In the *Jewish Antiquities*, the paraphrase by Josephus of 1–2 Samuel covers the end of book 5 and the whole of books 6 and 7, the latter including the beginning of 1 Kings until the death of David; some portions of 1 Chronicles are used, too. This paper aims at dealing with Josephus’ Biblical sources, as a by-product of a French translation and extensive commentary of his narrative.\(^1\) The topic is complicated by the fact that several forms of 1–2 Samuel are extant: the Massoretic text (MT), which is admittedly difficult; in Greek, there are very different versions; the Latin and Syriac also have significant variant readings. Moreover, interesting fragments of 1–2 Samuel have been discovered in some Qumran caves, which have noteworthy contact points with 1 Chronicles, with the Greek (against the MT) and with Josephus.

Josephus himself tells us that he has ‘translated’ (μεθρημηνευμένην) from the Hebrew Scriptures, as stated in the prologue of the *Antiquities* (1:5). The same claim is sometimes made within the narrative, even more clearly. About Jonas, he feels compelled to tell of the miracles as written ‘in the Hebrew books’ (9:208). Later he insists (10:218): ‘In the beginning of this history, I have said that I intended to do no more than translate (or ‘paraphrase’ μεταφράζειν) the Hebrew books into the Greek language . . ., without adding to, or removing from, them anything of my own’.\(^2\) In *Ag. Ap.* 1:54 he states: ‘I have translated (μετηρμήνευκα) the *Archaeology* from the holy books’. It is obvious, however, that he has many contacts with the Septuagint (LXX) against the MT, therefore many commentators have not taken these statements seriously, out of the assumption that the only Hebrew Bible extant in his time was the MT, supposed to have been fixed.


\(^2\) About the book of Daniel, which Josephus uses extensively, he warns his reader that should he want to know the secrets of the future, he must scrutinize the text by himself; a difficult task he has done privately (*Ant.* 10:210). We may surmise that he does not refer to a Greek book, which suggests that he addresses the Jews.
at the Yabneh academy and immediately diffused everywhere. But things have not been that easy. In a previous study of Josephus' Pentateuch, I concluded that the best hypothesis to explain the peculiarities of his text was that he had not used a Greek Bible, but paraphrased a much altered Hebrew source including marginal glosses or variant readings. In other words, this was a perused reference copy, most probably the one taken by Titus when he plundered the Temple archives in 70 C.E. This is suggested by Josephus in *Vita* § 417, but unfortunately the passage is corrupted.3

Now, in the same prologue of the *Antiquities*, he alludes, as a precedent to his own work, to the story of the Greek translation of the Pentateuch made in Alexandria upon a request of king Ptolemy II. Then he adds (1:12–13): ‘But [the king] did not obtain all our writing at that time: those who were sent to Alexandria as translators gave him only the books of the Laws, while there are a vast number of other matters in our sacred books, for they contain the history of five thousand years’.

So Josephus utters three statements: 1. he translated or paraphrased from the Hebrew; 2. he is the first to render into Greek the historical books (former Prophets), at least in connection with an official request, which implies some protection of the works in public libraries; 3. he adds or omits nothing. The third point is easy to check: unlike what he did to the Pentateuch, he follows faithfully the Samuel narrative, only adding some speeches and personal comments and removing some inconsistencies in detail. As for the first two claims, this paper will conclude that we may trust him, too.

The progression will be in five stages: 1. it is necessary to show first that here Josephus follows closely his sources; 2. the significance of his relationship to the so-called ‘Lucianic recension’ of the LXX; 3. specific contacts with Qumran fragments; 4. the incidence of the additions and parallels of 1 Chronicles; 5. Josephus and the Greek Bible. We may add that the text of the *Antiquities*, only witnessed by medieval manuscripts, is not very well preserved, but the actual effect of this problem for an assessment of its sources is minimal, except in some cases in the spelling of proper names.4

---