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SILVIA CASTELLI

*«Bronze Bases Similar to Spikes of Lances». Textual Criticism and
«Anchoring» Strategies in Josephus' AJ 3.109 (// Ex. 27.10-11)*



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«BRONZE BASES SIMILAR TO SPIKES OF LANCES»
TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND «ANCHORING» STRATEGIES
IN JOSEPHUS' *AJ* 3.109 (// *EX.* 27.10-11)

*To Emilio Gabba,
Domenico Magnino,
and Bruno Chiesa*
ל"י

ABSTRACT. According to Niese's text of *AJ* 3.109, Josephus has the bases of the shafts of the tabernacle court as «golden» (χρῦσαῖ) and «of bronze» (χαλκαῖ), and «similar to spikes of lances» (σαυρωτήρσιν ἐμφορεῖς). This article argues that Niese's text is corrupted and proposes to emend χρῦσαῖ into χαλκαῖ, and omit χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν as a scribal gloss later introduced into the text. With this formulation, Josephus would emphasize that the bases of the shafts were of bronze, consistently with the Hebrew text of Exodus, and that the tabernacle was a temporary structure, similar to a military camp. Josephus' intention to present the tabernacle of the desert as a military camp invited the comparison between the bases of the shafts of the court and the spikes at the butt-end of the spear, expressed with a simile, according to a «horizontal anchoring» strategy. This article, moreover, explores the cognitive availability of the term σαυρωτήρ used in the simile and argues for Josephus' allusion to Homer's description of Diomedes's camp (*Il.* 10.153), pointing to a «vertical anchoring» strategy.

1. Introduction

In *AJ* 3.108-114 Josephus describes the court of the tabernacle compound erected by Moses in the desert, corresponding to the biblical account of *Ex.* 27.9-19 (// *MT Ex.* 38.9-20; *LXX Ex.* 37.7-21). The passage is part of the comprehensive description of the Israelite tabernacle and priestly garments, where Josephus engages in an accurate, detailed reworking of the biblical narrative: in his text, the historian brings his Greek vocabulary in most cases close to the Hebrew Scriptures and notably, for the priestly vestments, he points to a Semitic background¹.

* This investigation has been carried out within the project «Anchoring Innovation», the Gravitation Grant research agenda of the Dutch National Research School in Classical Studies, OIKOS. It is financially supported by the Dutch ministry of Education, Culture and Science (NWO project number 024.003.012). For more information about the research programme and its results, see the website <https://www.anchoring-innovation.nl>. I would like to thank my colleagues of the department of Classics at Leiden University for their feedbacks on an earlier draft of this article, and the anonymous reviewer of «Athenaeum» for his/her careful reading and most valuable comments. I dedicate this article to the blessed memory of Emilio Gabba, Domenico Magnino, and Bruno Chiesa, «maestri dell'Ateneo pavese».

¹ On Josephus' Hebrew Bible, see Nodet 2018; Rajak 2021, p. 431, who considers the Hebrew *Tanakh* in Josephus as a «tantalizing presence»; Castelli 2020.

In spite of the high accuracy of the general description, as it is transmitted to us, *AJ* 3.109 (*// Ex.* 27.10-11) is contradictory inasmuch as it depicts the bases of the shafts of the court as «golden» and «of bronze» at the same time (βάσεις δὲ χρυσαῖ... χαλκαῖ δέ). Moreover, in this passage Josephus compares the bases of the shafts with the spikes of lances, using a simile (σαυρωτήρσιν ἐμφορεῖς) and a *hapax legomenon* in his work (σαυρωτήρ). In this article I shall first present the solutions proposed by the editors of Josephus' *Antiquities*, and the issues that they leave unresolved (§ 2). Secondly, I shall set out the text-critical problems of Niese's text, explain how such a text may have originated in the course of textual transmission, and suggest two emendations to it (§ 3). Thirdly, I shall address the reasons for Josephus' formulation, focusing on the material of the bases, and on the use of similes (§ 4). Finally, I shall explore the cognitive availability of the term σαυρωτήρ used in the simile (§ 5.1), and argue for the plausibility of a literary allusion to Homer (§ 5.2).

2. Status quaestionis: *Feldman's, Thackeray's, and Nodet's Solutions*

The text of *AJ* 3.109 is published in Benedictus Niese's *editio maior*, still the most authoritative edition to this day, as follows:

κάμακας δὲ ἔστησε χαλκῆας πενταπήχεις τὸ ὕψος καθ' ἑκατέραν πλευρὰν εἴκοσι τῶν ἐπιμηκιστέρων, δέκα δὲ τῶν ἐν πλάτει κειμένων τῆς κατόπιν, κρίκοι δὲ τῶν καμάκων ἑκάστη προσῆσαν· *κιονόκρανα μὲν ἀργύρεα, βάσεις δὲ χρυσαῖ σαυρωτήρσιν ἐμφορεῖς, χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν, ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐρηρυσμέναι².

This text represents the *communis opinio* in contemporary scholarship. The only textual variations accepted in the French edition of Étienne Nodet are the omission of the first δέ after κάμακας and the reading καθ' ἑτέραν instead of καθ' ἑκατέραν³. Both Niese and Nodet signal a *lacuna* before κιονόκρανα, yet the passage as it stands does make sense, and the editions of Bekker and Naber, in fact, do not mark any *lacuna*. For the Brill Josephus Project, Louis H. Feldman translates the passage as follows:

Then he [Moses] 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

² Niese 1887, p. 179.

³ However, in spite of accepting καθ' ἑτέραν as the textual reading of the majority of the manuscripts, Nodet still prefers to translate according to the reading of manuscript O (καθ' ἑκατέραν), in line with other editions. See Nodet 2000, p. 164*. Accordingly, in footnote 13 ἑκατέραν is printed by Nodet in italics, to indicate that the same reading is used in the translation («de chaque côté»). Likewise, Nodet translates the beginning of the passage with «Il [Moses] dressa *ensuite*» (italics mine), implying the use of δέ attested by RO and printed in the other editions.

the pillars... 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 ground⁴.

There are a few points to make regarding Feldman's translation, which I have italicized above. First, Josephus speaks here in terms of κάμακες. LSJ gives «vine pole; any pole or shaft» as the meaning of κάμαξ, and rightly interprets the meaning of the word in this passage of Josephus as «shaft of a spear»⁵. With his choice of κάμακες Josephus emphasizes that the tabernacle structure is a temporary one, similar to that of a military camp⁶. Hence, Henry St. John Thackeray's translation «shafts» is more suitable than Feldman's «pillars». Second, while the word «columns» used by Feldman («the capitals of the columns») would imply a change in the referent, the bases about which Josephus writes are still those of the shafts, as Thackeray and Nodet rightly indicate in their respective translations (see below), not those of the columns of the tent. Thus, even in this case I would prefer to keep the word «shafts». Third, in his translation Feldman does not solve the contradiction within the text regarding the bases: according to Josephus' text, the bases are both golden (χρυσᾶι) and of bronze (χαλκαῖ), with an apparent incongruity.

