

# DAVID'S REACTION TO THE DEATH OF SAUL According to Josephus

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2 Samuel 1 relates David's reaction to the news brought him by an Amalekite fugitive concerning Israel's defeat by the Philistines and the death of King Saul. As such, the chapter harks back to the story of the catastrophic battle of Mt. Gilboa as narrated in 1 Samuel 31 (// 1 Chronicles 10). At the same time, the account of events given in the final chapter of 1 Samuel and the opening chapter of 2 Samuel diverges notably. In particular, whereas the former has Saul killing himself (31:4-5), the latter represents the Amalekite claiming to have dispatched the king at his request (1:9-10). Faced with this difficulty, some scholars have assigned 2 Samuel 1, in whole or part, to a different author or tradition than 1 Samuel 31. Others, on the contrary, uphold the literary unity of the two chapters by positing that the Amalekite is lying with regard to the circumstances of Saul's demise, doing so with a view to winning David's favor. In this essay, it is not my intention to further pursue this long-controverted question.<sup>1</sup> Rather, I shall focus on an

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<sup>1</sup> On the question, see in addition to the Samuel commentaries: J.P. Fokkelman, "A Lie Born of Truth, Too Weak to Contain it. A Structural Reading of 2 Sam i 1-16," in *Prophets*,

extra-Biblical retelling of the story of 2 Samuel 1, i.e. the one given by Josephus in his *Antiquitates Judaicae* (hereafter *Ant.*) 7.1-6.<sup>2</sup> My study will proceed by way of a detailed comparison between the Josephan passage and its Scriptural source as attested by the following major witnesses: MT (BHS),<sup>3</sup> Codex Vaticanus (hereafter B)<sup>4</sup> and the Lucianic (hereafter L) or Antiochene MSS<sup>5</sup> of the LXX as well as Targum Jonathan on the Former Prophets (hereafter TJ).<sup>6</sup> This comparison aims to shed light on a series of overarching questions: Which text-form(s) of 2 Samuel 1 did Josephus have available? What rewriting techniques has he applied to the data of his source? Are there distinctive features to Josephus' account of David's reaction to the death of Saul vis-à-vis its Biblical prototype? What specific messages might Josephus' version be intended to convey to *Ant.*'s double audience, i.e. Gentiles and fellow Jews?

In turning now to my comparison, I divide up the material to be studied into three parallel segments as follows: 1) The Exchange (2 Sam 1:1-10// *Ant.* 7.1-4a); 2) David's Initial Reaction (1:11-16// 7.4b-6a); and 3) David's Lament (1:17-27// 7.6b).

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*Worship and Theodicy*, ed. A.S. van der Woude, Oudtestamentische Studiën 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 39-55.

<sup>2</sup> For the text and translation of the works of Josephus I use H.St.J. Thackeray, R. Marcus, A. Wikgren, L.H. Feldman, eds., *Josephus*, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1926-1965). *Ant.* 7.1-6 is found in Vol. V, 358-61 where the translation and notes are by Marcus. I have likewise consulted the text and apparatus for *Ant.* 7.1-6 in B. Niese, *Flavii Iosephi Opera*, II (Berlin: Weidmann, 1955), 89-90. On Josephus' overall treatment of the protagonist of *Ant.* 7.1-6, see L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of David," *HUCA* 60 (1989), 129-74.

<sup>3</sup> According to the indications given by E.C. Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus*, HSM 19 (Chico: Scholars, 1978), 271, the extant text of the Hebrew Qumran MS 4QSam<sup>a</sup> lacks any portion of 2 Samuel 1.

<sup>4</sup> For B I use A.E. Brooke, N. Maclean, and H.St.J. Thackeray, eds., *The Old Testament in Greek According to the Text of Codex Vaticanus*, II:1, *I and II Samuel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927).

<sup>5</sup> For L I use N. Fernández Marcos and J.R. Busto Saiz, *El texto antioqueno de la Biblia griega*, I, *1-2 Samuel*, TECC 50 (Madrid: C.S.I.C., 1989).

<sup>6</sup> For TJ I use the text of A. Sperber, ed., *The Bible in Aramaic*, II (Leiden: Brill, 1959) and the translation of this by D.J. Harrington and A.J. Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets*, *The Aramaic Bible* 10 (Wilmington: Glazier, 1987).

## The Exchange

2 Samuel 1 opens (v.1a) with a double *Rückverweis*, i.e. to the death of Saul (1 Samuel 31// *Ant.* 6.368-378) and to David's return to Ziklag after his triumph over the Amalekites (1 Samuel 30// *Ant.* 6.356-367).<sup>7</sup> Josephus' rendition (7.1a) specifies the chronological relationship between these two earlier happenings<sup>8</sup>: "Now this battle (μάχη), as it happened, took place *on the same day on which*<sup>9</sup> David returned to Sikella (Σέκελλαν)<sup>10</sup> after his victory over the Amalekites (see *Ant.* 6.367// 1 Sam 30:26)."

