

# The Meanings of the Noun *σκάνδαλον* in the Book of Judith\*

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Abstract: The book of Judith employs the noun *σκάνδαλον*—a *vox biblica*—three times in quite different contexts: war (Jdt 5:1), sin (Jdt 5:20), and eating (Jdt 12:2). The purpose of this paper is to shed more light on the specific use the book of Judith makes of this noun. What does the word mean in its respective contexts? To what extent is its use influenced by the translated books of the Septuagint that might have been available to the author of the book of Judith? Furthermore, the question arises whether this specific linguistic feature enables us to get further criteria relating to the origin of the book of Judith: does it represent a translation from a Hebrew *Vorlage*, or was it originally written in Greek?

## I. INTRODUCTION

The word *σκάνδαλον* is considered to be a *vox biblica*, that is, a word which does not occur in writings outside the biblical literature or in literature influenced by it.<sup>1</sup> As for cognate words that could contribute to a better understanding of the use of *σκάνδαλον* in Jewish and Christian writings, only few examples are quoted by scholars<sup>2</sup>: Except for one occurrence of *σκανδάνων* [sic] in P.Cair.Zen. IV 59608, whose context is far from being clear, Aristophanes, *Ach.* 687, uses

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1. See already Robert Helbing, *Grammatik der Septuaginta. Laut- und Wortlehre* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907), 126–27; Gerard J. M. Bartelink, *Lexicologisch-semantic studie over de taal van de Apostolische Vaders. Bijdrage tot de studie van de groeptaal der griekse Christenen* (Utrecht: Beijers, 1952), 49.

2. See, e.g., Gustav Stählin, “*σκάνδαλον* κτλ.,” *TDNT* 7:339–58 (339–40).

σκανδάληθρον (“stick in a trap”), albeit in a figurative sense: ἀνεγκύσας ἐρωτᾷ, σκανδάληθρ’ ἰστάς ἐπῶν, “he drags us [before the judge], presses us with questions, lays word-traps.”

Some centuries later, probably at the end of the second century CE, a word from the same root occurs in a fictional letter contained in Alciphron’s collection of *Epistulae*, 3.22.<sup>3</sup> A certain Polyalsos complains about foxes who have plundered his vines. In order to put an end to their undesirable activities, Polyalsos makes use of an instrument that he calls ἡ σκανδάλη: Πάγην ἔστησα ἐπὶ τὰς μιάρας ἀλώπεκας κρεάδιον τῆς σκανδάλης ἀπαρτήσας, “I set a trap for those confounded foxes and hang a piece of meat on the σκανδάλη.”

Nevertheless, these scattered attestations of the root in question can hardly explain the biblical evidence. In fact, in the biblical writings, the noun has a certain range of concrete and abstract meanings. Hence, one cannot but agree with Gustav Stählin’s statement: “There is no intellectual or abstract extension of the meaning of σκάνδαλον outside the Jew.-Chr. sphere.”<sup>4</sup>

In the translated books of the Septuagint, the word σκάνδαλον is attested only fourteen times.<sup>5</sup> To this might be added a handful of quotations in books not available in Hebrew. For example, the book of Judith employs σκάνδαλον three times in quite different contexts: war (Jdt 5:1), sin (Jdt 5:20), and eating (Jdt 12:2). The purpose of this paper is to shed more light on the specific use the book of Judith makes of this noun. What does the word mean in its respective contexts? To what extent is its use influenced by the translated books of the Septuagint that might have been available to the author of the book of Judith? Furthermore, the question arises whether this specific linguistic feature enables us to get further criteria relating to the origin of the book of Judith: does it represent a translation from a supposed Hebrew *Vorlage*, or was it originally written in Greek? In this latter case, what conclusions can be drawn from this hypothesis?

## 2. JDT 5:1: ἔθηκαν ἐν τοῖς πεδίοις σκάνδαλα

The first occurrence of σκάνδαλον is to be found in Jdt 5:1: οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ παρεσκευάσαντο εἰς πόλεμον καὶ τὰς διόδους τῆς ὀρεινῆς συνέκλεισαν καὶ ἐτείχισαν πᾶσαν κορυφὴν ὄρους ὑψηλοῦ καὶ ἔθηκαν ἐν τοῖς πεδίοις σκάνδαλα “the sons of Israel had prepared for war and ... they had blocked the highland passages and fortified all the summits of the high mountains and had set traps in the plains”

3. For Alciphron, see M. Weißenberger, “Alciphron,” *Der Neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996), 1:cols. 1548–49

4. Stählin *TDNT* 7:340.

5. For a brief overview of the LXX occurrences, see Juan Mateos, “Análisis semántico de los lexemas σκανδαλίζω y σκάνδαλον,” *Filología Neotestamentaria* 2 (1989): 57–92 (78). However, this article does not focus on the LXX use of the words in question.