For the Loeb Classical Library Thackeray translates as follows in his main text: «Their capitals were of silver, their sockets, gilded and resembling the spikes of lances, were of bronze and firmly planted to the soil»⁷. The first solution proposed by Thackeray is that the bases/sockets of the shafts are of bronze, yet covered by gold: namely, they are gilded. Giving χρυσᾶι the meaning «gilded» allows Thackeray to keep the reading «of bronze», which corresponds to *Ex.* 27.10⁸. In support of this interpretation one could point to the Latin translation of Josephus *deauratae*⁹. However, the Latin interpretation looks itself like an early attempt to solve the problem of χρυσᾶι and χαλκαῖ: yet, such interpretation still conflicts with the description of the shafts of the court that follows, where the bases are consistently in bronze (*AJ* 3.112). Moreover, a few paragraphs later, as part of the same description of the tabernacle (*AJ* 3.120 and 136), Josephus clearly has the word ἐπίχρυσος to indicate «gilded». It is thus less probable that he used χρυσᾶι to mean «gilded» in *AJ* 3.109 instead of ἐπίχρυσαι.

⁴ Feldman 2000, p. 260. Italics mine.

⁵ Liddell-Scott-Jones 1996, p. 871, *s.v.* κάμαξ (hereafter, LSJ). In the Septuagint, the word is found only in *2 Mac.* 5.3, in the classical meaning of «spear». See Muraoka 2009, p. 361; Lust-Eynikel-Hauspie 2003, p. 304 (hereafter, LEH). At *Ex.* 27.10 (*//* 38.10 ff.) the Masoretic Text has the word פְּסָלִים »posts», the corresponding Septuagint word is στῦλοι »pillars», which is used to indicate both the supports of the court (*Ex.* 27.10 ff.) and those of the tabernacle (*Ex.* 26.15 ff.). Philo (*Mos.* 2.89) prefers κίονες («columns») for both the court and the tabernacle.

⁶ More examples of vocabulary indicating that the tabernacle was seen by Josephus as a military camp are found in Castelli 2020, pp. 6-9.

⁷ Thackeray 1995, p. 369.

⁸ The meaning of χρυσουῖς as ἐπίχρυσος «gilded» is attested. See LSJ, *s.v.* χρύσεος.

⁹ See Niese 1887, p. 179.

As a second solution, indicated with a question mark in the apparatus, Thackeray conjectures χρυσοῖς instead of χρυσαῖ, and refers the conjecture to the spikes of lances (σαυρωτήρσι), interpreting «their sockets, resembling the gilded spikes of lances, were of bronze» (βάσεις δὲ χρυσοῖς σαυρωτήρσιν ἐμφερεῖς, χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν). This is text-critically a good conjecture: the error ο > α is paleographically easy to explain in minuscule manuscripts, and likewise the omission of the final ζ when the next word starts with σ. Thackeray's conjecture easily explains the error found in the manuscript transmission, and solves both the textual problem and the above-mentioned contradiction in relation to the gilded and bronze bases. If we accept Thackeray's conjecture, we may explain Josephus' formulation as involving the inclusion within his description of a reference to a precious, shining element – a point that I shall address below – and possibly an allusion to an author for whom the spear-butts were golden/gilded. Thackeray, in fact, based his conjecture on Herodotus, *Hist.* 7.41, the only extant passage in Greek literature where the word σαυρωτήρ bears some connection, although not a direct one, to the adjective χρύσεος. In that passage Herodotus describes Xerxes' army, comprised of thousand horsemen and ten thousand foot soldiers. In particular, the depiction of the foot soldiers featured golden pomegranates and golden apples instead of spikes of lances¹⁰. While several allusions to Herodotus are found in Josephus¹¹, an allusion should not to be taken for granted in this case. *Hist.* 7.41 does not clearly speak of «golden/gilded spikes of lances», yet of golden pomegranates and golden apples placed instead of the spikes. But since the bases of the shafts of the court of Moses's tabernacle do not look like apples or pomegranates, one wonders, in this case, whether Josephus' simile and allusion would have been clear to his immediate audience¹².

¹⁰ «One thousand of these [the foot soldiers] had golden pomegranates on their spear-shafts instead of a spike (ἐπὶ τοῖσι δόρασι ἀντὶ τῶν σαυρωτήρων ροιάς εἶχον χρυσεάς), and surrounded the rest; the nine thousand who were inside them had silver pomegranates. Those who held their spears reversed (οἱ ἐς τὴν γῆν τρέποντες τὰς λόγχας) also carried golden pomegranates (εἶχον δὲ χρυσεάς ροιάς), and those following nearest to Xerxes had apples of gold». Transl. by A.D. Godley (Godley 1920).

¹¹ In *AJ* 8.157 Josephus alludes to *Hist.* 2.99-100; he cites parts of *Hist.* 2.102-103 in *AJ* 8.253-262 and *Ap.* 1.168-171, and again alludes to *Hist.* 2.141 in *AJ* 10.17-20. Several additional passages are signaled by Almagor 2016, pp. 83-100. It should be pointed out, however, that most of the Herodotean passages mentioned by Josephus come from Herodotus' Egyptian and Persian history, namely from book 1 and 2 of Herodotus' *Historiae*, some of the most quoted books in Latin circles; see Racine 2016, pp. 193-212. Moreover, only in the discourse of Agrippa (*BJ* 2.358-359) does Josephus draw from books 7 and 8 of Herodotus' *Historiae*; see Mason-Chapman 2008, pp. 276 s. Josephus recalls Herodotus' alternative account of Xerxes' flight on a single ship for Asia (8.118), alludes to Xerxes' cutting the Athos canal (7.22-24) and bridging the Hellespont (7.33-36), and refers to the Athenians' flight from their city for the sake of freedom (8.40-41,50-54).

¹² On Josephus' immediate audience, see Mason 2016, pp. 91-97. Moreover, Racine 2016, pp. 193-212, repeatedly emphasizes that Herodotus' direct readership was very limited in Latin circles: his *Histories* were read «carefully by few, read superficially by many and unread by most» (p. 199); «for many if not most

One may surmise that Josephus wanted to add to his description some reference to a precious, shining element in the structure that he describes. However, golden weapons were not common in Josephus' time. Josephus mentions «golden spears» only in *BJ* 7.14, where «golden spears» (χρυσᾶ δόρατα) are given by Titus as *dona militaria*. In that context, golden crowns and golden chains are also listed, according to the practice of military gifts attested by inscriptions¹³. In *BJ* 5.351 the Roman army parades in front of Jerusalem gleaming far and wide «with silver and gold» (ἀργύρω καὶ χρυσῷ), and in 5.555 Titus alludes to the soldiers' weapons made of «silver and gold» (ἀργύρου τε καὶ χρυσοῦ). Yet, while the intimidating factor of a shining glittering army was an important point in the Roman war scenario, making golden and shiny the spikes at the butt-end of the spear would be less logical: the spike of the spear is less visible, and may eventually end up being planted in the ground. These few passages do not make «golden spikes of lances» enough of a common and easily identifiable referent to Josephus' audience to be used in a simile. In accepting Thackeray's conjecture, one should be aware of these unresolved issues.