The source story now (1:2) introduces the bearer of bad tidings who appears "on the third day," i.e. following the "two days" David had spent in Ziklag (v.1b), subsequent to his return there (v.1a). Josephus (7.1b) reproduces the content of this notice with various modifications: "And when he had already been two days in Sikella, there came (παραγίνεται),<sup>11</sup> on the third day, *the slayer* (ἀνελὼν) *of Saul*,<sup>12</sup> who had escaped (διασωθείς)<sup>13</sup> from the battle (μάχης, see 7.1a) with the Philistines (Παλαιστίνους)<sup>14</sup> with his clothes rent (τὴν...ἔσθητα

<sup>7</sup> On *Ant.* 6.356-367 see C.T. Begg, "The Ziklag Interlude According to Josephus," *Teresianum* 48 (1997), 713-36.

<sup>8</sup> In so doing, he underscores the fact that David could not have had any part in the battle in which the Philistines, whose service he had earlier entered (see 1 Samuel 27) routed the Israelites.

<sup>9</sup> I italicize items of Josephus' presentation like the above which lack a counterpart in the source (just as I do elements of the latter which have no equivalent in Josephus).

<sup>10</sup> MT "Ziklag," Β Σεκελάκ, Λ Σεκελάγ.

<sup>11</sup> Compare BL 1:2 ἦλθεν. On Josephus' penchant for the historic present, which, as here, he often introduces where the LXX parallel text reads some past form, see C.T. Begg, *Josephus' Account of the Early Divided Monarchy* (AJ 8,212-420), BETL 108 (Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1993), 10-11, n. 32 and the literature cited there.

<sup>12</sup> Compare the indeterminate "a man (ἄνθρωπος)" of 1:2. Josephus' specification concerning the identity of the one who "comes" here anticipates the figure's later statement about himself as cited in 1:10 ("so I... slew him [Saul]"). It likewise harks back to Josephus' rendition of 1 Samuel 31, according to which Saul does not die by his own hand (so 31:4-5), but rather, in a harmonization with the story told David in 2 Samuel 1, is slain by an Amalekite (*Ant.* 6.371). See further below.

<sup>13</sup> The verb διασώζω figures in the messenger's report as cited in BL 1:3b "I have escaped (διασέσωμαι) from the camp of Israel."

<sup>14</sup> This is Josephus' standard designation for the Philistines as opposed to the term favored by LXX, i.e. ἀλλόφυλοι. See R. de Vaux, "Les Philistins dans la Septante," in *Wort, Lied und Gottesspruch. Beiträge zur Septuaginta*, I, ed. J. Schreiner, FzB 1 (Würzburg: Echter, 1972), 185-94.

With the above indication as to whence the messenger comes, compare that of 1:2 ("from

περιερρηγμένους)<sup>15</sup> and ashes sprinkled (τέφραν περιχεάμενος)<sup>16</sup> on his head...." The source concludes its introduction of the messenger in 1:2b with a paratactic mention of his doing homage to David: "and when he came to David, he fell (L + on his face) to the ground and did obeisance." The historian (7.2a) joins this item hypotactically to the following account (1:3) of the initial exchange between David and the messenger: "He prostrated himself before David (προσκυνήσας αὐτόν; BL προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ) and, to his question (πυνθανομένῳ) whence he came *in such condition* (ποθέν ἤκοι τοιοῦτος),<sup>17</sup> replied, 'from the battle (μάχης) of the Israelites'. "<sup>18</sup>

In 1:4a David responds to the man's statement of 1:3b with a further question/injunction: "How did it go? Tell me." Josephus passes over this intervention by David, thus directly linking the messenger's self-presentation (1:3b) and his subsequent report (1:4b): "He then went on to tell that its issue had been disastrous (ἀτυχές)<sup>19</sup> to the Hebrews (Ἑβραίοις),<sup>20</sup> for many tens of thousands of them had been slain

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the camp, from with Saul" [MT]; "from the camp, from the people of Saul" [B]; "from the camp of the people with Saul" [L]).

<sup>15</sup> Compare BL 1:2 τὰ ἱμάτια... διεργαγῶτα. The above phrase recurs in *Bellum Judaicum* (hereafter *BJ*) 2.316,601; *Ant.* 6.357;7.40;9.67; 10.59;11.221. In particular, it echoes the mention of David's own "rending his clothes" in *Ant.* 6.357 when he discovers that the Amalekites have carried off the population of Ziklag. We will note other verbal contacts between Josephus' story of David's reaction to Saul's death (7.1-6) and his account of David's avenging the despoliation of Ziklag (6.356-367).

<sup>16</sup> This phrase is hapax in Josephus. In MT (ארדמ) and BL (γῆ) 1:2 the reference is to the "earth" which the messenger has on his head. Josephus' mention of "ashes" has an approximate counterpart in TJ's term אפר ("dust").

