MISKAN AND *'OHEL MO'ED*: ETYMOLOGY, LEXICAL DEFINITIONS, AND EXTRA-BIBLICAL USAGE[1]

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Miskan and *'ohel mo'ed* are names for the cultic dwelling place of YHWH described in Exod 25-40. This, the first of three studies on *miskan* and *o'hel mo'ed*, will consider the etymologies of the terms, their lexical definitions, and parallel terms found in non-Semitic languages. Particular attention will be given to their usage in Ugaritic and their translation or interpretation in the LXX. The intention of this paper is to form some notion of the basic meaning of these terms/phrases as a foundation for a second study which focuses on their usages as witnessed within the text of Exod 25-40. A third study will present the literary structure of Exod 25-40, which these terms help to form.

1. *The Etymology and Lexical Definition of Miskan*.
Miskan is a nominal form of *skn*, a verb which has the meaning of "self-submission" (once), "settle," "rest," "stop," "1ive in," "inhabit," "sojourn," "dwell" (in its qal form); "let/make to live/dwell" (in the piel); "settle, "let/make to live/dwell" (in the hiphil).[2] Its Assyrian cognate is *sakanu* ("set," "lay," "deposit") which yields the nominal form *maskanu* ("place," "dwelling place").[3]

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[2]W. L. Holladay, ed., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, 1971), 369-370; F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, eds., *The New Brown, Driver and Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (BDB) (Grand Rapids, 1981), 1014-1016; L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, eds., *Lexicon in Veteris Testimenti Libros* (KB) (Leiden, 1958), 2:575; J. O. Lewis, "The Ark and the Tent," *RevExp* 74 (1977): 545; E. Klien, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English* (New York, 1987), 391.

[3]BDB, 1014. See also A. L. Oppenheim and E. Reiner, eds., *The Assyrian*

The Hebrew noun *miskan* is generally understood to mean dwelling place," the identity of which is determined by the context in which the term is found.[4] In addition, Holladay indicates its use for "home," "tomb," and "(central) sanctuary."[5] J. O. Lewis suggests that *skn* is "rooted in the nomadic past of Israel and literally means 'to pitch a tent.'"[6] He distinguishes *skn* from *ysb*, noting that the latter is the normal term used for "dwelling in houses," from a basic meaning "to sit down."[7] That is, *skn* refers to a nonsedentary dwelling place (Lewis suggests a tent) while *ysb* refers to a sedentary dwelling place (e.g., a house). Thus, one may arrive at the preliminary conclusion that the verb *skn* refers generally to some form of nonsedentary dwelling, perhaps "camping" in modern parlance, and that the noun *miskan* therefore refers to the place of that activity: a nonsedentary "dwelling-place," a "camp," or perhaps a "camp site." The emphasis of *miskan* is therefore on the nature of the camp--its nonsedentary nature.

Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, volume 10, part I (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1977), 369-373, where the following basic definitions for *maskanu* are given: "1. threshing floor, empty lot, 2. small agricultural settlement, 3. emplacement, (normal) location, site (of a building), base (of a statue), stand (for a pot), residence, position, 4. tent, canopy; 5. fetter (for a slave), 6. pledge given as security, and 7. sanctuary (?)." Definition #4 indicates a broader meaning than simply "tent" or "canopy" (372). An appropriate interpretation may be "camp," as suggested by at least two of the seven examples given.

[4]BDB, 1015; J. J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt: Studies in Exodus*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986), 254.

[5]Holladay lists these primary texts: Num 16:24; Isa 22:16; Lev 15:31; and notes the meaning as "(central) sanctuary (74 of 130 times), tabernacle Exod 25:9" (219).

[6]Lewis, 545.

[7]Ibid. Cf. Holladay, 146. F. M. Cross points out that the usual "priestly" word for people "dwelling" was *ysb*, and was never used of YHWH except when referring to His "throne" or "to enthrone" (F. M. Cross, Jr., "The Tabernacle," *BA* 110 [1947]: 67). M. Haran ("The Divine Presence in the Israelite Cult and the Cultic Institutions," *Bib* 50 [1969]: 259) concurs with a differentiated use of *skn* and *ysb* in the deuteronomic writings where *skn* speaks of "God's presence in a chosen place," but *ysb* refers to "his staying in heaven." For various uses of these two roots, see M. H. Woudstra, *The Ark of the Covenant from Conquest to Kingship* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1965), 69-70.