(NETS). At first glance, the sense of this long sentence does not give rise to major difficulties. The activities mentioned concern obviously the fortification of strategically important places in order to prevent the Assyrian army from occupying Judea.

The vocabulary resembles both biblical and nonbiblical Greek, at least partly. It will suffice to quote three examples:

- The expression *παρασκευάζομαι εἰς πόλεμον* is attested in Thucydides, *Hist.* 3.13 (*παρασκευάζεσθαι τε ἐς τὸν πόλεμον*). Polybius, *Hist.* 27.19.1 (*παρασκευαζομένους εἰς τὸν περὶ Κοίλης Συρίας πόλεμον*), and Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 18.2.4 (*παρασκευαζομένων εἰς πόλεμον*). Moreover, it occurs even in a translated text of the LXX, in Jer 6:4; 27:42, and later in the New Testament in 1 Cor 14:8.
- The same holds true for the military use of *συγκλείω*: Both in biblical and in nonbiblical Greek the verb might refer to the siege of a city (Josh 6:1) or to the closing of doors or the opening of closed city gates (Isa 45:1; Xenophon, *Anab.* 7.1.15).
- That a city or a place of strategic importance is fortified (verb *τειχίζω*) is an idea common to biblical and nonbiblical texts (Lev 25:29; Hos 8:14; Thucydides, *Hist.* 1.91). Especially, the idea that the top of a mountain (*κορυφή*) is fortified can be found in Josephus, *J.W.* 4.55.

To be sure, it will prove difficult to find exact parallels for each of the quoted expressions of Jdt 5:1 in the extant Greek literature. Nonetheless, it should be underlined that they are understandable against the background of biblical and nonbiblical Greek texts.

So far so good. A rather more difficult case is the phrase *ἔθηκαν ἐν τοῖς πεδίοις σκάνδαλα* in Jdt 5:1. Of course, if, on the one hand, the tops of the mountains are to be fortified, on the other, the plains cannot represent a gateway for the Assyrian army under Holofernes' command. In other words, the defenders have to take measures across the plains so as to frustrate any enemy invasion. By contrast to the aforementioned expressions, the idea of laying *σκάνδαλα* in the plains raises several questions: (1) To what kind of object does the word *σκάνδαλα* refer? (2) In which texts can the expression *τίθημι σκάνδαλον* be found? (3) What are its equivalents in non-biblical Greek?

(1) Interestingly, with regard to the first question, in the extant manuscripts of the book of Judith, no real variant of *σκάνδαλα* is attested, except the singular *σκάνδαλον* in manuscript 392 which dates from the tenth century. Further, the Vulgate, whose divergences from the Septuagint of the book of Judith are

notorious,<sup>6</sup> does not offer a Latin translation of the expression in question. Only the fortification measures set in motion in the mountains are mentioned: *ac montium itinera conclusissent*. Finally, in the numerous in-depth descriptions of wars and campaigns by ancient authors (e.g., Polybius, Diodorus Siculus, Josephus), there is no mention anywhere of a *σκάνδαλον* that would fulfill the function it has in Jdt 5:1, that is, to hinder the advance of enemy troops. In the absence of older or contemporary occurrences in the extant non-Jewish literature, it would be tempting to recognize a relationship between *σκάνδαλον* and *σκανδάλη*, the word which turns up in Alciphron's letter in the context of hunting (see above). Whatever the *σκανδάλη* might be, the trap itself or a part of it, this quite isolated occurrence can hardly explain Jdt 5:1. The Jewish population certainly did not set fox-traps against well-equipped Assyrian troops.