<sup>17</sup> Compare David's direct address question in 1:3a "Where do you come from (BL πόθεν [σ, > L] παρεγένου)?" Here, as frequently elsewhere, Josephus replaces source direct with indirect address; see Begg, *Josephus' Account*, 12-13, n. 38 and the literature cited there.

<sup>18</sup> The wording of the messenger's reply here—where Josephus does retain the direct discourse of the source—picks up the notice of 7.1 on his having "escaped from the battle (μάχης) with the Philistines." Compare 1:3b "And he said to him, 'I have escaped from the camp of Israel (cf. 1:2 where the man is said to come from "the camp").'"

<sup>19</sup> Josephus' other uses of the term ἀτυχές are in *BJ* 1.556, 665; *Ant.* 8.273; 16.116.

<sup>20</sup> The above general opening to the messenger's report takes the place of the item of detail with which its source equivalent begins, i.e. "The people have fled from the battle." Note the shift in Josephus' designation for the people from "Israelites" in what precedes to "Hebrews" here. On his use of the latter term, in alternation with "Israelites" and "Jews," throughout his writings, see G. Harvey, *The True Israel: Uses of the Names Jew, Hebrew, and Israel in Ancient Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, AGJU 35 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 124-29.



(πολλῶν... ἀναιρεθεισῶν [see ἀνελών, 7.1b]... μυριάδων)<sup>21</sup> and Saul, *their king*, had also fallen (πεσόντος) along with his sons."<sup>22</sup>

David intervenes once again in 1:5 to ask the "young man" (BL τῷ παιδαρίῳ, compare 1:2 a man, BL ἀνήρ) the suspicious question: "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" Here too (see on 1:4a above), Josephus skips over this Davidic "interjection," allowing the messenger to proceed uninterrupted.<sup>23</sup> At the same time he introduces (7.3) the continuation of this figure's word with a formulation which does seem to have implicitly in view David's question in 1:5, i.e. "these things he claimed to report as one...." Thereafter, he has the messenger deliver a (free) version of the claim made by his Biblical counterpart in 1:6: "... who had himself been present at the rout of the Hebrews (τῇ τροπῇ τῶν Ἑβραίων [see 7.2]) and had been with the king when he fled (πεφευγότη)...."<sup>24</sup>

In 1:7-8 the messenger relates an initial exchange between Saul and himself: Saul spies and calls to the latter, who presents himself, whereupon Saul asks who he is and is told that he is an "Amalekite." Josephus has already "anticipated" this sequence in his version of 1 Samuel 31 in 6.371.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, he leaves that exchange aside now,

<sup>21</sup> Josephus' wording here echoes that used by him in *Ant.* 6.368 (// 1 Sam 31:1b) in describing the outcome of the battle of Mt. Gilboa "(the Philistines)... slew multitudes (πολλοὺς ἀναιρούσι) of their adversaries." Compare 1:4b "and many (πολλοί) of the people have fallen and are dead (B ἀπέθανον, > L)."

<sup>22</sup> This element of the Josephan messenger's report echoes the historian's notice in 6.373 (// 1 Sam 31:7): (the Hebrews hear) "that Saul and his sons had fallen (πέπτωκε)." Compare the conclusion of the messenger's report in 1:4b: "and Saul (B + has died) and Jonathan his son have died." Josephus' reference to the death of Saul's "sons" here serves to harmonize his presentation with his account in 6.369 (// 31:2b) where, not only Jonathan, but also two other sons of Saul are killed by the Philistines.

<sup>23</sup> In leaving 1:5 aside, Josephus avoids its problematic shift in designation for the "messenger" (see above) which has led some scholars to assign 1:5-10 (+ 13-16) to a different hand than 1:1-2, 11-12. Cf. the commentaries.

<sup>24</sup> Josephus' reference to Saul's "flight" here recalls 6.370 where following the death of his sons (6.369// 31:2b), "Saul flees (φεύγει)." With the above statement by the messenger compare that made in 1:6 "By chance I happened to be on Mt. Gilboa; and there was Saul leaning upon his spear (BL δόρυ); and lo, the chariots and horsemen were close upon him." Josephus' substitution of alternative wording in this instance might be explained in terms of the seeming discrepancy between what the messenger reports in 2 Sam 1:6 and the account given in 1 Samuel 31. In the latter text it is Philistine "archers," rather than "chariots and horsemen," who "find" Saul (31:3), just as the king "falls upon" his "sword" (31:4b) as opposed to "leaning on his spear."