Finally, in his French edition, Nodet translates, «et leur socles en or, semblables à des pieds de lance; la partie fixée dans le sol était en bronze»¹⁴. This interpretation implies that the σαυρωτήρ is golden in its upper part, where the shaft enters into the spike, and bronze in the lower part, which is planted into the soil. Although examples of such shapes of spikes at the butt-end of a spear have been found¹⁵, to my knowledge a golden-bronze spike is not attested: the ferrules or spikes of lances at the butt-end of a spear were usually of bronze, leaded bronze, or iron. In the specific case of the σαυρωτήρ from Masada¹⁶, it was entirely planted in the soil, and was of iron.

Latin readers, Herodotus' reputation was therefore far more important than the content of his *Histories*» (p. 197).

¹³ E.g., *CIL* X.6659; *CIL* VIII.12536.

¹⁴ Nodet 2000, p. 164*. The punctuation used by Bekker 1855 in his edition points to a similar interpretation; Flavius Iosephi *Opera* 1.145: κιονόκρανα μὲν ἀργύρεα, βάσεις δὲ χρυσαῖ, σαυρωτήρσιν ἐμφορεῖς: χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐρηρησμέναι. Nodet's translation, however, does not seem to interpret correctly the participle ἐρηρησμέναι.

¹⁵ Such is the shape, for example, of the leaded bronze σαυρωτήρ preserved at the Harvard Art Museum (1960.489), dated end 5th-first half of the 4th century BCE: «This spear-butt or sauroter consists of a tapering four-sided point that rises from a cylindrical socket. The juncture between the socket and the point has a torus-shaped molding flanked by a minute fillet on either side»; see <https://hvard.art/o/304009>.

¹⁶ Stiebel-Magness 2007, pp. 27 and 93, plate 29:2: the iron ferrule exhibits an open socket with a square attachment hole; the circular socket tapers to a square sectioned point. The ferrule was found in a tower room in the eastern section of the casemate wall that was inhabited at the time of the revolt.

3. Issues with Niese's Text, Origin of the Textual Corruption, and Emendations

Taking all this into consideration, if Niese's text (*κιονόκρανα μὲν ἀργύρεα, βάσεις δὲ χρυσαῖ σαυρωτήρσιν ἐμφερεῖς, χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν, ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐρηρυσμένα) is to be kept, one may interpret it literally as follows: «the capitals of the shafts were of silver, their bases were golden/gilded, similar to spikes of lances, yet of bronze, firmly planted in the soil», or, with a different interpunction, and ἦσαν connected to the participle ἐρηρυσμένα¹⁷, as «the capitals of the shafts were of silver, and their bases, gilded yet of bronze, similar to spikes of lances, were firmly planted in the soil». With this text, however, the problem of the double material of the bases – golden/gilded and bronze – remains. Moreover, every translation based on this text necessarily adds an article to «capitals» and «bases», which depend on ἦσαν, while in Josephus both κιονόκρανα and βάσεις are indefinite objects. It should be noticed that in this description Josephus is precise in his use of the articles¹⁸. Finally, if one supposes that χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν refers to the shafts at the beginning of the paragraphs (κάμακες), as an implied subject, one would have a tautological formulation, since the information on the bronze shafts (κάμακας... χαλκέας) has been provided at the outset of the paragraph. However, such a tautological formulation is not typical of Josephus' description of the tabernacle, and of his biblical section in general: had Josephus intended to repeat such information, he would probably have repeated its subject (αἱ κάμακες) as well.

As in other passages of the description of the tabernacle, I suspect that Niese's text of *AJ* 3.109 is corrupted. Nodet seems to contemplate this possibility when he states in his *apparatus* that χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν was a later correction, possibly an authorial correction, or a scribal gloss. In the case of an authorial correction, χρυσαῖ should be omitted, as it is in Théodore Reinach's edition¹⁹. From the point of view of text-critical methodology, χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν would be *lectio facilior* and χρυσαῖ *difficilior*, since nowhere in the book of Exodus are golden bases mentioned for the tabernacle, nor in the text of Josephus later on. The scenario of χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν as a scribal gloss is text-critically probable, since the bronze bases correspond to the text of Exodus and to the rest of the text of Josephus; moreover, χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν in *AJ* 3.109 interrupts the connection with the simile: the bases of the shafts are similar to spear-butts in so far as they are firmly planted into the ground. Not only does χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν interrupt the flow of the sentence, but it makes definite the indefinite κιονόκρανα and βάσεις. If χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν is a scribal gloss, as it appears to be, it should thus be omitted.

¹⁷ A similar formulation is found in *AJ* 3.112: ἦν ἐπικεχαλωμένος.

¹⁸ Josephus says, for example, that «rings [indefinite] were added to each of the shafts [definite]» (*AJ* 3.109: κρῖκοι δὲ τῶν καμάκων ἐκάστη προσῆσαν), and that «cords [indefinite] were attached to the rings [definite]» (*AJ* 3.110: ἐξήπτετο δὲ τῶν κρῖκων καλῶδια).

¹⁹ Reinach 1900, p. 168. Nodet 2000, p. 164*.

On the other hand, if χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν is omitted and χρυσαῖ is kept according to the text-critical rule of *lectio difficilior potior/probabilior*, we still face a problem. It is strange that Josephus mentions «golden bases» and not «bronze bases», since even the shafts at the front of the court are all entirely overlaid with silver, except their bases (*AJ* 3.112: παρέξ τῶν βάσεων), which are clearly of bronze (χαλκαῖ γὰρ ἦσαν). In other words, even the shafts at the front, which have a special status, keep their bases simply of bronze. Likewise, in *AJ* 3.117, while the columns of the tent are overlaid by gold, their bases are made of silver: even in that case, the sockets are not golden. Finally, at *AJ* 3.124 the columns of the tent are said to be golden, yet their bases remain once again plainly of bronze. Featuring «golden bases» for the shafts of the court would thus be inconsistent with what is repeated three times later on in the description of the tabernacle. Moreover, had Josephus intentionally emphasized the gold as a more precious material, he would probably have emphasized other parts of the structure, such as the capitals or the rings, less likely the bases, which were grounded in the soil. The *lectio difficilior*, in this case, looks incoherent with the rest of Josephus' description and with the accuracy displayed by the author in this specific section of the tabernacle. Moreover, textual critics in both classical and biblical studies have rightly warned against the indiscriminate application of the principle of *lectio difficilior potior*: in some cases, what appears as the «harder reading» is actually due to scribal error, and rather requires conjectural emendation²⁰.

Other passages of the description of the tabernacle present cases of textual corruption in Niese's text. To give but two examples, at the beginning of *AJ* 3.108, only one paragraph before our passage, Niese's text mentions «gold, bronze and fabrics» (χρυσίου τε καὶ χαλκοῦ καὶ τῶν ὑφαντῶν) as the materials ready to be used for the tabernacle: all Greek MSS omit silver, although the capitals of the court are clearly in silver (*AJ* 3.109), and the front shafts of the court are silver-plated (*AJ* 3.112). Edward Bernard (1638-1697), professor of astronomy at Oxford who was in charge of a new edition of Josephus for Oxford University Press²¹, added therefore καὶ ἀργύρου, «and silver» in *AJ* 3.108, on the basis of the Latin translation «et argento», with a conjecture followed by Thackeray, Niese's *editio minor*, and Feldman. Another case of textual corruption is found at *AJ* 3.151: the same Bernard conjectures χανααίας, as the transcription of the Aramaic form for the priestly undergarments, instead of the transmitted χαναναίας «Chananeans».