(2) As for the Septuagint evidence, where the second question is concerned, it is true that nowhere are *σκάνδαλα* said to have been employed in order to stop an enemy army. However, to the best of my knowledge, the closest parallels to Jdt 5:1 are to be found in some Septuagint texts which are probably earlier than the book of Judith. As follows from at least two passages, a *σκάνδαλον* is "set" (verb *τίθημι* or *προστίθημι*), that is, it is used on purpose. In fact, its function is to make a person stumble. In at least one case, stumbling is to be taken literally: Lev 19:14: *ἀπέναντι τυφλοῦ οὐ προσθήσεις σκάνδαλον* [MT: *mikšol*], "you shall not put an obstacle before a blind person"). In another occurrence, one might hesitate between a literal and a figurative interpretation: Ps 139[140]:6: *ἐχόμενα τρίβου σκάνδαλον* [MT: *moqšim*] *ἔθεντό μοι*, "near the path they set an obstacle for me." In the light of these two texts in Greek and Hebrew, the phrase *ἔθηκαν ἐν τοῖς πεδίοις σκάνδαλα* requires the following interpretation: the *σκάνδαλα* are probably obstructions or barricades which were meant to make the Assyrian army "stumble" in the case of an attack. Therefore, modern commentators translate the word in this sense: "obstacles" (Morton Enslin<sup>7</sup>), "traps" (Carey A. Moore,<sup>8</sup> Debora Levine Gera<sup>9</sup>), "emboscadas" (José Vilchez Líndez<sup>10</sup>), and "Hindernisse" (Schmitz, Engel).<sup>11</sup>

6. See, e.g., Robert Hanhart, *Judith*, Septuaginta 8.4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 15.

7. Morton S. Enslin, *The Book of Judith: Greek Text with English Translation, Commentary and Critical Notes* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 85: "apparently *σκάνδαλα* here signifies barricades of some sort, as snares or pitfalls."

8. Carey A. Moore, *Judith: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AncB 40 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 157.

9. Debora Levine Gera, *Judith* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 191, 196.

10. José Vilchez Líndez, *Tobías y Judit*, Nueva Biblia Española (Estella: Editorial Verbo Divino, 2000), 299.

11. Barbara Schmitz and Helmut Engel, *Judit: Übersetzt und ausgelegt*, HThKAT (Freiburg: Herder, 2014), 159, 163.

(3) With regard to the third question, however, the problem is more complex than it first appears. Was the text understandable in antiquity? Unfortunately, ancient commentaries on the book of Judith are missing. However, it is striking that even in the first centuries CE Christian commentators felt obliged to paraphrase the noun *σκάνδαλον* when it occurs elsewhere in the Bible, either in the Old Testament or in the New Testament. In his commentary on Ps 139:6<sup>LXX</sup>, Theodoret of Cyrus (*Interpr. Ps.*, PG 80, 1944) gives an equivalent for each of the three words *παγίς*, *σχοινίον*, and *σκάνδαλον*: *Παγίδα δὲ, καὶ σχοινία, καὶ σκάνδαλα, τὰς διαφόρους ἐπιβουλάς, τοὺς λόχους, τὰς ἐνέδρας*, “trap, nets, and obstacles [he calls] various schemes, ambushes, and ambuscades.” He explains that these nouns are to be understood in a figurative sense, the metaphors being borrowed from the field of hunting where cords, traps and nets are used (*εἶρηκε δὲ ταῦτα τροπικῶς, ἐκ μεταφορᾶς τῶν θηρευόντων καὶ ἀρπεδόνας, καὶ ποδάγρας, καὶ δίχτυα διατεινόντων*, *Interpr. Ps.*, PG 80, 1944). Commenting on the New Testament quotation “it is inevitable that *σκάνδαλα* should come” (Luke 17:1), John Chrysostom asks (*Hom. Matt.*, PG 58, 574): What is the meaning of *τὰ σκάνδαλα*? His answer is “hindrances on the right way” (*τὰ κωλύματα τῆς ὀρθῆς ὁδοῦ*).<sup>12</sup> The patristic evidence should not be overestimated. Nevertheless, one question still remains open: could the word *σκάνδαλον* be understood by readers or hearers who did not share a Jewish or a Christian background? This possibility should not be ruled out a priori. Nevertheless, one has to bear in mind that the more common words for “ambush” are *λόχος* and *ἐνέδρα*, the nouns quoted in the abovementioned commentary by Theodoret. It suffices to recall one example, Josephus, *Ant.* 14.399: “Antigonus laid snares and ambushes in the passes and places most proper for them” (*Ἀντίγονος τῶν παρόδων τοὺς ἐπιτηδεῖους τόπους ἐνέδραις καὶ λόχοις κατελάμβανεν*).<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Jdt 5:20: ἐπισκεψόμεθα ὅτι ἐν αὐτοῖς σκάνδαλον τοῦτο

At the end of his discourse to Holofernes, Achior considers two alternatives. If Israel has not sinned against his god, he will protect his people (see also Jdt 11:10); therefore, the Assyrian military campaign will be doomed to failure (Jdt 5:21). If, however, Israel has sinned, the military campaign against them