<sup>25</sup> This reads: "Then he (Saul) turned and, seeing a youth standing there, asked him who he

moving directly to the key matter of Saul's request of the Amalekite and the latter's execution of this (// 1:9-10a). This sequence reads in Josephus' (re-arranged) version: "... he further confessed to having killed (κτεῖναι) Saul at his own request (παρακληθείς) *when he was about to be taken* (λαμβάνεσθαι) *by the enemy* (πολεμίων)<sup>26</sup>; for, after he had fallen upon his sword (τῆ ῥομφαία... ἐπιπεσόντα), he had been too weak (ἀσθενῆσαι), because of the great number of his wounds (τῶν τραυμάτων ὑπερβολήν), to do away with (κατεργάσασθαι) himself."<sup>27</sup> The messenger's report (1:6-10) concludes in v.10b with a quotation of the words with which he presents Saul's crown and armlet to David. In Josephus' rendition (7.4a) quotation becomes a narrative notice: "*As token* (σύμβολα) *of Saul's having been slain* (ἀναιρέσεως, see ἀνελὼν,

was, and, on learning that he was an Amalekite...." The purpose of Josephus' working this element of 2 Samuel 1 into his rendition of 1 Samuel 31 is to harmonize the two presentations which in the Bible itself, as noted above, diverge as to the specifics of Saul's demise, the identity of his killer in particular.

<sup>26</sup> The messenger's above words evidence many verbal echoes of Josephus' earlier rendering of 1 Samuel 31, see 6.370 (// 31:4a) where Saul bids his armor-bearer to thrust him through with his sword "before the *enemy* (πολεμίους) should *take* (συλλαβεῖν) him alive" and 6.371a (// 31:4b) "the armour-bearer did not dare to *slay* (κτεῖναι) his master." See further the "anticipation" of Saul's request (// 1:9) in 6.371c: "... he *begged* (παρεκάλεισεν) him to thrust the sword in...." Compare the Amalekite's words as cited in 1:9-10a: "And he (Saul) said to me, 'Stand beside me and slay me; for anguish [so RSV; MT גָּחַח; BL σκότος δεινόν] has seized me, and yet my life still lingers.' So I stood beside him and slew him...."

Interestingly, like his presumed contemporary Josephus, Pseudo-Philo, in his *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (LAB) 65.3b-5 works a version of the Saul-Amalekite exchange of 2 Sam 1:6-9 into his account of Saul's end (// 1 Samuel 31), while also amplifying this with elements of his own (I italicize these below). The relevant sequence of LAB reads: "He [Saul] looked behind him. He saw a man running and he called to him and said [// 1:7a], 'Take my spear and kill me; my soul is still in me [// 1:9].' *He came to kill him and Saul said to him, 'Before you kill me, tell me who you are [// 1:8a].'* He said to him, 'I am Edabus, son of Agag, king of the Amalekites [compare 1:8b I am an Amalekite].' *Saul said, 'Behold now the words of Samuel have come to pass upon me, for he said, "He who will be born to Agag will be a stumbling block for you [the above italicized sequence harks back to LAB 58.3 where, in Pseudo-Philo's version of 1 Samuel 15, God commands that Agag, the Amalekite king whom Saul has spared, be allowed a last act of intercourse with his wife from which will be born one who "will become a stumbling block for Saul"]." Go and tell David, "I have killed your enemy." And say to him, "So says Saul, 'Do not remember my hatred and my injustice.'"*" The translation is that of H. Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum with Latin Text & English Translation*, AGAJU 31, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 1.194.

<sup>27</sup> Here too (see previous note), Josephus has the messenger echo the wording of his own earlier narration of Saul's end (// 1 Samuel 31). See 6.370 "He himself (Saul)... after receiving numerous *wounds* (τραύματα)... was too *weak* (ἡσθένει) to kill (ἀποκτεῖναι) himself...." Note too the word for "sword" used here in 7.3, i.e. ῥομφαία, occurs in 6.370 and 371.

With the above "motivation" cited by the messenger for his deed of regicide, compare that given by him in 2 Sam 1:10ab "(I slew him) because I was sure that he could not live after he had

7.1),<sup>28</sup> he showed the gold (ornament) (χρυσόν) that had been on the king's arm(s) (περὶ τοῖς βραχίοσι) and his crown (στέφανον), which he had stripped (περιδύσας) from the corpse (νεκρόν) and brought (κομίσειεν) to him."<sup>29</sup>

### David's Initial Reaction

The next source section, 1:11-16 (// 7.4b-6a), describes David's immediate response to the news brought him: mourning gestures (vv.11-12) and punishment of Saul's killer (vv.13-16). Josephus (7.4b) introduces the former item with a transitional indication that harks back to his inserted notice on the messenger's bringing of the regalia as "tokens" of Saul's demise (see above): "David, being no longer able to doubt (ἀπιστεῖν) him with these clear proofs (ἐναργῆ<sup>30</sup> τεκμήρια)... before his eyes...." He then proceeds with a (compressed) version of 1:11-12: "... rent his garments (καταρρηγνύει... τὴν ἐσθήτα),<sup>31</sup> and continued all of that day to weep and lament with his companions (κλαίων... καὶ ὀδυρόμενος μετὰ τῶν ἐταίρων)."<sup>32</sup> To the source's "objective" account about the mourning rites carried out by David and his men (1:11-12),

fallen."