Especially important is the fact that no particular object is inherently associated (etymologically) with the term, which may apply either to a living being or an inanimate object. The breadth of the meaning of *miskan* must be taken into account in determining its use in context. To understand the meaning of *miskan*, one must ask: "Dwelling place *of what* or *of whom*?" The answer must be found in the context. In practice, the answer is subject to interpretation flavored by theological and hermeneutical presuppositions.

As a case in point, considerable discussion has been generated concerning how *miskan* relates to the dwelling place of YHWH as described in the biblical text. R. Friedman defines *miskan* as the "inner fabric" over which is the "outer fabric" (*'ohel*), both comprising a "single structure."[8] F. M. Cross defines *skn* "to encamp" or "to tent"; therefore, he suggests that *miskan* originally meant "tent" and later came to mean "the" tent par excellence.[9] On the basis of Ras Shamra evidence, G. E. Wright defines *miskan* as "tent-dwelling."[10] G. H. Davies takes a broader view, defining *miskan* as "tabernacle, dwelling, dwelling-place, habitation, abode, encampment"; however, he allows that the term may refer to the "shrine as a whole" (Exod 25:9) or "virtually the holy of holies" (Exod 26:1).[11] Here then is provided the prevalent scope of definition: as specific as the "inner fabric" within the tent, yet as broad as "abode" or "encampment."

To add confusion, *miskan* is often translated "tabernacle," which in turn, is derived from the Latin Vulgate's *tabernaculum*, meaning

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[8]R. E. Friedman argues that the Mosaic construction was just the right size to fit into the Most Holy Place of the Solomonic Temple ("The Tabernacle in the Temple," *BA* 43 [1980]: 243, 245). Friedman's "outer tent" (*miskan*)/"inner tent" (*'ohel mo'ed*) idea is clearly at odds with their relationship described in Exod 26:7 (see below, in the main text).

[9]Cross, 65-66.

[10]G. E. Wright, "The Significance of the Temple in the Ancient Near East, Part III: The Temple in Palestine-Syria," *BA* 17 (1944): 72.

[11]G. H. Davies, "Tabernacle," in IDB, 1962 ed., 4:498. The breadth of this definition is not justified in Exod 25-40. Certainly Exod 26:1 is not only the "holy of holies," as Davies suggests. The larger context of which Exod 26:1 is a part (Exod 26:1-37; especially v. 33) includes both *haqqodes* ("the holy") and *qodes haq^{o}dasim* ("the holy of holies"). In Exod 26:1, *miskan* refers to the two-compartment unit

"tent."[12] Since there is a completely different Hebrew word for
"tent" (*'ohel*), this use of *tabernaculum* is problematic. Inappropriate
translation conveys a notion of synonymity, not evident in the
Hebrew, but adopted in modern theology. If the two terms are
identical, the meaning of phrases like Exod 26:7, "tent over the
tabernacle" (NIV), might remain obscure. However, as the Hebrew
for that verse is *le 'ohel 'al hammiskan*, "to/for [the] tent on/over the
dwelling place," the distinction is apparent. While it is certainly true
that the furniture within the *miskan* suggests a habitation or a
dwelling, the term itself is not synonymous with "tent."[13]

The trend of scholarly definition of *miskan* is correct; however,
as a broad term, it has often recieved too narrow a definition. *Miskan*
almost always is automatically taken to mean "The dwelling of God"
or even redefined as "sanctuary," "tabernacle," or "temple," without
regard for the actual terminology. It would be safer to state that
miskan connotes a special type of habitation; the term indicates the
presence of the dweller while emphasizing the temporary nature of
the dwelling place. In anthropological terms, this is a matter of
sedentary or nonsedentary habitation.

If the dwelling place itself is nonsedentary, the dweller may be
seen as nonsedentary as well.[14] This choice of nonsedentary
terminology may reflect the inculturalization of YHWH's commands
in Exod 25-40, since the people to whom YHWH uttered the
command to build the *miskan* were, as the biblical record shows,
nonsedentary. A command to build a permanent, sedentary dwelling
(such as the later Solomonic *hekal*, "temple" or "palace") might well

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[12]See modern English translations: JB, KJV, NEB, NIV; see also Davies 4:498-506.