²⁰ West 1973, p. 59. For the text of the Hebrew Bible, Albrektson 1981, pp. 5-18; and the excursus «Who's Afraid of Conjectural Emendation? With Some Observations on the Codex Optimus» by C. Martone in Martone 2012, pp. 52-64; Chiesa 2012, pp. 257-264. For the text of the New Testament, see Krans 2013, pp. 613-635; and the theoretical background behind the *Amsterdam Database for New Testament Conjectural Emendation* (<https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/nt-conjectures-attribution>).

²¹ Bernard 1700. On Bernard's edition, see Roebach 2016, pp. 307-325. In his *editio maior* Niese follows the Greek MSS, yet approves Bernard's conjecture with «recte, ut videtur».

It is thus not unlikely that χρυσαῖ of *AJ* 3.109 is not *lectio difficilior* but rather the result of a scribal error for χαλκαῖ, possibly due to the closeness of the logic pair «silver-gold» (κιονόκρανα μὲν ἀργύρεα, βάσεις δὲ χρυσαῖ), and to the mention of «gold and bronze and fabrics» in the previous paragraph (*AJ* 3.108). If that is the case, χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν may reasonably be interpreted as a gloss added at a later stage by another scribe to correct the erroneous χρυσαῖ: such a gloss may have been inspired by the formulation of *AJ* 3.112, where the bases are openly of bronze, χαλκαῖ γὰρ ἦσαν («were in fact of bronze»). In this case, we would witness a scribal error at a first stage, followed by a scribal correction later included in the text.

If this sequence is correct, one may reasonably emend χρυσαῖ into χαλκαῖ²², and omit χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν as a gloss. At that point, κιονόκρανα μὲν ἀργύρεα, βάσεις δὲ χαλκαῖ would directly depend on the preceding verb προσῆσαν, «were added». In that way «capitals» and «bases» remain indefinite objects as they are in Josephus, with no need to add an article, as modern editors do («the capitals were of silver, the bases golden etc.»). I would therefore read and interpret Josephus' text of *AJ* 3.109 as follows:

κάμακας δὲ ἔστησε χαλκῆας πενταπῆχεις τὸ ὕψος καθ' ἑκατέραν πλευρὰν εἴκοσι τῶν ἐπιμηκεστέρων, δέκα δὲ τῶν ἐν πλάτει κειμένων τῆς κατόπιν, κρίκοι δὲ τῶν καμάκων ἐκάστη προσῆσαν *, κιονόκρανα μὲν ἀργύρεα, βάσεις δὲ χαλκαῖ, σαυρωτῆρσιν ἐμφορεῖς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐρηρυσμέναι.

Then [Moses] set up shafts of bronze, five cubits in height, twenty on each of the two longer sides, ten in breadth on the sides lying behind; and to each of the shafts were added [*silver?] rings and silver capitals, but bronze bases, similar to spikes of lances, firmly planted into the ground.

The *lacuna* may have specified the material of the rings: if so, they were probably in silver [ἀργύροισι] as in *Ex.* 27.10-11, less probably golden. With that formulation – of which I shall provide an explanation in § 4 – Josephus would point out that the material of the bases of the shafts was bronze, not silver: that would parallel *AJ* 3.112 where the shafts are entirely overlaid by silver, except their bases, which are likewise only of bronze.

4. *The Reasons for Josephus' Formulation:*

Close to the Hebrew Bible, with an «Anchoring» Simile

In my reconstruction above, Josephus points out that the material of the bases of the shafts was bronze. Moreover, he compares the bases of the shafts to the spikes at the butt-end of the spears, using a simile. The reasons why Josephus emphasizes

²² In support of the emendation χαλκαῖ for χρυσαῖ at *AJ* 3.109, see Bernard's analogous conjecture χάλκεια instead of χρύσεια at *AJ* 3.150 reported in Niese's apparatus.

the features of the bases of the shafts, using a simile, a *hapax legomenon*, and highlighting their material, need also an explanation. The first motivation points to the closeness of Josephus' text to the Hebrew Bible in the section of the tabernacle and priestly garments, which I have addressed elsewhere²³. In fact, a look at the Greek and Hebrew Bible at *Ex. 27.10-11* may shed light on Josephus' emphasis on the bronze bases. In LXX *Ex. 27.10* the bases of the pillars of the court are clearly in bronze, as in the parallel passage of the Hebrew Bible. However, according to LXX *Ex. 27.11*, the bases of the pillars are first described as being of bronze, as in the Hebrew Bible, and then covered by silver, with an unparalleled correspondent in the Hebrew.

Ex. 27.10-11: And their pillars shall be twenty, and their bases twenty, bronze, and their hooks and bands silver. Likewise, for the side towards the east there shall be hangings, a length of a hundred cubits, and their pillars shall be twenty, and their bases twenty, bronze, and the hooks and bands of the pillars *and the bases silver-plated with silver* (italics mine; transl. Pietersma-Wright 2007)²⁴.

By reading LXX *Ex. 27.11*, one may have wondered what was the material of which the bases were, in fact, comprised, that is, whether they were of bronze or silver-plated. In fact, in the second tabernacle account (*Ex. 37.15*), which parallels the first of *Ex. 27*, the Septuagint's translators provide a clearer text to their readers: the bases of the pillars are only – and undoubtedly – of bronze (καὶ αἱ βάσεις τῶν στύλων χαλκαῖ). That being the case, it is not implausible that in *AJ 3.109* Josephus, in keeping with his practice, in the tabernacle account, of adhering closely to the Hebrew Bible, may have wanted to emphasize that the bases of the shafts were of bronze, not silver, in contrast to the unclear account provided by LXX *Ex. 27.11*.

What is more evident, however, is that in his description of the tabernacle the historian intended to make clear to his audience – non-Jewish and Jewish alike – that the desert tabernacle compound erected by Moses was a temporary structure, similar to a military camp, and not a permanent one, such as was the Jerusalem Temple. And, if Josephus wished to emphasize the temporary nature of the desert tabernacle compound, his use of terminology denoting Moses' use of materials having a different primary function, such as the word κάμακες, «shafts», seen above, and his emphasis on the role of the cords in making the structure stable against

²³ Castelli 2020.