<sup>28</sup> With this inserted phrase Josephus spells out the rationale for the messenger's bringing Saul's insignia to David.

<sup>29</sup> The above notice echoes, with variations, Josephus' "anticipation" of it in 6.372a "... after stripping off (περιελόμενος) (the bracelet of) gold (χρυσόν) on Saul's arm (περὶ τὸν βραχίονα) and his royal crown (στέφανον), he disappeared." Compare 1:10b "I took (BL ἔλαβον) the crown (B τὸ βασίλειον, L τὸ διάδεμα) which was on his head and the armband (BL χλιδώνα) which was on his arm (BL ἐπὶ τοῦ βραχίονος), and I have brought (BL ἐνήνοχα) them to my lord."

<sup>30</sup> Josephus' other uses of this term are in *BJ* 7.349; *Ant.* 14.266; *c. Apionem* 2.17.

<sup>31</sup> Josephus' two remaining uses of this construction are in *Ant.* 7.177 (David's grieving for the supposed murder of all his sons by Absalom), 204 (Hushai's mourning at David's flight before Absalom). Compare 1:11a "Then David took hold of his clothes (BL ἐκράτησεν... τῶν ἱματίων), and rent (BL διέρρηξεν) them." Cf. the phrase used of the messenger's condition in 7.1 (// 1:2) τὴν... ἐσθήτα περιεργημένος.

<sup>32</sup> The above phrase is highly reminiscent of that used by Josephus in reference to the grieving by David and his men over pillaged Ziklag in 6.358 (// 1 Sam 30:4) κλαίων... καὶ ὀδυρόμενος μετὰ τῶν φίλων (cf. 6.357 where one meets the term ἐταίρων of 7.4 as a designation for David's "companions"). Compare 1:11b-12 "and (so did) all the men (BL ἄνδρες) who were with him (MT L; B + they rent their clothes); and they mourned (ἐκόψαντο) and wept (BL ἐκλαύσαν) and fasted (MT B; L reads the two latter verbs in the opposite order) until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son and for the people of the Lord (MT; BL Judah) and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword." Josephus likely leaves aside the extended specification of 1:12b about the object of and reason for the lament as something that could be readily supplied



the historian appends (7.5a) a psychological comment about David's state of mind as he performs those rites: "His grief (λύπην) was made (ποιεῖ)<sup>33</sup> heavier (χαλεπωτέραν)<sup>34</sup> by (the thought of) Saul's son Jonathan who had been his most faithful friend (πιστότατος... φίλος)<sup>35</sup> and had been responsible for saving his life (σωτηρίας αἴτιος)."<sup>36</sup>

Having performed due mourning for the dead, David next proceeds (1:13-16) to deal with Saul's slayer. Josephus prefaces his rendition of this new item with an extended transitional phrase (7.5b) which highlights David's magnanimity in acting as he does: "And such nobility (ἀρετήν) did David show and such loyalty (εὐνοίαν)<sup>37</sup> to Saul that not only was he grieved (χαλεπῶς [see λύπην χαλεπωτέραν, 7.4] ἐνεγκεῖν) at his death, although he had several times been in danger of losing his own life at his hands, but he also punished the man who had killed him."<sup>38</sup> Following this elaborate introduction, he drastically compresses and re-arranges (7.6a) the source account of the final interaction between David and the messenger. His version of the four verses which the Bible devotes to the subject consists of a single, hypotactically-constructed sentence: "he told (φῆσας) him that he had accused himself (κατήγορος) of having slain the king (ἀνελὼν τὸν βασιλέα, see τὸν Σαοῦλον ἀνελὼν, 7.1),<sup>39</sup> and when he learned (μαθὼν) that his father

by readers in light of his previous presentation.

<sup>33</sup> Thus Niese and Marcus. The codices SP read ἐποιεῖ.

<sup>34</sup> The phrase "heavy grief" occurs only here in Josephus.

<sup>35</sup> The phrase "faithful friend" occurs also in *BJ* 7.26; *Ant.* 7.211; 12.402; 16.180, 256; 20.163; *Vita* 163, 234, 378. Note the wordplay between ἀπιστεῖν (7.4) and πιστότατος (7.5). On Josephus' use of words of the πιστ- stem, see D.R. Lindsey, *Josephus and Faith: πίστις and πιστεύειν as Faith Terminology in the Writings of Flavius Josephus and the New Testament*, AGJU 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

<sup>36</sup> The above phrase "cause of salvation" occurs twice elsewhere in Josephus: *Ant.* 3.64 (God of the Israelites); 11.208 (Mordecai of King Artaxerxes). The whole above "appendix" to Josephus' notice on David's mourning (*//* 1:11-12) is reflective of his more general accentuation of the David-Jonathan friendship, this with a view to winning the sympathy of Greco-Roman readers whose literature featured comparable friendships. On the point, see Feldman, "David," 169-70.