[13]For a description of the furniture in terms of a habitation, see F. B. Holbrook,
"The Israelite Sanctuary," in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, eds. A. V. Wallenkampf
and W. R. Lesher (Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1981),
23; Cf. V. Hurowitz, "The Priestly Account of Building the Tabernacle," *JAOS* 105
(1985): 28; cf. also Haran, 255.

[14]Holbrook, 23. That the earthly dwelling is "movable" does not mean the
spiritual counterpart is also movable, much less does it describe the heavenly Dweller.
To draw extended theological conclusions from the choice of terminology about the
nature of the spiritual analogue may unfairly overlook the inculturalization of
YHWH's commands in Exod 25-40. This choice of terminology may indicate less
about YHWH's heavenly mobility than about His mode of communication with finite
humans.

have been incomprehensible or even reprehensible, given the circumstances of the earlier period. The writer called the dwelling place by a term which was immediately understandable within his cultural framework. *Miskan*, it seems, calls to mind a nonsedentary type of dwelling place: the "camp," not particularly a structure itself, but a place where an object or a being abides.

2. *The Etymology and Lexical Definition of* 'Ohel Mo'ed

The genitival construct *'ohel mo'ed* is often translated "tent of meeting" in modern versions.[15] The Hebrew word *'ohel* means "tent."[16] Variations of the word are found in Aramaic (*'ahala'*), Phoenician (*'h1*), Ugaritic (*'hl*), and Egyptian [*'(a)har(u)*].[17] The Assyrian cognate is *alu*.[18] The Vulgate translates both *'ohel* and *miskan* as *tabernaculum* (occasionally, *tentorium*), obscuring the discrete meaning of the Hebrew terms.[19] The term *mo'ed* is a nominal form of the verb *y'd*: "designate," "appear," "come," "gather," "summon," "reveal oneself." Its basic meaning is "appointed time/place/ sign," "meeting place," "place of assembly," or "to meet by appointment."[20] The word occurs in Ugaritic (*mo'idu*) and Egyptian (*mw'd*).[21]

[15]NIV, RSV, KJV = "tent of the congregation".

[16]Holladay, 5-6. Cf. KB, 17; Klien,9; BDB, 13-14; J. P. Lewis, "'*Ohel*," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1980 ed., 1:15; Davis, 254.

[17]Klien disallows a connection between the Hebrew *'hl* and the Arabic *'hl* (p. 9). See Cross, 59-60; K. Koch, "*'hl*," *TDOT*, 1:123; Davies, 4:499.

[18]BDB, 13. Oppenheim and Reiner indicate that *alu* had four basic meanings: "1. city; 2. city as a social organization; 3. village, manor, estate; 4. fort, military strong point" (*Assyrian Dictionary*, volume 1, part I, 379). In each case, *alu* refers in some respect to either a sedentary dwelling or sedentary dweller (ibid., 379-390). This may indicate a sedentarized origin for the nonsedentary Hebrew *'ohel.*

[19]Davies, 4:498.

[20]Ibid; Holladay, 137-138, 186; Klien, 327; E. T. Mullen, Jr., *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature*, Harvard Semitic Monographs, no. 24 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 174-175; BDB, 417; and Lewis, 1:15.

[21]MuIlen, 117, 129; J. A. Wilson, "The Assembly of a Phoenician City," *JNES* 4 (1945): 245.

Combining the two words, the phrase *'ohel mo'ed* carries the notion "tent of the place of meeting/assembly/appointment," or perhaps more interpretively: "tent where YHWH reveals Himself." Brichto calls this the "Tent of Encounter" or "rendezvous."[22] This tent was the place of appointed gathering, known more by the event associated with it (meeting, gathering, or assembly) than by its physical character (hides over a wooden frame). In the YHWHistic cult, it was perceived to be the location of the ultimate cult event. With *'ohel ma'ed*, the focus is on the event: "meeting/assembly/ appointment/revelation." This is quite distinct from *miskan*, which focuses on the place rather than the event.