12. Another example can be found in Theodoret, *Interpr. Ps.* (PG 80, 1952, on Ps 140:9): *Φύλαξόν με ἀπὸ παγίδος, ἧς συνεστήσαντό μοι, καὶ ἀπὸ σκανδάλων τῶν ἐργαζομένων τὴν ἀνομίαν. Τῶν παγίδων τούτων καὶ τῶν σκανδάλων ἐμνημόνευσε καὶ ἐν τῷ πρὸ τούτου ψαλμῷ. Παγίδας δὲ καὶ σκάνδαλα τὰς ἐπιβουλάς καλεῖ, ὧν ἀπαλλαγῆναι παρακαλεῖ.*

13. See also Polybius, *Hist.* 3.40.12: *οἱ δὲ Βοῖοι συνέντες αὐτοῦ τὴν παρουσίαν, ἐν τισὶ δρυμοῖς ἐτοιμάσαντες ἐνέδρας ἅμα τῷ παρελθεῖν εἰς τοὺς ὑλώδεις τόπους πανταχόθεν ἅμα προσπεσόντες πολλοὺς ἀπέκτειναν τῶν Ῥωμαίων.* “The Boii had heard of his approach, and posting ambuscades in a certain forest attacked him from all sides at once as soon as he reached the wooded country, and killed many of the Romans.”

will be successful (Jdt 5:20). The crucial question is how Achior and the leaders of the Assyrian army will find out if Israel has sinned. Do they have to send spies to the entrenched Israelite soldiers in order to get some information out of them, as Vilchez Líndez supposes?<sup>14</sup> Be this as it may, the criterion this decision is based on is the existence of a σκάνδαλον, precisely σκάνδαλον τοῦτο of which the Assyrians have to gain knowledge (ἐπισκεψόμεθα). Of course, the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο suggests that the aforementioned sins (εἰ μὲν ἔστιν ἀγνόημα ἐν τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ καὶ ἀμαρτάνουσιν εἰς τὸν θεὸν αὐτῶν) represent the real σκάνδαλον.<sup>15</sup> Anyway, if the Assyrians become aware of this σκάνδαλον, what does it consist in? No doubt the σκάνδαλον is hardly a material obstacle. Perhaps the noun has undergone a metaphorical extension by analogy with the noun πρόσκομμα. While the literal meaning “stumbling” is still visible in expressions like λίθος προσκόμματι (Isa 8:14) the figurative meaning predominates in the LXX (see e.g., Exod 23:33; 34:12). In some quotations, however, the meaning seems to oscillate between both of them, for example, in Sir 34:16: οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας αὐτόν.... φυλακὴ ἀπὸ προσκόματος καὶ βοήθεια ἀπὸ πτώσεως, “the eyes of the Lord are on those who love him.... He is a guard against stumbling and a help against falling.” In Rom 14:13, πρόσκομμα is even a kind of synonym of σκάνδαλον: “not to put a stumbling block or an obstacle for one’s brother” (μὴ τιθέναι πρόσκομμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ ἢ σκάνδαλον). When σκάνδαλον has a figurative meaning, normally it is accompanied by a dative of the person interested, that is, for whom someone or something represents a σκάνδαλον. King Saul, for instance, agrees to give his daughter Michal to David in the expectation that she will become a σκάνδαλον for him (1 Kgdms 18:21: δώσω αὐτήν αὐτῷ καὶ ἔσται αὐτῷ εἰς σκάνδαλον<sup>16</sup>). Yet, such a dative or other equivalent is missing in Jdt 5:20. Surely, it can easily be deduced from the context that the relationship between Israel and God is at stake.<sup>17</sup> However, nowhere else in the Septuagint is a possible sin of Israel referred to as a σκάνδαλον in relation to God. In this regard, the formulation of Jdt 5:20 has no exact counterpart in the Septuagint.

What does the σκάνδαλον really consist of?<sup>18</sup> Achior’s discourse is quite enigmatic.<sup>19</sup> It is possible that an Israelite reader or hearer of the book of Judith

14. Vilchez Líndez, *Tobías y Judit*, 310.

15. Enslin, *Book of Judith*, 92: “σκάνδαλον τοῦτο ... is substantially equivalent to the preceding ἀγνόηματα [sic].”

16. In Ps 68:23<sup>LXX</sup>, no dative is used but the preposition ἐνώπιον.

17. For this idea and the following considerations on idolatry, see the article by Daniela Scialabba in the present volume.