²⁴ Pietersma-Wright 2007, p. 70. Hanhart 2006, p. 192, has the following text for *Ex. 27.10-11*: καὶ οἱ στύλοι αὐτῶν εἴκοσι, καὶ αἱ βάσεις αὐτῶν εἴκοσι χαλκαῖ καὶ οἱ κρίκοι [ἀγκύλαι *Ex. 37.15*] αὐτῶν καὶ αἱ ψαλίδες [κεφαλίδες LXX *Ex. 37.15*] αὐτῶν [om. Wevers] ἄργυραῖ [περιηργυρωμένοι ἄργυρῳ *Ex. 37.15*]. οὕτως τῷ κλίτει τῷ πρὸς ἀπηλιώτην ἰστία, ἑκατὸν πηχῶν μήκος· καὶ οἱ στύλοι αὐτῶν εἴκοσι, καὶ αἱ βάσεις αὐτῶν εἴκοσι χαλκαῖ, καὶ οἱ κρίκοι καὶ αἱ ψαλίδες τῶν στύλων καὶ αἱ βάσεις αὐτῶν [om. Wevers] περιηργυρωμένοι ἄργυρῳ.

the force of the wind, which occurs later on in the description (*AJ* 3.110), would have provided an economical means of achieving that effect. The simile comparing the bases of the shafts, which were firmly planted into the soil, with the *σανρωτήρ*, the spike at the butt-end of the spear, would also have contributed to this effect.

The use of similes is recurrent in Josephus, especially in descriptions. Gamala is compared to the shape of a camel (*BJ* 4.5), according to the meaning of the Hebrew root *גמל*²⁵. The Herodion «has a circular shape in the form of a breast» (*AJ* 15.324), connecting space with the human dimension, and the city of Jerusalem, which lies across from the Temple, is «similar to a theatre» (*AJ* 15.410), with a comparison based on the same dimension of space, yet on a different level – the level of the sacred city, Jerusalem, with that of a profane building such as a theatre.

In the very description of the tabernacle of the desert which I am considering here, Josephus says, with an unparalleled remark in the biblical account, that each of the pillars of the tabernacle had «rings of gold fixed to the outer side, joined as if by roots» (*AJ* 3.120: ὡσπερ ρίζαις τισίν); later on, that Moses set up a table «quite similar to those of Delphi» (*AJ* 3.139: Δελφικαῖς παραπλησίαν), and that its legs were «similar to those which the Dorians put on their beds» (οἷς Δωριεῖς προστιθέασι ταῖς κλίνας ἐμπερεῖς). It has rightly been remarked that the latter comparisons are not accurate²⁶, yet they nevertheless speak of Josephus' attempt to connect the description of the ancient table to a referent known to his audience. Likewise, in the ἔκφρασις of Ptolemy's gift to the high priest Eleazar, Josephus uses a simile to describe the table, which features «a central panel shaped like a lozenge» (*AJ* 12.72: ῥόμβω τὴν κατὰ μέσον ὄψιν ἐμπερές), as well as the mixing bowls, featuring «a pattern of interlacing lozenges, resembling nets» (*AJ* 12.80: πλέγμα ῥομβωτὸν δικτύους ἐμπερές)²⁷. Finally, while describing the priestly clothing, Josephus adds that the girdle of the ordinary priest is «woven coarse-meshed so as to seem like the skin of a serpent» (*AJ* 3.154: διακένως δ' ὕφασμένην ὥστε λεβηρίδα δοκεῖν ὄφως), and for the head-dress of the high-priest he offers one of the most elaborate examples of his similes, by comparing the three-layered high-priest's crown with a plant, and providing a detailed description of the same (*AJ* 3.172-178). All these examples point to Josephus' need to connect his description – of the tabernacle compound and the priestly clothing, of Ptolemy's gifts to the high-priest, and of a specific place in Palestine – to a referent known to his audience.

²⁵ On the description of Gamala, see Huitink - Van Henten 2012, pp. 199-217. In this case, Josephus makes a connection between space and animals.

²⁶ Feldman 2000, pp. 267-268 ntt. 334 and 336.

²⁷ The first simile is not found in Josephus' source, *Letter of Aristaeas* 67. The second simile, however, is found in *Letter of Aristaeas* 73. The grating of the bronze altar of the tabernacle compound is likewise compared to a net in *AJ* 3.149, but that is according to *Ex.* 27.4.

However, similes are not found exclusively in descriptions. In the desert narrative, Josephus explains that the *manna* sent to the Israelites in the desert «resembled honey (*AJ* 3.28: μέλιτι... ἐμπερές) in sweetness and delight, it was similar to the spice bdellium (ὄμοιον δὲ τῇ τῶν ἀρωμάτων βδέλλῃ), and its size was similar to the seed of coriander». Josephus draws part of his similes from the account of *Ex.* 16.31 («it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey»), yet he elaborates the Exodus information by conflating it with that of *Num* 11.7²⁸, where the «gum resin» points to the bdellium. In this case, the historian is particularly eager to explain the biblical account, which deals with a miracle²⁹, by clarifying the concept of *manna*: through a triple simile, he aims at connecting his biblical, miraculous account with a world which is recognizable to his audience; he translates the unapproachable level of God's providential help for Israel into conventional, understandable language.

All the examples above point to Josephus' endeavor to make his account more familiar to his Graeco-Roman audience by using analogies according to a «horizontal anchoring» strategy³⁰. However, the use of similes was common in Greek literature, notably in epic poetry – *in primis* in Homer³¹ – and was not unknown to Flavian epic³². In using similes, therefore, Josephus would not only accommodate his description of the tabernacle to a world which was more familiar to his audience – that of a military camp – but would also make his work more appreciated from the literary point of view, integrating it into the classical tradition. The use of a simile, therefore, would respond to a double «anchoring» strategy.

5.1. *On the Use of σαυρωτήρ*

In his similes, Josephus often makes use of *hapax legomena*. The word μαστοειδής «like a breast», describing the Herodian in *AJ* 15.324, is a *hapax legomenon* in his work³³, as is the word θεατροειδής «like a theatre», used to describe Jerusalem (*AJ* 15.410). Both terms, however, are found in Strabo as well as in Jewish-Greek

²⁸ *Num.* 11:7: «Now the *manna* was like coriander seed, and its color was like the color of gum resin».

²⁹ On Josephus and miracles, Koskenniemi 2005, pp. 228-280; Avioz 2012, pp. 1-25.

³⁰ On the concept of «anchoring», see Sluiter 2017; on «horizontal anchoring», see Sluiter 2021, p. 248.

³¹ To mention but the most recent literature on the topic, see De Jong 2012, pp. 21-38: De Jong counts about 200 similes in the *Iliad* and 40 in the *Odyssey*; on the functions of Homeric similes, notably pp. 23-25. Feeney 2014, pp. 189-228; Sluiter 2014, pp. 821-824; Scheijnen 2017, pp. 2-24; Harris 2018, pp. 475-500. Similes occur also in biblical literature; see Joosten 1996, pp. 227-236.

³² The use of similes is also found in Flavian epic, notably in Statius and Valerius Flaccus; see Sanna 2006, pp. 631-652; McNelis 2015, pp. 189-204.

³³ Van Henten 2014, pp. 233 s.

literature³⁴. Likewise, *σαυρωτήρ* of *AJ* 3.109 is a *hapax legomenon* in Josephus. It indicates the spike at the butt-end of the spear.

