

Schalit's Modern Hebrew Translation of Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae*: A Reassessment

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This chapter deals with the Hebrew translation of Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae* (*Qadmoniyot ha-Yehudim*) published by Abraham Schalit in 1944.¹ Comparing this with other translations, it also discusses the problems attendant upon translating Josephus into modern languages. Finally, it provides an outline and some critical notes.

Earlier reviews of Schalit are very brief, only covering specific aspects of the translation.² A thorough and comprehensive analysis of the whole work lying beyond the scope of this chapter, I shall discuss a number of select examples.

According to Yochanan Glucker,³ good translations of Greek and Roman texts into Hebrew demand that:

- The translator be a master of Hebrew and ancient Greek and Latin grammar and vocabulary;
- Be aware of the diverse aspects of culture, history, religion, philosophy, and society;
- Contextualize the ancient source in its cultural and literary setting;
- Be able to identify allusions to earlier authors;
- Recognize and characterize ancient genres, etc.;
- Be accurate;
- Offer an introduction and interpretation containing information that may assist modern readers.

Glucker argues that Schalit meets all these requirements.

With respect to Josephus in particular, the translator also has to be in full command of Second Temple writings—the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran scrolls, rabbinic literature, and other Jewish-Hellenistic works—and the vast secondary literature written on these sources. He or she must be

1 Schalit, *Yosef ben Matityahu*. For the Hebrew name of the book, see Schwartz, “Judaean’ or ‘Jew?’”

2 Wallach, “A. Shalit: Introduction;” Bin-Gorion, “Mishné Mikra;” Lewy, “New Paths;” Marcus, “A Review.”

3 Glucker, “Aryeh Kasher’s Translation and Commentary on *Contra Apion*.”

capable of finding the most appropriate equivalent term in the target language, “experienced in textual criticism and [with] a grasp of the problems manuscripts and their potential corruption can cause.”⁴

Finally, Hebrew translators of ancient works written in foreign language all face the questions of which Hebrew to use—Modern, Biblical, or Mishnaic—and whether the translation should be colloquial or formal.⁵ Schalit appears to have preferred Biblical Hebrew—a theme to which I shall return later.

Before dealing with Schalit's translation, let us review the most recent Hebrew translations of Josephus' other works:

1. The *Bellum Judaicum* was translated in 2010 by Lisa Ullman of the Hebrew University.⁶ This edition has brief footnotes, a comprehensive introduction by Jonathan Price, and appendices on the Roman army by Israel Shatzman. Accompanied by color photographs, maps, genealogies, illustrations, chronological tables, and bibliography, it has been well received by scholars and laypeople alike.⁷
2. *Contra Apion* was translated by Aryeh Kasher in 1997.⁸ This two-volume work includes an introduction, translation, (often lengthy) notes, and bibliography.⁹
3. Daniel Schwartz translated the *Vita* in 2007.¹⁰ This tome includes translation, notes and appendices, color photos, maps, chronological tables, and a bibliography.
4. Alexander Schorr published a partial translation of the *Antiquities* in 1940.¹¹

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A Professor at the Hebrew University, Abraham Schalit's (1898–1979) interest in Josephus was complemented by more general research into *Roman Rule*

4 Vagelpohl, *Aristotle's "Rhetoric" in the East*, 7.

5 Zipor, *The Septuagint Translation to Genesis*.

6 Ullman, *Yosef Ben Matityahu*.

7 Gera, “Joseph's Coat of Many Colors.” The very early translations of Simchoni and Haggai are rarely cited by modern scholars: see Simchoni, *Yossef ben Matityahu*; Haggai, *Josephus, Bellum Judaicum*. See also Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship*, 34–36. For other Hebrew translations of Josephus, see Schatz, *Josephus in Modern Jewish Culture*.

8 Kasher, *Flavius Josephus: Against Apion*.

9 For a review, see Gucker, “Aryeh Kasher's Translation and Commentary on *Contra Apion*”—who severely criticizes both the translation and the notes.