18. This question remains open in the detailed analysis of Achior’s speech by Barbara Schmitz, *Gedeutete Geschichte: Die Funktion der Reden und Gebete im Buch Judit*, HBS 40 (Freiburg: Herder, 2004), 116, who states: “Der Erfolg der Assyrer hängt somit von der Bedingung ab, ob das Volk Israel durch sein Verhalten selbst in die Falle geht.”

could not help but think of idolatry, especially if he was familiar with the language of the Septuagint. In fact, several times the Septuagint establishes a connection between foreign gods and the *σκάνδαλον* they represent for Israel or for humans in general (e.g., Judg 2:3; Ps 105:36<sup>LXX</sup>; Wis 14:11). Such an idea is also suggested by the LXX text of Hos 4:17: μέτοχος ειδώλων Εφραιμ ἔθηκεν ἑαυτῷ σκάνδαλα, “Ephraim, an associate of idols, placed stumbling blocks against himself” (NETS).<sup>20</sup> Is it therefore idolatry which represents the specific *σκάνδαλον* in Jdt 5:20, that is, the event or action which creates the “obstacle”<sup>21</sup> lying between Israel and his God? At first glance, this interpretation is not too far-fetched—even if Judith herself explicitly excludes a recent incident of idolatry in Israel (Jdt 8:18). Nevertheless, this was possibly the interpretation of the text suggested to the Israelite reader or hearer. From the mouth of an enemy officer, who is a member of the hateful Ammonite people, he or she would learn that this *σκάνδαλον* could have serious consequences. In other words, Achior—a pagan who later will join the Jewish people (Jdt 14:10)<sup>22</sup>—would implicitly remind the Israelites of a possible great guilt before their god. Still, is Holofernes, the fictitious addressee of Achior’s speech, supposed to take the *σκάνδαλον* as an allusion to idolatry? If so, would he be capable of understanding that idolatry is an offense toward the God of Israel? Obviously, no definite answer to this question is possible. The fact remains that the nature of the *σκάνδαλον* is obviously not the crucial problem in Achior’s discourse.<sup>23</sup> What Achior and Holofernes want to find out is if an “obstacle” really exists and if it prevents the God of Israel from intervening in favour of his people.

#### 4. JDT 12:2: ἵνα μὴ γένηται σκάνδαλον

In Jdt 12:1, Judith is invited to have a meal with Holofernes. Although she accepts the invitation, she refuses to take from the dishes and the wine offered to her. Instead, she prefers eating the food which she had brought with her. When

19. See the recent analysis by Roger Gil and Eberhard Bons, “Judith 5:5–21 ou le récit d’Akhior: Les mémoires dans la construction de l’identité narrative du peuple d’Israël,” *VT* 64 (2014): 573–87 (585–86).

20. The LXX version diverges much from the MT. See Eberhard Bons, Jan Joosten, and Stephan Kessler. *Les Douze Prophètes: Osée, La Bible d’Alexandrie* 23.1 (Paris: Cerf, 2002), 95.

21. Vilchez Líndez, *Tobías y Judit*, 309, renders the word *σκάνδαλον* by “obstáculo.”

22. The role which Achior plays in the book of Judith is analyzed by Adolfo Roitman, “No One Spoke Ill of Her”: *Essays on Judith*, ed. James C. VanderKam, ECL 2 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 31–45.

23. Nevertheless, on a narrative level, the allusion to a *σκάνδαλον* might prepare “the way to Judith’s lying speech, for she will supply [Holofernes] with precise details about the Israelites’ alleged sin (11:11–15)” (Gera, *Judith*, 216).

invited once more by Holofernes, she does not change her behaviour, eating only what her maid had previously prepared (Jdt 12:19). What is the reason for this refusal? Judith's answer is: ἵνα μὴ γένηται σκάνδαλον.

As a guest, Judith is wary of eating anything which is not in compliance with Jewish dietary laws.<sup>24</sup> On the one hand, her refusal is in line with other biblical and nonbiblical texts that report analogous behaviour (e.g., Dan 1:8; Tob 1:11; *Jos. Asten.* 7:1).<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, in a previous statement, in Jdt 11:12, Judith had justified her flight from Bethulia by a serious transgression committed by the inhabitants of the besieged city. Concretely, her concern was to escape from a population which was willing to eat "what God by his laws has forbidden them to eat" (ὅσα διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς τοῖς νόμοις αὐτοῦ μὴ φαγεῖν). Her attitude is therefore entirely consistent: neither in her home town nor in Holofernes's tent does she eat anything whose consumption is against Jewish laws.