<sup>37</sup> The above combination of nouns occurs also in *Ant.* 3.188 (of Aaron) and 14.216 (quotation of Julius Caesar's directive to the people of Parium citing the "worthy deeds" and "goodwill" of Rome's Jewish allies).

<sup>38</sup> Also elsewhere, Josephus highlights David's μεγαλοψυχία, see Feldman, "David," 153-55.

<sup>39</sup> The above statement by David is Josephus' "anticipated" equivalent to the final word (1:16) which David addresses to the messenger, this, oddly, only after the latter has been slain: "Your blood be upon your head; for your own mouth has testified against you saying, 'I have slain (B ἐθανάτωσα, L τεθανάτωκα) the anointed of the Lord (BL τὸν χριστὸν Κυρίου)'. In replacing



was of the Amalekite race,<sup>40</sup> he ordered (ἐκέλευσεν) him to be put to death (ἀπολέσθαι)."<sup>41</sup>

### David's Lament

David's response to the news of the Saulides' death culminates in 1:17-27 with his pronouncing a poetic eulogy over Saul and Jonathan. Josephus (7.6b) reduces this whole sequence to the prosaic notice "David also composed laments (θρήνους) and eulogies (ἐπιταφίους ἐπαίνους)<sup>42</sup>

the source phrase "the anointed of the Lord" with "the king" here, Josephus avoids, as regularly elsewhere, two Biblical usages, i.e. of "Lord" (LXX κύριος) as a divine title and of the politically charged designation "Messiah." On his virtually total elimination of the title "Lord" for the Deity in *Ant.* given its lack of currency in secular Greek, see Begg, *Josephus' Account*, 45, n. 218. On his re-formulation of Biblical references to David containing the term "Messiah" (LXX χριστός), see Feldman, "David," 131 and n. 6; 173.

<sup>40</sup> The above phrase conflates the report of the exchange cited in 1:13 "And David said to the young man who told him, 'Where do you come from?' And he answered, 'I am the son of a sojourner (BL ἀνδρὸς παροίκου), an Amalekite.'" Josephus' non-reproduction of David's question of 1:13a might be prompted by the consideration that in 1:3a (// 7.2) David has already posed the messenger a very similar query. A similar concern with avoiding source repetitions might lie behind the historian's non-use of David's accusatory question as quoted in 1:14: "How is it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" whose content seems to parallel the statement attributed to David in 1:16, see previous note. (In passing over 1:14 entirely Josephus likewise avoids its problematic phrase "the anointed of the Lord"— again see previous note).

<sup>41</sup> Compare 1:15a "Then David called one of his young men and said, 'Go fall upon (B ἀπάντησον, L ἄψασθε) him.'" Once again compressing, Josephus leaves aside the notice of 1:15b: "and he (the young man) smote him (the Amalekite) and he died (so MT B; L and they smote him and they threw him to the ground)."

The verb used by Josephus above in reference to the "execution" of the Amalekite, i.e. ἀπόλλυμι/ἀπολλύω, harks back to the wording of Moses' announcement regarding the Amalekites' future annihilation in *Ant.* 3.60 (// Exod 17:14) "He predicted that the Amalekites were to be utterly exterminated (ἀπολουμένους)...." As such the verb insinuates an additional, "Mosaic" justification for David's dealing with the Amalekite as he does. On Josephus' treatment of the Bible's many and highly polemical references to the Amalekites overall, see J. Maier, "Amalek in the Writings of Josephus," *Josephus & the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith*, *Studia Post-Biblica* 41, ed. F. Parente and J. Sievers (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 109-26 and C.T. Begg, "Israel's Battle with Amalek According to Josephus," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 4 (1997), 201-16. Finally, note that whereas Josephus, like the Bible itself, does not further identify the Amalekite messenger of 2 Samuel 1, Rabbinic tradition equates him with the son of Doeg, the slayer of the priests of Nob (1 Samuel 21-22), or, alternatively, with Doeg himself. See L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 6 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1928), 6.243, n. 107.

<sup>42</sup> The above phrase occurs only here in Josephus; his other uses of the term ἐπιτάφιος are in *BJ* 1.660; 2.1; *Ant.* 7.42 (David for the slain Abner); 17.177.