10 Schwartz, *Flavius Josephus, Vita*.

11 Schorr, *Antiquitates Judaicae*.

in *the Land of Israel* (1937), his scholarly biography of Herod being translated in expanded form into German as *Koenig Herodes* (1969). Schalit addressed various aspects of Josephus' methodology and sources in numerous articles, translating his introduction to the *Antiquities* (Books 1–10 in 1944 and 11–20 in 1963) into Hebrew and editing a concordance of all the names appearing in Josephus' works (1968).¹²

Schalit was responsible for the entries relating to the Second Temple period in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, also editing some of the volumes in *The World History of the Jewish People* series. For many years he devoted himself to an exhaustive German commentary on *Antiquities* 11–20, this being followed by a greatly expanded German version of his Hebrew commentary on the first half.¹³ His translation is thus the result of much hard work. The labor of love culminated in three volumes, an introduction preceding the first ten books and notes concluding volume 2. The third volume covers books 11–20 and focuses on the Second Temple period. Schalit unfortunately dying before completing it, this contains the translation without any introduction or notes.¹⁴

In contrast to the Brill Josephus Project, Schalit worked alone—an admirable feat.¹⁵ While he made use of Thackeray and other translations, the only Hebrew translation at his disposal was Alexander Schorr's partial attempt.¹⁶ A French translation was also made by Théodore Reinach.¹⁷

According to Bezalel Bar-Kochva (Tel Aviv University), “in general, Schalit's translation of the *Antiquities of the Jews* ... is the best translation of the writings of Josephus into Hebrew published so far, perhaps surpassing all the translations into modern European languages.”¹⁸ It immediately became a standard reference book for scholars writing in Hebrew.

Schalit added the references to the biblical text in *Antiquities* 1–11 (Genesis to Esther). While these are included in the LCL edition and Brill Josephus Project, they must all be double checked. I have addressed this issue with respect to Josephus' rewriting of the pentateuchal laws.

12 Schalit, *Namenwörterbuch zu Flavius Josephus*.

13 Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship*, 34.

14 Schwartz (“Hellenism, Judaism, and Apologetic,” 5) reports that there remained a “233-page German typescript by Schalit, comprising a commentary to the first 108 paragraphs of *Antiquities* 11.”

15 Mason, *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*; Feldman, *Judean Antiquities, Books 1–4*; Begg, *Judean Antiquities, Books 5–7*; Begg and Spilisbury, *Judean Antiquities, Books 8–10*.

16 Thackeray et al., *Josephus*. Schalit cites Thackeray and Marcus more than a hundred times in the notes.

17 Reinach, *Oeuvres Complètes de Flavius Josephépe*.

18 Bar-Kochva, “The Conquest of Samaria,” 30.

1 The Introduction

Schalit's introduction is masterful. Covering 82 pages, it provides an important framework for the translation. Its subdivision is less helpful, however, making it difficult to follow; nor is the table of contents of any help in this regard. Schalit could have taken a leaf out of Louis Feldman's *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible*.¹⁹ In the following, I present the topics with which both volumes deal:

1. Josephus' historiographical predecessors
2. The schools of Isocrates and Aristotle
3. Josephus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus
4. Historiography in the *Bellum* vs. the *Antiquities*
5. Josephus' biblical text
6. Knowledge of a Hebrew text
7. Use of a Greek text
8. Use of an Aramaic Targum
9. Josephus' biblical texts for the various biblical books
10. Josephus' assurance that he will not modify the Scriptures
11. Josephus' audience
12. Josephus' sources
13. The prophet and the historian
14. Josephus and rabbinic tradition
15. Josephus as apologist to non-Jews and Jews
16. Hellenizations
17. Dramatic language and motifs
18. Romantic motifs
19. Appeal to philosophic interests
20. Psychologizing²⁰

Schalit's influence on Feldman is not surprising in light of the fact that the latter considers him the "foremost Josephus scholar of the past generation."²¹

19 Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible*.

