re-examine it, make it known, and eventually correct it (διορθοῦν).

> (108) All of them, including the priest and the eldest of the translators and the chief officers of the community, requested that, since the translation had been so successfully completed, it should remain as it was and not be altered. (109) Accordingly, when all had approved this idea, they ordered that, if anyone saw any further addition made to the text of the Law or anything omitted from it, he should examine it and make it known and correct it (εἴ τις ἢ περισσόν τι προσγεγραμμένον ὁρᾷ τῷ νόμῳ ἢ λεῖπον, πάλιν ἐπισκοποῦντα τοῦτο καὶ ποιοῦντα φανερὸν διορθοῦν); in this they acted wisely, that what had once been judged good might remain for ever (*Ant.* 12.108–109. Transl. by Ralph Marcus).

In his commentary on this paragraph of the *Letter of Aristeas*, Benjamin Wright states that "why he [Josephus] has taken this tack is not immediately clear."[67] In light of the present investigation into Josephus's terminology of the tabernacle, Josephus wrote in these terms because he was aware of the ongoing process of revision to the Septuagint, to which he himself contributed. In fact, he provided his audience with a biblical account which was concurrently of a higher Greek standard in its more updated and specific terminology, as well as closer to the Hebrew than the Septuagint in its faithfulness to the text known to the historian,

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[64] On this point see Spilsbury, "Josephus and the Bible," 126–127.

[65] On the concept of "private emendation," see J. Kugel, *Shem in the Tents of Japhet: Essays on the Encounter of Judaism and Hellenism*, JSJSup 74 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002), 19 and 27–28.

[66] B.G. Wright III, *The Letter of Aristeas: 'Aristeas to Philocrates' or 'On the Translation of the Law of the Jews,'* CEJL (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 441.

[67] Wright, *The Letter of Aristeas*, 452.

and represented therefore—at least in the intentions of the author—an improved alternative to the extant Greek Bible.