The term is typical of Ionic writers, while in Attic and in κοινή Greek the spearbutt would be mostly called *στύραξ*³⁵. It is noteworthy that nowhere else in Josephus' writing does a reference to *σαυρωτήρ* occur, neither as *στύραξ*, nor as its synonym *οὐρίαχος*. However, *σαυρωτήρ* finds several classical attestations. The term occurs before Josephus mainly in Greek poetry: once in Homer (*Il.* 10.153) – and consequently attested in the *Scholion* and in Homer's commentators³⁶ – in Aeschylus (fr. 664, l. 2), Aristotle's *Poetica* (1461a Bekker), and *Anthologia Graeca* (6.110.3). It is widely attested in the lexicographers, who provide its synonyms *στύραξ* and *οὐρίαχος* as well³⁷, yet is not unknown to the historians: it occurs once in Herodotus (*Hist.* 7.41), and three times in Polybius (twice in 6.25; once in 11.18); moreover, it occurs twice in Pausanias³⁸. The use by historians, the occurrences in Pausanias, and especially one fragment of Aristotle seem to indicate a wider cognitive availability than one would suppose at first sight by reading Josephus. In the *scholion* to Hom. *Il.* 10.153 (see below, § 5.2), Aristotle comments on Homer's image of the spears standing on their spikes:

the standing of the spears on their spike looks inept: if only one had fallen in the night it would have created a clamor. Aristotle solves this issue by saying that «so always does Homer, as it was in the past. Such were the old customs, as it is still now among the barbarians: many of the barbarians do it in that way»³⁹.

As we have seen in § 2, in fact, Herodotus 7.41 uses this word while describing Xerxes' army. A few words before mentioning *σαυρωτήρ* (*AJ* 3.109), Josephus has another uncommon word, *κιονόκρανα* «capitals», of which the *Thesaurus Lin-*

³⁴ Van Henten 2014, pp. 312 s. nt. 2951, *ad loc.* *μαστοειδής* is found in Str. *Geogr.* 7a.1.33 and 35 to describe Mount Athos (*ὕψηλόν και μαστοειδής*), and 14.6.3 to characterize Mount Olympus (*ὄρος μαστοειδής Ὀλυμπος*). Moreover, *μαστοειδής* is found in Alex. Polyh. Fr. 18 Müller: the fragment in question, which describes the temple of Jerusalem, is attributed to Eupolemus. *Θεατροειδής* finds 22 attestations in the entire *corpus* of Greek literature. Among them, it is attested 4 times in Strabo (*Geogr.* 4.1.4; 9.3.3; 14.2.15; 16.2.41), and once in the *Letter of Aristaeas* 105.3.

³⁵ E.g., Xen. *HG* 6.2.19; Pl. *La.* 184a; Onos. 10.4; *στυράκιον* Th. 2.4.

³⁶ E.g., Porph. *ad Il.* 10.153; Apollon. *Lex.* 140; Eust. 3.34.

³⁷ Pollux, Hesychius, and Photius explain the meaning of *σαυρωτήρ* and clarify it with its synonyms, *στύραξ* and *οὐρίαχος*. Poll. 1.136: *και τα μέρη το μὲν τέλος σαυρωτήρ, το δὲ μέσον ἀγκύλη*. Hsch. 180, *s.v.* *σαυρωτήρ*: *το ἔσχατον σιδήριον τοῦ δόρατος*. Phot. *Lexicon, s.v.* *στύραξ*: *ὁ σαυρωτήρ καλοῦμενος: ἡ τοῦ δόρατος ἀκμή, ἐφ' ἣ στηρίζεται*. Suid. *s.v.* *οὐρίαχος* and *στύραξ*.

³⁸ Paus. 3.3.8 and 8.49.6.

³⁹ Arist. *fr.* 160: Schol. Ext. B *ad Il.* κ, 153 (ed. Rose 1967): *φαύλη δοκεῖ εἶναι ἡ τῶν δοράτων ἐπὶ σαυρωτήρας στάσις: και διη πανταχοῦ θόρυβον ἤδη πεποιηκε νύκτωρ ἐν μόνον πεσόν. λύει δ' Ἀριστοτέλης λέγων ὅτι τοιαῦτα ἀεὶ ποιεῖ Ὀμηρος, οἷα ἦν τότε. ἦν δὲ τοιαῦτα τὰ παλαιά, οἷα περ και νῦν ἐν τοῖς βαρβάροις: πολλοὶ δὲ οὕτω χροῦνται τῶν βαρβάρων*. See also Arist. *Po.* 1461a Bekker.

guae Graecae gives 17 occurrences in the whole of Greek literature⁴⁰. But while for κιονόκρανα one may reasonably assume that Josephus used a vocabulary list⁴¹, since he faces the challenges of interpreting the biblical text, by using σαυρωτήρ he goes a step further, by adding a simile to the biblical account. In the case of σαυρωτήρ, it is therefore more probable that Josephus knew the word himself.

The butt of shafted weapons is largely attested in Roman military equipment: it balanced the weight of the head ensuring a longer distance throw and presumably a steadier flight; it allowed the insertion of the pole in the ground; and it provided its carrier with a spare blow, in case the spearhead snapped, as attested by Polybius (*Hist.* 6.25). Only a few examples of spikes at the butt-end of spears were clearly identified as such in Palestine, most notably from Masada, and such deficiency has been explained with a possible local preference for shafted weapons without a butt, as in the javelin from the Figs Caves⁴². Although there is no consensus on the definition and classification of Roman spears⁴³, surely some sort of spear was used in the first Revolt: Josephus writes that at the conclusion of the siege of Jotapata, the centurion Antonius was stabbed beneath the groin by a spear (δόρυ, *BJ* 3.335), and in the so-called Burnt House in the Upper-city of Jerusalem an iron spear was found, dated 70 CE⁴⁴. This evidence, together with findings from Masada⁴⁵ and Josephus' own military background, make Josephus' direct knowledge of the spikes at the butt-end of the spear well possible.

As we have seen, in *AJ* 3.109 Josephus describes the poles of the tabernacle court as shafts of 5 cubits. Consequently, in his simile Josephus plausibly refers to a spear similar to a δόρυ, the main spear of the classical hoplite, the Macedonian *sarissa* being longer. The δόρυ was usually made of bronze and mostly featured a spike at its butt-end, that is, a σαυρωτήρ.

⁴⁰ The word is found once in Philo of Alexandria in a profane context, 4 times in Diodorus Siculus to describe the capitals of temples, 3 times in Josephus (twice here and once for the capitals of the Herodian Temple, *AJ* 15.414), and a few times in later lexicographers: Ph. *Somm.* 2.55; Diod. 3.47.6; 5.47.4; 18.26.6; 18.27.2. Phot. *Hom.* 10, p. 101, l. 28; Hsch. *Lexicon*, s.v. E, nr. 7647, l. 4.

⁴¹ Although biblical *onomastica* from the time of Josephus are not attested, on the basis of two papyrus fragments dated to the second and third centuries (Rokéah 1968, pp. 70-82), Tessa Rajak suggests that the availability of vocabulary lists to Josephus «can be reasonably assumed». See Rajak 2021, p. 428. In the case of κιονόκρανα Josephus interprets the round shapes around the shafts of the court (Hebrew כַּוְּרִיָּם) as a kind of «capital», just as the Septuagint does. However, he either consciously preferred to avoid the unclear ψαλίδες of *LXX Ex.* 27.10 and κεφαλίδες – which in the *LXX Ex.* 27.17 and 37.15 refers to two different Hebrew words – or he may have overlooked the Septuagint at the outset, relying only on the Hebrew. See Castelli 2020, pp. 7-8.