20 The topics that Feldman alone covers are: Josephus' priestly bias; answers to the charges made by anti-Jewish writers; establishment of the historicity of the biblical events; the rehabilitation of non-Jewish leaders; the problems of assimilation and intermarriage; appeal to political interests; Josephus and nationalism; a response to proselytism; stylistic and other changes; resolution of difficulties and contradictions in the text; appeal to social interests; Josephus' attitude to women; de-theologizing; Josephus as rewriter of the Bible/rewriting model.

21 Feldman, "Flavius Josephus Revisited," 767.

2 Bibliography and Indices

A cumulative bibliography would have been very helpful to the reader. The same holds true with respect to Schalit's work on Herod, only the German translation containing a bibliography. In the *Antiquitates*, the reader must garner the bibliographic references by trolling the footnotes. The information is very important, subsequent scholars adducing the same works as Schalit—Helscher, Siegfried, Bloch, Mez, Rahlfs, Schürer, et al.²² Schalit's volume also lacks any indices of ancient texts/persons/place and modern authors. This further compounds the difficulties of finding anything therein.

3 The Page Structure

Schalit's follows the following format:

1. Translation of Josephus' Greek text into Hebrew
2. Chapters and sub-chapters and numerical division
3. Notes at the end of volume 2
4. Annotations regarding Josephus' biblical text

The paragraphs are numbered in both Arabic numerals and Hebrew characters. While scholars traditionally referred to either of these, today the custom is to cite the book and section number—*Qad.7:2*, for example. The same numbering is thus employed in Schalit, Thackeray, and Brill.

Rather strangely, Schalit does not start a new paragraph on a new line. The notes also appear at the end of the second volume *contra* the footnote system followed by both LCL and Brill. The notes being too sporadic to provide a specific *ad hoc* commentary, the reader must rely on them and the Introduction to reconstruct Josephus' general rewriting principles. Ideally, each book of the *Antiquitates* should be prefaced by an analysis of its structure and general observations regarding characterization, omissions, additions, and modifications, and an excursus.

22 Siegfried, "Die hebräischen Worterklärungen des Josephus;" Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*. In addition to Feldman, see also Spilsbury, *The Image of the Jew*; Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*; et al.

4 The Greek Text

None of the Hebrew translations of Josephus, including Schalit's, print the Greek text, presumably due to technical and practical constraints. The Brill Josephus Project ("Flavius Josephus Online"), which employs the newer translation of Josephus' works, and the PACE website are the only places where this is available.²³

Strangely, Niese, upon whose edition Schalit based his translation, is only cited once in passing in the Introduction—in Hebrew characters and without full bibliographical information.²⁴ The Brill Josephus Project also uses Niese's edition as its basis, supplemented by the Loeb Greek text and the Münster and Étienne Nodet's enterprises.²⁵

5 The Notes

The more than three thousand notes collected at the end of volume 2, which include a collation of the various manuscripts of Josephus' writings, are invaluable. Schalit regularly compares Josephus with the LXX and MT, on occasion explaining his choice of certain words or phrases. He also compares Josephus with rabbinic literature, both halakhic and aggadic. While basing himself upon Rappaport and Ginzberg's monumental work on the *Legends of the Jews*, he adds references to the Aramaic Targumim, Philo, and Hellenistic and Roman authors.²⁶ The notes also take issue with earlier scholars and translators.

Schalit's translation of the *Antiquitates* being published some years before the findings at Qumran, much has changed since then. In the textual fields, some Qumran scrolls support Josephus' readings, others do not. Some scholars thus suggest that Josephus' employed a particular Greek version of the Bible whose *Vorlage* was closely related to 4QSamuel.²⁷

23 <https://brill.com/view/db/fjo>; <http://pace.hypervisions.it/york/york/texts.htm>

24 Niese), *Flavii Iosephi opera*, vols. 1- (=editio maior); Niese Flavii Iosephi opera (= editio minor). See also Naber, *Flavii Iosephi Opera Omnia*.

25 See Mason's comments in the preface that opens each volume of the Brill Josephus Project.

26 Rappaport, *Agada und Exegese*; Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*. See also S. Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaeae Politics*, 47–57; Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, 3–20. For Josephus and rabbinic literature, see Ilan and Noam, *Josephus and the Rabbis*.