How is the word σκάνδαλον to be understood in Jdt 12:2? The quotation has in common with Jdt 5:20 that a dative is missing.<sup>26</sup> If there is a σκάνδαλον, who will be scandalized? Judith's servant who is supposed to be a Jewish woman? Nothing is said about her feelings, which would be hurt by Judith eating with Holofernes. Likewise, it remains open what Holofernes in this fictitious scenario is supposed to understand. What kind of σκάνδαλον would be created in his view? This question remains unanswered. Has a possible σκάνδαλον which consists in eating impure dishes an impact on the relationship between God and Israel? In the light of Jdt 11:11–12, this conclusion is not impossible. Determined as she is to kill Holofernes, she needs the divine protection in order to execute her plan. Therefore, she is not willing to compromise her relationship with God by a sin against the impurity laws.

Perhaps the reader or hearer of the book of Judith is able to perceive this nuance. Aware of the fact that a possible ἀγνόημα of Israel can represent a σκάνδαλον (Jdt 5:20), he or she is supposed to understand in Jdt 12:2 as well that Judith has to avoid at any cost a new σκάνδαλον arising.<sup>27</sup> In sum, the text alludes perhaps to the fact that Judith is concerned about obeying Jewish dietary laws.<sup>28</sup> However, except for the quite enigmatic answer ἵνα μὴ γένηται

24. See Moore. *Judith.* 218: Judith "did not know what his fancy foods were and whether they were prohibited to the Israelites."

25. See Eberhard Bons, "Manger ou ne pas manger avec les étrangers? Quelques observations concernant Gn 43 et le roman *Joseph et Aséneth.*" *RIIPR* 93 (2013): 93–103; Gera. *Judith.* 370–71.

26. Moore. *Judith.* 217. fills this gap in translating ἵνα μὴ γένηται σκάνδαλον by "lest it be an offence to God."

27. For a similar interpretation, see Gera. *Judith.* 371.

28. See also Vilchez Líndez, *Tobías y Judit.* 400: "El autor piensa en los lectores judíos de su relato. A fin de que se identifiquen más fácilmente con la heroína Judit, hace

*σκάνδαλον*, she does not provide any explicit justification of her refusal to eat with Holofernes. Once again it should be underlined that this usage of *σκάνδαλον* is not prepared by other LXX texts.

## 6. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the author of the Book of Judith employs the noun *σκάνδαλον* in three contexts:

- a *σκάνδαλον* is a kind of barricade preventing troops from occupying a country (Jdt 5:1),
- a possible *σκάνδαλον* on the part of Israel can represent an “obstacle” for God who withdraws his protection from Israel (Jdt 5:20),
- a *σκάνδαλον* might consist in a transgression of impurity laws by Judith which could cause her plan to fail (Jdt 12:2).

None of these three instances has an exact counterpart in the other Septuagint texts. In the extant Jewish literature in Greek of the Hellenistic and Roman era (including Philo and Josephus), the noun *σκάνδαλον* does not occur anywhere else. Certainly, nobody doubts that the author of the book of Judith had a deep knowledge of the already available Septuagint texts and their theological vocabulary. Therefore, it is possible that the author borrowed the noun *σκάνδαλον* from the Septuagint writings. However, he employed it in other contexts and in another manner. In principle, in the case of Jdt 5:1, *σκάνδαλον* could be the rendering of a possible Hebrew *Vorlage mikšol* or *mōqeš*. By contrast, it is questionable if this could be the case in the two remaining instances. If Jdt 5:20; 12:2 were translated from Hebrew, the Hebrew use of the corresponding noun would be quite different from what appears in the MT. In fact, why does the text leave open the question as to who is or who will be scandalized by Israel's or Judith's attitudes? Perhaps, these two quotations make a strong case for the hypothesis that the book of Judith was not translated from Hebrew but written in Greek, albeit in a Septuagint style.<sup>29</sup>

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que ésta rechace la oferta de Holofernes por escrúpulos de conciencia acerca de la pureza-impureza de los alimentos.”

29. For this hypothesis, see Jan Joosten. “The Language and the Milieu of the Book of Judith,” in: *Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls V' '11: A Festschrift for Devorah Dimant* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2003), \*159–\*177; J. Corley, “Septuagintalism, Semitic Interference, and the Original Language of the Book of Judith,” in *Studies in the Greek Bible*, edited by J. Corley (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2008), 65–96.