3. *Parallel Terms in Ugaritic Sources*

The Ugaritic language provides a lexical cross-reference for Semitic-language documents written in the Middle Bronze in (IIC) /Late Bronze I time frame.[23] Useful for this study are cognates for *miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed* which appear in the Ugaritic corpus, especially instances in which the terms are found in close literary formation.

[22]H. C. Brichto, "The Worship of the Golden Calf: A literary Analysis of a Fable on Idolatry," *HUCA* 54 (1983): 23.

[23]For a brief account of the discovery of the Ugaritic materials, see P. C. Craigie, *Ugarit and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 7-25; and A. Curtis, *Cities of the Biblical World: Ugarit Ras Shamra* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 18-33. See H. O. Thompson, *Biblical Archaeology* (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987), xxv. Stratum 1.3 at Ras Shamra (ca. 1365-1185 B.C.E.) is the latest occupation of Ugaritic civilization on a site continually occupied since Neolithic Stratum V.C, ca. 6500 B. C. E. (Curtis, 41). The 'Aqhat and Keret epics, in which our words are found, are dated "between the seventeenth and fifteenth centuries B.C" (Mullen, 2). See also J. Gray, *The KRT Text in the Literature of Ras Shamra: A Social Myth of Ancient Canaan* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955): 2.

The Egyptian equivalent for *'ohel mo'ed* (*mw'd*) is also found in the Tale of Wen-Amon (ca. 1100 B.CB.), referring to a city "assembly," and in a document from Byblos (7th cent. B.C.E.); see Mullen, 129, n. 31; and Wilson, 245. For more on these two documents, see Cross, 65; R. J. Clifford, "The Tent of El and The Israelite Tent of Meeting," *CBQ* 33 (1971): 225; and H. Goedicke, *The Report of Wenamun* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 123.

The verb form *skn* occurs sixteen times in Ugaritic literature; its noun form (*msknt*) appears twice.[24] The paucity of occurrences of *msknt* makes definition problematic. Both occurrences of the noun are plural and both seem to refer to the multitudinous gods' private "dwelling places," not a meeting chamber or council place.[25] The Ugaritic equivalent of *mo'ed* is limited to a single occurrence of the phrase *puhru mo'idu* meaning "the gathered assembly."[26] An equivalent to the Hebrew phrase *'ohel mo'ed* does not appear in Ugaritic texts.

The equivalent term for *'ohel* (Ugaritic, *'hl*) does occur and is especially important for this study in that the term occurs in association with *msknt* in each of its two occurrences.[27] Two lines of the Keret epic read:

> *ti'tayu 'iluma la-'ahalihum,*
> *daru 'ili la-miskanatihum.*[28]

Mullen provides the following translation, noting the association of *la-'ahalihum* and *la-miskanatihum*:

> The gods proceed to their tents
> The assembly of 'El to their dwellings.[29]

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[24]Por a list of occurrences of *skn*, see R. E. Whitaker, *A Concordance of the Ugaritic Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 594. For the occurrences of *msknt* see p. 436.

[25]This study follows the numbering system of A. Herdner, *Corpus des Tablettes en Cuneiformes Alphabitiques Descouvertes a Ras Shamra-Ugarit de 1929 a 1939* (CTA), Mission de Ras Shamra, 10, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1963), quoted in Curtis, 80, 82. The specific references are to CTA 17.V.33 and CTA 15.111.19; cf. Whitaker, 436. See also S. Segert, *A Basic Grammar of the Ugaritic Language: With Selected Texts and Glossary* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 193; also C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Manual* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1955), 327.

[26]Mullen, 117, 129 (CTA 2.1.14,15,16-17.20,31). Also Clifford, 224-225. See I. AI-Yasin, *The Lexical Relation Between Ugarit and Arabic, Shelton Semitic Series*, no. 1 (New York: Shelton College, 1952), 75. For a note on *'hl*, see ibid., 37.

[27]Whitaker, 436, reads: *tity. ilm.l ah1 hm. / dr il.l msknt hm ...* The word *'hl* [cf. *ahl*] occurs in CTA 17.V.32; CTA 15.111.18; CTA 19.1V.214; CTA 19.1V.222; CTA 19.IV.212; ibid., 9. *Msknt* occurs in CTA 17.V.32 and CTA 15.10.19; ibid., 436.