27 See Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus*; Ulrich, "Josephus' Biblical Text;" Driesbach, *4QSamuel^a and the Text of Samuel*.

6 The Nature of Schalit's Translation

As is well known, Josephus' Greek syntax and grammar is complex.²⁸ This fact is compounded by the debate over whether a translation should cleave to the source or flow in the target language. In the preface, Schalit observes:

The aim was to give the translation the character of the Hebrew language of the time of Josephus without forfeiting even earlier forms of speech of Hebrew ... Another difficulty ... was the translation from Greek to Hebrew—two languages that are completely different in structure and character. The Hebrew language does not like long chains of clauses while the Greek does. It was necessary to break up and divide the long and complicated sentences of the Greek original without transgressing two important principles to which every translator must adhere: fidelity and accuracy.²⁹

Like Schalit, the Brill Josephus Project follows the same procedure. Two examples will suffice:

Antiquitates Judaicae 1.59

τοῦ δὲ μὴ θηρίοις ἀλώμενος περιπέσῃ
 δεδιότος καὶ τοῦτον ἀπόλῃται τὸν
 τρόπον, ἐκέλευε μὴδὲν ὑφορᾶσθαι
 σκυθρωπὸν ἀπὸ τοιαύτης αἰτίας,
 ἀλλ' ἔνεκα τοῦ μὴδὲν αὐτῶ ἔκ θηρίων
 γενέσθαι δεινὸν διὰ πάσης ἀδεῶς χωρεῖν
 γῆς; καὶ σημεῖον ἐπιβαλὼν, ᾧ γνῶριμος
 ἂν εἴη, προσέταξεν ἀπιέναι.

Schalit's translation

וכשפחד הלה, שמא יפגעו בו בנדודיו חיות
 רעות וימיתוהו, אמר לו אלהים, שאין לו
 לחשוש לכל פורענות מסיבה מעין זה,
 אלא יכול הוא להתהלך לבטח בכל הארץ
 וכל חיה רעה לא תפגע בו. ושם לו אות, בו
 יכירוהו, ופקד עליו להסתלק.

This passage has multiple subordinate clauses which Schalit makes more comprehensible by using punctuation and breaking it up into two sentences.³⁰

28 See the preface to the individual volumes in Mason, *Flavius Josephus, Translation and Commentary*. The most comprehensive study of Josephus' syntax is Schmidt, "De Flavii Josephi Elocutione Observationes Criticae." See more recently, Ladouceur, "Studies in the Language and Historiography of Flavius Josephus;" Ladouceur, "The Language of Josephus;" Forte, "Translating Book 1." Mason notes the "problematic language and syntax of [A.J.] books 17–19" (*Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees*, 281).

29 Schalit, *Qadmoniyot*, ix (my translation).

30 As Ullman notes in her preface to the *Bellum*, however: "In my translations I have tried to preserve something of the complexity of Josephus' language. I did not find it appropriate to completely eliminate the difficulties of the original, and only occasionally split sentences that were too long" (Ullman, *Yosef Ben Matityahu*, 10–11).

Antiquitates Judaicae 10.93

Schalit's translation

τούτοις καταπραῦναντες τὸ πλῆθος τοῖς
 λόγοις ἐρρύσαντο τῆς κατεψηφισμένης
 αὐτοῦ κολάσεως τὸν Ἱερεμίαν, ὃς
 ἀπάσας αὐτοῦ τὰς προφητείας
 συγγραψάμενος νηστεύοντος τοῦ
 δήμου καὶ ἐκκλησιάζοντος ἐν τῷ
 ἱερῷ μῆνι ἐνάτῳ τοῦ πέμπτου ἔτους
 τῆς Ἰωακείμου βασιλείας ἀνέγνω
 τὴν βίβλον, ἣν περὶ τῶν μελλόντων
 συμβήσεσθαι τῇ πόλει καὶ τῷ ναῷ καὶ
 τοῖς ὄχλοις ἦν συντεταχώς. τούτοις
 καταπραῦναντες τὸ πλῆθος τοῖς λόγοις
 ἐρρύσαντο τῆς κατεψηφισμένης αὐτοῦ
 κολάσεως τὸν Ἱερεμίαν, ὃς ἀπάσας
 αὐτοῦ τὰς προφητείας συγγραψάμενος
 νηστεύοντος τοῦ δήμου καὶ
 ἐκκλησιάζοντος ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ μῆνι ἐνάτῳ
 τοῦ πέμπτου ἔτους τῆς Ἰωακείμου
 βασιλείας ἀνέγνω τὴν βίβλον, ἣν
 περὶ τῶν μελλόντων συμβήσεσθαι τῇ
 πόλει καὶ τῷ ναῷ καὶ τοῖς ὄχλοις ἦν
 συντεταχώς.