⁴² Stiebel 2007, I, p. 137.

⁴³ Stiebel-Magness 2007, p. 27.

⁴⁴ Levine 2002, p. 322.

⁴⁵ Notably the iron ferrule published by Stiebel-Magness 2007, pp. 27 and 93, plate 29:2.

5.2. *An Allusion to Hom. Il. 10.153*

I have suggested in § 5.1 that Josephus plausibly associates the shafts of the tabernacle court with the shafts of the δόρυ, and their bases with the σαυρωτήρ. I will argue here that this association may point to a literary allusion to Greek epic, specifically to Homer, *Il.* 10.153. While Josephus' allusions were a recurrent topic in Thackeray's and Feldman's works⁴⁶, both approaches have been criticized by recent scholarship⁴⁷. Notably, Erkki Koskenniemi's 2019 monograph *Greek Writers and Philosophers in Philo and Josephus* challenges Feldman's numerous assertions that Josephus alludes to Greek poets, and, in particular, to Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides⁴⁸. However, while I agree with Koskenniemi that Feldman's parallels with the classical tradition often go too far⁴⁹, and that Philo and Josephus have quite a different approach to Greek poetry, I do not subscribe to Koskenniemi's conclusion on Josephus⁵⁰. First, Koskenniemi does not deal with linguistic similarities between Josephus and Greek poets⁵¹, which would speak for closer parallels and allusions. Second, Josephus does quote one Homeric passage in *Antiquities*, namely *Il.* 14.90-91 in *AJ* 19.92 (see below), and did allude to Greek poetry in several passages, although he did not quote any of these authors extensively⁵². One

⁴⁶ The topic of literary allusions was connected to Thackeray's theory of Josephus' assistants based on *Ap.* 1.50, formulated as early as 1929, and recurrent in Thackeray's commentary on Josephus and unfinished *Lexicon* to Josephus. See Thackeray 1929; Thackeray 1995, pp. XIV-XVII; Thackeray 1930-1955. Rajak 2002, pp. 233-236, rejects Thackeray's proposal as being needed to explain Josephus' classical allusions, yet does not dismiss the fact of Josephus' allusions. The topic of allusions permeates L.H. Feldman's comprehensive essays Feldman 1998c and Feldman 1998b.

⁴⁷ For disagreement with Feldman, see Roncace 2000, pp. 247-274; Begg 1996, pp. 69-110; Avioz 2012, pp. 1-25; and especially Koskenniemi 2019, pp. 168-171.

⁴⁸ Koskenniemi 2019, pp. 168-171; on the Greek tragedians, see Feldman 1998a, pp. 51-80; Feldman 1998b, pp. 172-177.

⁴⁹ In some cases, Feldman refers to general themes in classical antiquity, not to specific allusions to Homer: for example, the custom of establishing guest-friendships is found in *AJ* 8.388 – Ahab makes a covenant with Ben-Hadad and presents him with many gifts – as in *Hom. Il.* 6.212-236 between Glaucus and Diomedes (Feldman 1998c, p. 285). Other examples of this general trend are found in Feldman 1998b, p. 130; Feldman 1997, pp. 41-87 (pp. 64-73).

⁵⁰ Koskenniemi 2019, p. 171 concludes his argument on Josephus and Greek poetry by saying that «Josephus thus mentions no poets in *War or Life* and mentions Hesiod and Theodectes in *Antiquities* only once. In *Apion*, Homer appears four times, Hesiod and Choerilus once [...]. Many educated people, like Philo, used to embellish their text with good verses and take them as part of their argumentation, but doing this required that they had learned them by heart. Josephus does not use the poets for this end, and this is important».

⁵¹ Koskenniemi 2019, p. 158 nt. 32. On the other hand, a linguistic approach is followed by Laduceur 1983, pp. 18-38.

⁵² Several allusions in Josephus' *Bellum Iudaicum* have been convincingly argued for by Mason-Chapman 2008 (e.g., pp. 121-146), and by Chapman 2005. Numerous allusions to Greek literature are listed in Ryan Olson's monograph on Josephus' letters, Olson 2010. Classical parallels were also identified by

cannot therefore rule out that in his simile of *AJ* 3.109 Josephus purposely makes a literary allusion.

Among the authors in whose work *σαυρωτήρ* occurs, the most convincing candidate for an allusion in this passage of *AJ* 3.109 is Homer. Josephus was acquainted with Homer. He openly mentions him four times in *Contra Apionem* (1.12; 2.13-14; 2.154-156; 2.255-256)⁵³: among these passages he grants Homer's oral poetry to be the beginning of Greek literature (*Ap.* 1.12), and he rightly states that nowhere did Homer use the word νόμος (*Ap.* 2.155)⁵⁴. Koskenniemi touches on the tempting hypothesis that the latter information may have come to Josephus through his patron – possibly the M. Mettius Epaphroditus scholar of Homer and Hesiod, who lived in Rome at his time – although acknowledging that the identification of the patron is far from certain⁵⁵. Moreover, in *AJ* 19.92 Josephus quotes *Il.* 14.90-91 while describing the conspiracy to assassinate Caligula. To Vatinius's words that «the game of the slaughter of tyrants is to be played this day», Cluvius replies,

ὦ γενναῖε, φησὶν, σίγα, μή τις τ' ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν μῦθον ἀκούσῃ

«O brave comrade – he says – be silent, lest some other of the Achaeans hear (your) word»

(*AJ* 19.92).

Cluvius's answer echoes, with an omission and an inversion⁵⁶, Odysseus's words to Agamemnon: σίγα, μή τις τ' ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν τοῦτον ἀκούσῃ | μῦθον «be silent, lest some other of the Achaeans hear this word». Even if the quotation had come to Josephus from his source – a fact which is by itself controversial⁵⁷ – it is nevertheless relevant that the historian decides to include a Homeric quotation in this dramatic account: probably a Homeric citation would not escape (most of) his audience⁵⁸. Chapman convincingly argues that Josephus alludes to Homer with the expression ἃ δειλοί in *BJ* 2.347 and 5.376 (*Il.* 17.201; *Od.* 20.351), as well as with the combination of the noun κειμήλιον and the verb καταμάω in *BJ*

Paul 1993, pp. 56-66. Even more recently, an echo of the epigram of Asclepiades for Aias's tombs (7.145) or its imitation by Antipatros of Sydon (7.146) has been pointed out in *BJ* 4.325 by Magnelli 2015, pp. 267-270.

⁵³ These passages are discussed in Koskenniemi 2019, pp. 158-162; Ritoók 1989, pp. 137-152, also deals with the passages of *Contra Apionem*, but not with Josephus' allusions to Homer.

⁵⁴ Feldman 1998b, p. 172; Koskenniemi 2019, pp. 160-161.

⁵⁵ Koskenniemi 2019, p. 161 nt. 38. On the grammarian M. Mettius Epaphroditus, see Matthaios 2015, pp. 230 s. The identification was already favored by Thackeray 1995, p. XI.