[28]CT A 15.111.18-19.

[29]Ibid. Mullen states that there is "here the parallelism of *'ahalihum* and *miskanatum*, thus equating the tent with the tabernacle structure (note 42). The same

Here *'ahalihum* ("their tents") is poetically associated with *miskanatihum* ("their dwelling places"). However, there is no equivalent Ugaritic phrase for *'ohel mo'ed*. The lack of an exact parallel demands an interpretive step by the reader. The terms are associated in the Ugaritic, but perhaps not in the same way as they are in the Hebrew. One would expect identical phrases if the Ugaritic and the Hebrew were synonymous or identical. In fact, the narrative speaks of a plural number of gods going to their plural tents. This is quite unlike the context of Exod 25-40 (and of the whole MT which allows no plurality of true gods). In line 19, the "assembly" is going to a plural number of "dwellings." The tents are not "tents of assembly," or of "meeting," or of "appointment," or of "revelation." They are simply personal tents, private tents, not a community tent.

The word *msknt* also appears in the Ugaritic Aqhat epic:

> *h.tb'.ktr. l ahl*,
> *h.hyn.tb'.l msknt*[30]

H. Ginsberg provides the following translation:

> Kothar departs for/from his tent,
> Hayyin departs for / from his tabernacle.[31]

Although "tabernacle" is a poor translation for *msknt* (better would be "dwelling" or "dwelling place"), the terms *'hl* and *msknt* clearly associate linguistically, in poetic parallelism. This parallelism, however, does not necessarily imply synonymity. The absence of the equivalent for the Hebrew *'ohel mo'ed* limits this passage's possibility of clarifying the Hebrew text. Thus, an in-depth analysis of this Ugaritic text is unnecessary for the current study.

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parallelism is common in Hebrew literature (cf. Num 24:5; Isa 54:2; Jer 30:18; etc, where *'ohel* and *miskan* are in parallel)." Mullen accepts that the *miskan* "may be equated with" the *'ohel*, a conclusion accepted without critical evaluation (pp. 168-175, passim) and therefore misunderstands the term as used in the Hebrew text. Poetic parallelism should not be confused with synonymity, either in the Hebrew text or in the Ugaritic material, especially since there is a difference in actual terminology (*'ohel mo'ed* compared with the Ugaritic *'hl*) and a perceived contextual connotative nuance.

[30]CTA 17.V.31-33; Whitaker, 436.

[31]H. L. Ginsberg, "Ugaritic Myths, Epics, and Legends," in *ANET*, 151. See his n. 19 for the "for/from" alternative reading.

Summarizing: the Ugaritic literature witnesses two instances of
msknt, both times in close connection with *'hl*. While clearly in
poetic association, the words need not be synonymous. So, little
additional definition from Ugaritic sources is added to the definition
of *miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed* already obtained from Hebrew (by way of
lexica and word studies). No occurrence of "tent of assembly" (*'hl
m'd*) is witnessed in Ugaritic materials currently available. In short,
the Ugaritic evidence shows a similarity in basic meaning between
the two terms (that is, both are places to inhabit), but does not offer
additional insight in regard to the nuance of their definitions.
The Ugaritic language makes no clear distinction in meaning
between the words *msknt* and *'hl*, whereas the Hebrew clearly does.
The reason for this may be related to cultural factors. The texts
quoted above are normally dated in the Middle Bronze III (IIC)/Late
Bronze I, between the 17th and 15th centuries B.C., when Ugarit was
already an urban center. The chapters in Exodus, according to
traditional views on the authorship of the book and the internal
chronology of the book, deal with the late 15th century. Israel was
at the time a pastoral and nonsedentary people who became
sedentarized much later. Given these divergent cultural conditions,
it is possible that *msknt* and *'hl* did not convey the
nonsedentary / sedentary differentiation simply because of cultural
constraints.[32] Furthermore, it is possible that the *miskan* and *'ohel
mo'ed* phraseology typical of contemporary Late Bronze Semitic
cultures may have been redefined when adopted into the terminolo-
gy of the YHWHistic religion. Terms commonly used by
surrounding peoples, who had a pantheon of gods, were
inadequate-without redefinition-to convey the appropriate theo-
logical meaning within the YHWH cult.