בדיבורים אלה הרגיעו את העם והצילו את
 ירמיהו מן העונש שנתחייב. והנביא כתב
 את כל דברי נבואותיו וקרא את הספר,
 שחיבר על מה שעתידי לקרות את העיר
 ואת בית המקדש ואת העם, ביום תענית
 ציבור, בשעת אספה פומבית במקדש,
 בחודש התשיעי בשנה החמישית למלכות
 יהויקים.

The Greek text of *Antiquitates Judaicae* 10.93 comprises one long, complicated sentence, which Schalit again breaks into short sentences.

7 Consistency

One of the criteria for evaluating translations is consistency—“the question when a varied use of words is preferable to a consistent use of words.”³¹ Each volume of the Brill Josephus Project states that the goal was

to render individual Greek words with as much consistency as the context will allow, to preserve the parts of speech, letting adjectives be adjectives and participles be participles, to preserve phrases and clauses intact, and

31 Bittner, *Evaluating the Evaluator*, 117.

replacing the original with one that is partially or completely unrelated to it.³⁴ The Brill Josephus Project adopts the second, transliterating *Habramos* in Latin letters. Schalit prefers cleaving to the MT, and does not make efforts to conform his transliteration to that of Josephus. This is a problematic move: readers not being familiar with Hellenized versions of biblical proper names, they find it difficult compare the translation with the Septuagint. While Schalit undertakes this task in the notes, these are gathered in a separate volume. This method also impinges on the assessment of Josephus' consistency with regard to personal name: he refers to the biblical מִיכָל as Mel-cha, Michalé, and Melchalé, for example.³⁵

10 Adherence to Biblical Hebrew

One of the hallmarks of Schalit's translation is his adherence to Biblical Hebrew.³⁶ This can be illustrated by several examples.

1. The MT explains the name Naphtali: וַתֹּאמֶר רַחֵל נַפְתָּלִי אֱלֹהִים נִפְתַּלְתִּי עִם יְבִלְתִּי וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ נַפְתָּלִי (Gen 30:8). Josephus links the name and its explanation: καὶ μετ' αὐτὸν Νεφθάλεις, μηχανητὸς οἶον, διὰ τὸ ἀντιτεχνάσασθαι πρὸς τὴν εὐτεχνίαν τῆς ἀδελφῆς (*Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.305). Schalit translates: מפני שנפתלה עם אחותה בגלל פוריותה, ואחריו נפתלי מעין איש הנפתולים "after him Naphtali, a sort of wrestler because he wrestled with his sister over her fertility." He thus fabricates an artificial etymology in imitation of Josephus' Greek craftsmanship. The meaning of the root לפ"ת is abstruse in Hebrew, however, its use thus leaving the modern reader perplexed. The LXX is even less clear—Josephus evidently not following it. If the meaning is "contrived," as Brill suggests, then Josephus should probably be translated תחבולה, as per Schorr.³⁷

2. Schalit also seeks to connect פנואל and פני אל (Gen 32:31) despite Josephus' own avoidance of this move (*Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.334): Φανουήλος and ὁ σημαίνει θεοῦ πρόσωπον, "which signifies the face of God."³⁸

34 Vermes, "Proper Names in Translation."

35 See Avioz, "Josephus' Portrait of Michal."

36 Cf. "We have tried to ensure, certainly not with complete success, a language close to the language of biblical historiography (especially of the books of early prophets)" (Rappaport, *The First Book of Maccabees*, 3). The choice is reasonable in light of the close relationship between Maccabees and the Hebrew Bible: see Goldstein, *1 Maccabees*.