(for the funeral) of Saul and Jonathan,<sup>43</sup> which have survived to my own time."<sup>44</sup> In thus leaving aside the actual wording of the source poem here, Josephus follows a practice also evident in his handling of similar compositions elsewhere in the Bible, e.g., the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15)<sup>45</sup> and the Song of Deborah and Barak (Judges 5).<sup>46</sup> L.H. Feldman suggests that the historian's procedure in this regard likely reflects his understanding of his purpose in *Ant.*, i.e. to be "writing a history, not a book of poetry."<sup>47</sup>

### Conclusion

Having completed my detailed reading of *Ant.* 7.1-6 in relation to its Biblical source, I wish now to summarize its findings on the questions with which I began this essay. My first opening question concerned the text(s) of 2 Samuel 1 utilized by Josephus in *Ant.* 7.1-6. The foregoing investigation has not yielded clear-cut indications on this point – unsurprisingly so given the passage's brevity, strongly paraphrastic character, and many omissions of source items (see below). Accordingly, on the basis of 7.1-6 itself it does not seem possible to determine which Biblical text-form(s) Josephus utilized in developing his version of the events narrated there.<sup>48</sup>

The passage offers greater illumination vis-à-vis the question of the rewriting techniques Josephus employs within it. Especially

<sup>43</sup> Compare the introduction to the actual eulogy (1:19-27) in 1:17 "And David lamented (BL ἐθρήνησεν) with this lamentation (BL θρήνον) over Saul and Jonathan his son."

<sup>44</sup> This notice on the long-lasting perdurance of David's eulogies for the Saulides was likely inspired by the wording of 1:18 "and he said it (so BL, MT the Bow) should be taught to the people of Judah; behold, it is written in the Book of Jashar."

<sup>45</sup> In *Ant.* 2.346 the text of the Song is compressed into the notice: "(the Israelites) passed that whole night in melody and mirth, Moses himself composing in hexameter verse a song to God to enshrine His praises and their thankfulness for His gracious favor."

<sup>46</sup> In his version of the Biblical Deborah story of Judges 4-5 in *Ant.* 5.200-209, Josephus makes no mention of the Song of chap. 5 at all.

<sup>47</sup> L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Moses, Part Two," *JQR* 83 (1992), 12, n. 108.

<sup>48</sup> With regard to the Books of Samuel overall, there is a long-standing scholarly consensus that Josephus used a text of those books having greater affinities with LXX (L in particular) than with MT. On the point, see L.H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937-1980)* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1984), 166-67; E.C. Ulrich, "Josephus' Biblical Text for the Books of Samuel," in *Josephus, the Bible and History*, ed. L.H. Feldman and G. Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 81-96.

noteworthy are his omissions or compressions of source data, of which the most conspicuous example is his drastic reduction of David's eulogy (1:17-27) to a single sentence (7.6b). In fact, however, the technique surfaces, on a smaller-scale, throughout the pericope: David's two "follow-up" questions to the messenger (1:4a, 5) are both left aside, as is the latter's citation of his initial exchange with Saul (1:7-8), this having been previously utilized in Josephus' version of 1 Samuel 31 in 6.371b. Similarly, the catalogue of those for whom David and his men mourn (1:12b) is passed over, while the account of David's punishment of the messenger (1:13-16) is reduced to its essentials in the Josephan rendition of 7.6a.<sup>49</sup>

The technique of addition to or elaboration of the source's content is less in evidence in 7.1-6. Instances include the following: the inserted rationale for the messenger's bringing Saul's regalia to David (7.4a; compare 1:10b), the transitional notice on the effect of his doing so upon David (7.4b), the appended statement concerning David's grief being "made heavier" by the thought of Jonathan (7.5a; compare 1:11-12), and the expansive preface to Josephus' narration of David's punishment of the Amalekite (1:13-16// 7.6a) in 7.5b. Josephus likewise does some re-arrangement of the source's sequence, most notably in the case of 1:13-16 whose content he reproduces (7.6a) in the order vv.16, 13b,15a.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, Josephus also introduces stylistic, terminological and contentual modifications/adaptations into his version of 2 Samuel 1. Stylistically, he replaces parataxis with hypotaxis (compare, e.g., 7.2a and 1:2b-3) and direct with indirect discourse (compare, e.g., 7.2b-3 and 1:4b,6-10a). He likewise utilizes the historic present where BL have a past form (see, e.g., παραγίνεται [7.1b] vs. ἦλθεν [1:2a]). On the terminological level, he substitutes the clarifying phrase "the slayer of Saul" (7.1) for the vague designation "a man" of 1:2, just as he eliminates the expression "the anointed of the Lord" (1:16, cf. 1:14) which would have proved both linguistically and ideologically offputting to Gentile readers (see n. 39) in favor of a neutral reference to "the king" in 7.6a. More generally, he rewords the Biblical messenger's report (1:6-10), working numerous verbal echoes of his account of

<sup>49</sup> From 1:13-16, Josephus omits vv.13a,14 and 15b; see nn. 40,41.

<sup>50</sup> Here, one notes an instance of Josephus' re-writing techniques overlapping one another, with his re-arrangement of the source sequence going together with abridgement of its content, see above.