⁵⁶ Josephus omits τοῦτον, and replaces it with μῦθον.

⁵⁷ Feldman 1962, pp. 320-333 and Goud 1996, pp. 472-482, against Mommsen point to Josephus' conscious manipulation of his sources.

⁵⁸ «Learned citations were a highly visible indication of literary culture. It would be hard to overestimate the prestige of erudition for its own sake in the early Roman empire»; so Cameron 2004, p. 121.

2.322 (*// Il.* 24.63-65)⁵⁹. In *AJ* 1.222 the expression ἐπὶ γήρωσ οὐδῶ «on the threshold of old age», referred to Abraham as an elderly father of Isaac, echoes Hom. *Il.* 22.60 and 24.487 – where ἐπὶ γήρωσ οὐδῶ characterizes the old Priam in two pathetic speeches – as well as *Od.* 15.246; 15.348; 23.212⁶⁰. And *AJ* 4.117: «for no one will return bringing victory, or so as to gladden (εὐφράναι) children and wives» may echo Hom. *Il.* 5.688, where Sarpedon is eager to return home «to gladden (εὐφρανέειν) his dear wife and infant son»⁶¹.

In *Il.* 10.153, where the word σαυρωτήρ occurs, Homer describes Diomedes' camp:

ἀμφὶ δ' ἑταῖροι
εὐδον, ὑπὸ κρασὶν δ' ἔχον ἀσπίδας· ἔγχεα δὲ σφιν
ῥοθ' ἐπὶ σαυρωτήρος ἐλήλατο, τῆλε δὲ χαλκὸς
λάμφ' ὡς τε στεροπὴ πατρὸς Διός

around (him) his comrades
were sleeping with their shields under their heads, while their spears
were driven into the ground erect on their spikes, and afar shone
the bronze like the lightning of father Zeus
(Hom. *Il.* 10.153; transl. by A.T. Murray, slightly modified).

In his vivid description, Homer visualizes the bronze of the spears, flashing like a lightning. I have pointed out above (§ 4) that in his formulation Josephus stressed that the bases were of bronze, according to the Hebrew Bible and possibly in terms inconsistent with the formulation of *LXX Ex.* 27.11. Through this simile Josephus may additionally have wanted to allude to the famous Homeric passage of *Il.* 10.153, commented upon also by Aristotle (see § 5.1). There, the bronze of the spears is em-

⁵⁹ Chapman 2005, pp. 129-130. Chapman rightly prefers the *difficilior* καταμάω to the *facilior* καταπάσσω, found in *LXX Job* 2.12, and *Esth.* 4.1. Mason-Chapman 2008, *ad loc.*, support Josephus' allusion to *Il.* 24.63-65. According to Feldman 1998b, p. 172, Josephus alludes to Homer (*Il.* 10.231; 10.498: τλήμων. *Il.* 21.430: τλήμονες) when he uses the word τλημονεστάτη «most wretched» in *BJ* 5.19. However, ὁ τλημονεστάτη πόλις – referring to Jerusalem in a direct address, full of *pathos*, by Josephus to his beloved home city (*BJ* 5.19) – as well as ὁ τλημονέστατοι – referring to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the similarly dramatic speech of Ananus (*BJ* 4.174) – allude rather to Sophocles and Euripides. In fact, the superlative is found in Sophocles (*El.* 439: τλημονεστάτη; *Ph.* 363: τλημονέστατον) and Euripides (*Hec.* 562: τλημονέστατον; *Heracl.* 570: τλημονεστάτην; *Med.* 1067: τλημονεστάτην). On Josephus' allusions to Sophocles and Euripides in *Bellum Iudaicum*, see Chapman 2005, pp. 137-145.

⁶⁰ On this expression, see Kiss 2010, p. 403 nt. 9 on some parallels in later literature, among which Ps.-Phoc. 230. Josephus is not mentioned by Kiss.

⁶¹ *AJ* 4.117: Οὐ γὰρ ἂν ὑποστρέψειε τις νικηφόρος οὐδ' ὥστε παῖδας εὐφράναι καὶ γυναῖκας. Hom. *Il.* 5.688: εὐφρανέειν ἄλοχόν τε φίλην καὶ νήπιον υἱόν. According to Feldman 1998b, p. 163, another possible allusion to Homer is found when Josephus says that Moses has left his writings in disarray (σποράδην), as God has revealed to him (*AJ* 4.197): in fact, in *Anthologia Palatina* 11.442 the same word σποράδην is used to describe the disarray of Homer's poems.

phasized by its position at the end of the verse and by the visualization likewise created through a simile; moreover, *σαυρωτήρ* is stressed by two metric accents.

If Josephus purposely alluded to Homer in this passage, as it seems reasonable to suppose, the historian would integrate the biblical description of Moses's tabernacle into the most distinguished classical tradition, that of the Homeric epic. Not only by using a simile, which was itself common in Homer, but also through a specific allusion to the *Iliad*, according to a «vertical anchoring» strategy⁶². Considering the widespread use of Homer in Flavian literature⁶³, one may reasonably assume that the Homeric allusion would have been valued and appreciated by – at least some of – Josephus' audience.

6. Conclusions

In his account of the tabernacle (*AJ* 3.109), according to Niese's text, Josephus has the bases of the shafts of the court as «golden/gilded» (*χρυσαῖ*) and «of bronze» (*χαλκαῖ*) at the same time, and compares them with «spikes of lances» (*σαυρωτήρ-σιν ἐμπερεῖς*). I have argued that Niese's text is corrupted in this passage and that the most plausible solution is to emend *χρυσαῖ* into *χαλκαῖ*, and to omit *χαλκαῖ δὲ ἦσαν* as a scribal gloss. The gloss was meant to correct the corrupted *χρυσαῖ* and ended up at a later stage incorporated into the text. With his formulation, on the one hand Josephus emphasized that the bases of the shafts were of bronze, according to the Hebrew text of Exodus, and possibly against the unclear interpretation of the Septuagint in *Ex.* 27.11. On the other hand, Josephus' intention to present the tabernacle of the desert as a temporary structure, similar to a military camp, invited the comparison between the bases of the shafts of the court, firmly planted into the soil, and the spikes at the butt-end of the spear, expressed with a simile, according to a «horizontal anchoring» strategy. In his simile Josephus used the word *σαυρωτήρ*, a *hapax legomenon* in his work, yet one that was probably known to the historian, due to his military experience. I have finally argued that with his simile Josephus may reasonably be judged to have alluded to the description of Diomedes' camp in Homer, *Il.* 10.153: there not only does *σαυρωτήρ* occur, but the shining bronze of the spears is highlighted – a point useful to Josephus' agenda to follow the Hebrew Bible. By purposely alluding to Homer, Josephus would additionally make his work more impressive from the literary point of view, integrating his biblical description into the most distinguished classical tradition, according to a «vertical anchoring» strategy.

⁶² On «vertical anchoring», that is anchoring using the familiarity of a shared past, see Sluiter 2021, p. 248.

⁶³ Augoustakis 2014; Lovatt 2017.

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