37 Schorr, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 54. For the verse, see Tur-Sinai, *The Language and the Book*, 140–147; Warmuth, "Pātal."

38 Feldman, *Judean Antiquities 1–4*, 121n944.

3. In Josephus' rewriting of Num 16 (*Antiquitates Judaicae* 4.15) Schalit leaves the biblical term עדה untranslated.³⁹ The Greek is τὸ πλῆθος, which Feldman translate "multitude." This being debated among commentators, its non-translation does not help the reader understand Josephus' exegesis. One would expect something like המון.

4. Schalit translates Josephus' Ἄμα δὲ ἡμέρα⁴⁰ in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 6.52, for מַת הַשָּׁחַר הַשְּׁמַיִת כְּעֵלֹת הַיּוֹם, as הבוקר אור "At morning light" (cf. Gen 44:3). Not only do translators customarily endeavor not to replace one biblical phrase with another but here the reader is left wondering whether the morning was light or it had dawned; was this the first light of the morning? Is it a verb or a noun? A simpler translation is that offered by Begg: יום חדש עליה, "and it was day."

5. According to 2 Sam 13:22, Tamar remained שוממה. The NRSV translates: desolate woman, the NJPS: forlorn. Josephus (*Antiquitates Judaicae* 7.172) explains the noun as ἀγαμέμνη "unmarried" (literally: with no husband). This conclusion is remarkable in light of the fact that the other incidences of the root ש"מ in this meaning occur in Isa 54:1 and Lam 1:6; 3:1—neither of which are heavily represented in the *Antiquitates*. Irrespective of this issue, Schalit's decision to leave the original does not help the Hebrew reader, who only discovers that Josephus explains it as "unmarried" by returning to the Greek translation.

Schalit may have wished to point out the similarities between the MT and Josephus. This is unlikely, however, as in the Introduction he cites cases where Josephus differs from the MT. A more probable explanation is that his desire to imitate the biblical style dictated leaving it verbatim, modern Hebrew only allowing him an alternative such as אינה נשואה. This is the price he pays for making Josephus' Hebrew translation biblical.

6. In *Antiquitates Judaicae* 7.130, Josephus describes Bathsheba as "bathing in cool water in her own house ... of beautiful appearance and superior to all others." Schalit translates מים חיים "living water." ψυχρὸν means "cool," however. Here, Schalit appears to have been influenced by Lev 14:20, misleading the reader into thinking that Josephus is claiming that bathing after menstruation must take place in a mikveh-like body of water.

7. Schalit translates the *hapax legomenon* ילקוט in MT 1 Sam 17:40 as ילקוט. Here again, the reader is left not knowing precisely how Josephus understands ילקוט as πῆρα "pouch." A more intelligible rendering would have been חגור. Brill here correctly translates: "shepherd's bag."

39 HALOT explains it as "national, legal and cultic communities." Cf. Milgrom, "Priestly Terminology."

40 This appears in several Greek sources, differing from LXX.

8. Rewriting the laws of Sukkot (Lev 23:33–44) in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 3.244–247, he renders פרי עץ הדר (later known as אתרוג): τοῦ μήλου τοῦ τῆς περσεάς (*tou melon tou tes perseas*). Thackeray translates: “the fruit of the Persea,” Schalit elaborating this as “the fruit of the peach.” Josephus refers to the citron, however. Schalit’s translation is thus erroneous, the Greek for peach being *melon tou tes persikon*.⁴¹ While *persea* may refer to the Persea-tree, here it derives from Perses (acc.: Persen or Persea) “Persian.” It should thus be translated: “The Persian apple/fruit.”