Saul's death into his version of this in 7.2b-3 (see nn. 24, 26, 27, 29). As for contentual modifications, we noted, for example that the Josephan messenger, in line with the preceding narrative, reports the death, not of Jonathan alone (so 1:4b), but of Saul's "sons" (7.2b). In addition, he turns the source's notice (1:18) on the "preservation measures" for David's lament (it is to be taught to the people and is found written in "the Book of Jashar") into the statement that the Davidic eulogies "have survived to my own time." Also in contrast to the source, Josephus (7.1a; compare 1:1) specifies that the fatal battle of Mt. Gilboa took place "on the same day" that David returned to Ziklag.

Another of my opening questions had to do with the "distinctiveness" of Josephus' story of David's response to the tidings of Saul's demise vis-à-vis the Biblical one. Here, I would call attention to two such distinctive features of the Josephan version. First, it reproduces the content of the source account in streamlined fashion, this being particularly obvious in the case of the two concluding elements of 2 Samuel 1, i.e. David's punishment of the Amalekite (vv.13-16) and lament for the Saulides (vv.17-27). Secondly, in face of the Bible's own discrepancy on the matter, Josephus takes great pains to align, both in wording and content, the narrative of Saul's end (1 Samuel 31) with the messenger's report concerning this (2 Samuel 1). Thereby, he eliminates all uncertainty as to whether or not the messenger is lying in making his report,<sup>51</sup> just as he furthers the coherence of his work overall.<sup>52</sup>

The last of my introductory questions asked about the particular message(s) Josephus' version of 2 Samuel 1 might be intended to convey to the double intended audience of his *Ant.*, i.e. cultivated Gentiles and fellow Jews.<sup>53</sup> For the first of these readerships Josephus retells the Biblical account in a way designed not to offend its stylistic, linguistic

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<sup>51</sup> His opening identification of the messenger as "the slayer of Saul" (7.1b; compare 1:2 "a man") makes clear from the outset that the messenger is telling the truth in his subsequent claim about having dispatched Saul.

<sup>52</sup> Josephus' concern to link his version of 2 Samuel 1 more closely with what precedes extends not only to 1 Samuel 31 itself, but also to the earlier narrative of 1 Samuel 30, as the many verbal links between 7.1-6 and 6.356-367 (// 1 Samuel 30) make clear; see nn. 15, 32.

<sup>53</sup> On *Ant.* as addressed to a double audience, Gentiles primarily, but also Jews, see L.H. Feldman, "Use, Authority, and Exegesis of Mikra in the Writings of Josephus," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. M.J. Mulder and H. Sysling, CRINT 2/1 (Assen: van Gorcum, 1988) 455-518, esp. 470-71.



and ideological sensibilities. He offers them as well a sympathetic, admirable Jewish figure in the person of David whose attachment to a friend extends beyond that friend's death and who displays exemplary magnanimity in avenging his one-time persecutor.<sup>54</sup> To his co-religionists, Josephus' rendition presents David, in his "nobility and loyalty" (7.5), overlooking the many past wrongs done him by his compatriot Saul. Such a depiction would confront Josephus' Jewish contemporaries with a salutary challenge, given their recent history of fraternal violence.<sup>55</sup>

In sum, while *Ant.* 7.1-6 constitutes only a minuscule portion of Josephus' vast history of his people, I hope that the foregoing study has disclosed something of the interest and profit that a close reading of even so brief a passage can yield.

### ABSTRACT

2 Samuel 1 relates David's reaction to the death of Saul and Jonathan in battle with the Philistines (see 1 Samuel 31). This article provides a detailed investigation of Josephus' retelling, in *Antiquities* 7.1-6, of the story of 2 Samuel 1 (as witnessed by MT, LXX, and the Targum). Among its findings: Josephus takes particular care to eliminate the discrepancies between 1 Samuel 31 and 2 Samuel 1 regarding the circumstances of Saul's demise in his rendition of the latter chapter. He likewise drastically compresses throughout his version of 2 Samuel 1, reducing, for example David's eulogy for Saul and Jonathan as cited in vv.17-27 to a simple allusion to the fact of his having "composed laments and eulogies" for them.

### 撮 要

本文探討約西法在古史中，如何敘述大衛對掃羅及約拿單死訊的反應，及其與撒母耳記之記載（參照 MT、LXX 及 Targum）有何異同。作者發現約西法刻意將撒母耳記上第三十一章及撒母耳記下第一章的記載的差異之處統一起來，並且大幅度地濃縮撒母耳記下第一章的記載。

<sup>54</sup> On Josephus' concern to respond, throughout *Ant.*, to the anti-Semitic canard that the Jews had produced no "great men" comparable to the heroes of Greece and Rome, see Feldman, "David," 133.

<sup>55</sup> On *Ant.* as evidencing Josephus' continued preoccupation with the horrors of intra-Jewish strife as experienced by him first-hand during the Great Revolt, see, e.g., L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Joab," *Estudios Biblicos* 51 (1993), 323-51, esp. 335-37.