4. *Parallel Terms in the Septuagint*

This work is concerned primarily with the contextual use of
miskan and *'ohel mo'ed* in Exod 25-40 of the Hebrew. The way these

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[32]"The reality of a period of Israelite nonsedentary pastoralism is currently the
subject of discussion within the archaeological community. The issues are multiple
and complex, but some scholars contend for some sort of nonsedentary pastoralism
(see I. Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement* (Jerusalem: Israel
Exploration Society, 1988).

words are translated in the LXX is surveyed in a search for further information. *Miskan* is translated exclusively by *skene*, while the common translation for *'ohel mo'ed* is *skene tou martyriou*.[33] Hence, both *miskan* and *'ohel* (in the phrase *'ohel mo'ed*) are translated by the same word *skene*. W. Bauer defines *skene* as "tent" or "booth."[34] J. Thayer agrees with this definition--"tent" or "tabernacle"--and adds that *skn* is used "chiefly for *'ohel* [in the LXX and] often also for *miskan*."[35] Bauer notes the use of *skene* for both *miskan* and *'ohel* in his definition of *he skene tou martyriou*, "the tabernacle or Tent of Meeting."[36]

Like the English and Latin translations, the LXX shows little differentiation in its choice of terms for *miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed*.[37] As a significant or textual tradition, the LXX witnesses to an understanding of the Pentateuch which postdates its writings by many centuries. That both *miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed* are translated most often by *skene* may be attributed to several causes, one of which is a diluted perception of their connotational nuance. That is, by the time of the LXX, the two terms had come to mean virtually the same things; Israel had by then long been sedentarized.

5. *Summary and Conclusions*

The noun *miskan* (derived from the verb *skn*) means "dwelling, place." It concerns a "place" or "site" (similar to the modem word "camp"), and carries connotations of transience. It should not be

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[33]A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1949).

[34]W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, 2d ed. rev. and aug. by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 754.

[35]J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Company, 1886), 577.

[36]Bauer, 754.

[37]The argument could be made that *miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed* are synonymous, and therefore the single Greek term is adequate for both. The analysis of the use of these terms in Exod 25-40 clearly shows the terms to be similar but not synonymous (see note 2, above). For a more comprehensive view of the occurrences of *skene* in Exod 25-40, see G. Morrish, ed., *A Concordance of the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 222-223.

limited to a specific form of "dwelling" (particularly not the English "tent" or Latin *tabernaculum*), as this leads to confusion with *'ohel*. The phrase *'ohel mo'ed* is a genitival construct meaning "tent of assembly" or "encounter." It was the name of the structure in which the Divine and human met, emphasizing the event rather than the structure.

Parallel terms found in the Ugaritic literature provide no additional information beyond that already known from the Hebrew. In fact, the Ugaritic literature offers only limited insight because the word *'hl* does not appear in genitival construction with *mo'ed* or its equivalent. Furthermore, the differentiation between the nonsedentary and sedentary meanings of the words in Hebrew appears to have been lost.[38] As was noted, the reason for this could well have been that Ugarit, unlike Israel, was sedentary and urban. The LXX, by translating both *miskan* and *'ohel* by *skene*, obscures the meaning of the Hebrew terms. It would seem that by the time the LXX was translated, the words were understood as synonyms. Again, the cultural setting of a sedentary and urban people would have assisted in eroding the differences. The Vulgate, likewise, fails to distinguish between the two.

Two future articles on *miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed* will complete the study of the meaning of the words. The first will deal with the usage of the terms in Exod 25-40. The second will present an overview of the literary structure of those chapters. This introductory study has shown scholarly insensitivity to the connotational nuance of the words. The next two studies will reveal the pitfalls resulting from this insensitivity.

[38]This suggestion, made to the author by David Merling, finds support in Mullen (170), who recognizes "that the deities were pictured as tent dwellers, even by the highly urbanized culture of Ugarit." Mullen wonders at this anachronism, yet misses the significance of this for interpreting the Hebrew text (see Whitaker, 436). The vital point is that a nonsedentary (tent-dwelling) culture is being described by a sedentary (urbanized) writer, thus potentially giving rise to the blurred terminological nuance posited above.