9. In *Antiquitates Judaicae* 10.75, Schalit renders כרוז as ἀγγεῖον. Brill has “herald,” which is simpler. While כרוז occurs in Dan 3:4 and over a hundred times in rabbinic literature, the modern reader would expect a more familiar word, such as מבשר.⁴² Schalit may have espoused the view that כרוז and ἀγγεῖον are linked.⁴³ He also employs כרוז for πρέσβεσιον in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 8.365 (Brill: “herald”) and 8.416 (Greek: στρατοαγγεῖον; Brill: “herald”). In *Antiquitates Judaicae* 10.236, he uses כרוז while Brill translates ἀγγεῖον “announcement.”

10. Another case of Schalit’s “biblicising” of Josephus is his translation of *Antiquitates Judaicae* 12.325: “And from that time to the present we observe this festival, which we call the festival of Lights.”⁴⁴ Schalit translates φῶτα as חג האורים, probably echoing Isa 24:15: חג האורות.⁴⁵ חג האורות is more appropriate in this context, however.

11. According to Gen 21:2, “Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him.” Josephus rewrites this verse in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.214 as: τίταται δὲ παῖς ἑκατέρων τῷ ὑστάτῳ ἔτει. In the Brill edition, Feldman translates: “The child was born in the latest year for both.” Schalit translates: בצאת השנה. This expression appears in Exod 23:16 in relation to the Festival of Tabernacles. Schalit’s adherence to the biblical style thus obfuscates the meaning. The expression בצאת השנה appears in Exod 23:16, commentators discussing whether it signifies the beginning or end of the year. The Hebrew reader is therefore misled into thinking that Josephus forms part of this debate—which he is certainly not.⁴⁶ Josephus merely wishes

41 *Melon tou tes persikos* (or: medikos) was the original Greek term for the citron: see Rubenstein, *A History of Sukkot*, 75n13.

42 <https://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il/Pages/PMain.aspx>.

43 Ben-Yehuda, *Dictionary*, 2511. HALOT attributes it to Persian, however; see also Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 157.

44 Marcus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Books XII–XIV.

45 Cf. also Rabinowitz: ובן מתתיהו העיד שנקרא חג האורים (*Ha-mahanaim*, 312). Was Schalit inspired by Rabinowitz? Bar-Kochva (“The Festival of Purim,” 49) renders *fota* as חג האורות. See also Rappaport, *The First Book of Maccabees*, 78; Schwartz, *The Second Book of Maccabees*, 83.

46 Stendebach, “שנה.”

to say that the child was born after a year—in line with the biblical phrase כֶּעֶת חַיָּה (Gen 18:10).

11 Conclusion

Schalit's translation remains the most authoritative Hebrew translation of Josephus' *Antiquitates*, also contributing greatly to the newly-emerging positive evaluation of Josephus.⁴⁷ Even students untrained in modern Hebrew can benefit from his notes—although scholars around the world perhaps cite him less frequently than might be expected. Almost seventy years after its first publication, however, it is time for a new translation into modern Hebrew. This should:

1. Insert the Greek source alongside the Hebrew translation, either in print or digitally;
2. Abjure adherence to Biblical Hebrew in order to be comprehensible to modern Hebrew readers;
3. Employ footnotes rather than endnotes. The size of the printed volume could be the same as that of the Brill Josephus Project;
4. Write new introductions taking the many studies written, Qumran material discovered, and all other relevant material now available into consideration;
5. Add a glossary, indices, maps, and color photos.

Old Testament commentaries such as the Anchor Bible might serve as a good model, each biblical book including a translation with translational and text-critical notes, outline of major themes and topics, verse-by-verse commentary, historical background, and photographs, illustrations, and maps of artifacts and places associated with biblical figures and sites. Although this makes for lengthy tomes, in a day when books are distributed electronically, size becomes immaterial. Analyzing the unit as a whole, “grammatical and syntactical help, literary appreciation, and historical criticism” can then be ensured.⁴⁸ Rather than working alone, the new Hebrew translation of the *Antiquitates* should be the work of a team of translators and scholars.

47 See Schwartz, “From Masada to Jotapata;” Goodman, *Josephus's The Jewish War*, 106–107.

48 Language borrowed from Harrison, “Review of Flower and Marincola,” 98.

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