

## SAMSON'S BIRTH NARRATIVE ACCORDING TO JOSEPHUS

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The rowdy tales told of Samson in Judges 14-16 have a more decorous preface in the story of his birth related in Judges 13.<sup>1</sup> In this essay, I wish to examine Josephus's retelling of the hero's birth story in his *Antiquitates Judaicae* (hereafter *Ant.* 5.275-285).<sup>2</sup> I undertake

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<sup>1</sup> On the text-critical and exegetical problems posed by Judges 13, I have consulted the following commentaries: G.F. Moore, *Judges*, ICC (Edinburgh: Clark, 1895), 315-26; Cf., Burney, *The Book of Judges* (New York: Ktav, 1970 [rpt., original 1903]), 340-53; R.G. Boling, *Judges*, AB 6A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1975), 217-26.

<sup>2</sup> I use the text and translation of *Ant.* 5.275-285 in R. Marcus, *Josephus V*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1934), 124-29. I have likewise consulted the relevant text, translation and notes of E. Nodet, *Flavius Josèphe II: Les Antiquités Juives Livres IV et V* (Paris: Cerf, 1995), 180-83\* and the annotated translation of C.T. Begg, *Flavius Josephus Judean Antiquities 5-7* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 68-72.

On Josephus's overall treatment of Samson, see L.H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 461-489 and the critique of this by M. Roncace, "Another Portrait of Josephus' Portrait of Samson," *JSJ* 35 (2004): 189-207.

this investigation with two overarching questions in view: First, what rewriting techniques has Josephus applied to the data of his *Vorlage* (*n*) for *Ant.* 5.275-285,<sup>3</sup> and what is distinctive about his own rendition as a result of their application? Secondly, how does Josephus's handling of the biblical story of Samson's birth compare with its treatment by Pseudo-Philo in his *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (hereafter *L.A.B.*) 41.3-43.1<sup>4</sup> and in rabbinic-midrashic tradition?<sup>5</sup>

To facilitate my comparison of them, I divide up Judges 13:1-25 and *Ant.* 5.275-285 into eight parallel segments as follows: (1) Background notice (13:1// 5.275, cf. *L.A.B.* 41.3); (2) Parents introduced (13:2// 5.276-277a, cf. 42.1-2); (3) Woman-Angel Encounter (13:3-5// 5.277b-278, cf. 42.3); (4) Report and prayer (13:6-8// 5.279-280a, cf. 42.4-5); (5) Second appearance reported (13:9-10// 5.280b, cf. 42.6-7a); (6) Angel-Manoah interaction (13:11-20// 5.281b-284a, cf. 42.7-10a); (7) Manoah-Wife exchange (13:21-23// 5.284b, cf. 42.10b) and (8) Samson's emergence (13:24-25// 5.285, cf. 43.1a).

<sup>3</sup> MT Judges 13 (the chapter is not extant in the Qumran materials) does not differ in major ways from the texts offered by the other ancient witnesses, i.e. Codex Alexandrinus (A), Codex Vaticanus (B), and the "Lucianic" (L) manuscripts of the LXX, *Vetus Latina* (VL), the Vulgate (Vg.) and Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets (Tg.). Where, however, differences do exist among these witnesses which are relevant for understanding Josephus's own rendering of Judges 13, I shall make reference to them.

<sup>4</sup> For the Latin text and English translation of *L.A.B.* 41.3-43.1, I use H. Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum I*, AGJU 31 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 61-63, 162-64. I have likewise consulted Jacobson's detailed comments on the Pseudo-Philonian passage in vol. II, 979-93. My discussion of Josephus and Pseudo-Philo's versions of Judges 13 builds on the summary discussion of C. Houtman, "Die Macht des Nacherzählers. Frühe und späte Nacherzählung von Richter 13," in C. Houtman and K. Spronk, *Ein Held des Glaubens? Rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studien zu den Simson-Erzählungen*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 39 (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 26-39.

<sup>5</sup> This tradition's comments on the biblical Samson are helpfully assembled by J.S. Renzer, *Die Hauptpersonen des Richterbuches in Talmud und Midrasch, I. Simson* (Berlin: Itzkowski, 1902), 20-43. See also L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews IV* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968), 47; VI, 204-7.

## I. Background Notice

The story of Samson's birth (Judg 13:2-25) is prefaced in 13:1 by a notice on the religio-political situation into which the child is about to be born. That preface, in turn, consists of two elements, i.e. Israel's "again doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord" and the Lord's resultant "giving them into the hand of the Philistines forty years." Josephus's rendering (5.275) eliminates all mention of Israel's defection and the Deity's requiting of this, even as it introduces several minor embellishments concerning the Philistine domination itself: "After his [Abdon's] death<sup>6</sup> the Philistines (Παλαιστῖνοι)<sup>7</sup> conquered the Israelites and *exacted tribute* from them<sup>8</sup> for forty years. *From these straits they were delivered* (ἐλευθεροῦνται)<sup>9</sup> on this wise."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Josephus's insertion of this phrase (I italicize such items of his presentation that lack a counterpart in Judges 13 itself) serves to establish a more flowing transition between the preceding account of the minor judge "Abdon" (5.273-574// Judg 12:13-15) and the emergence of the Philistine menace (5.275// 13:1).

<sup>7</sup> This is Josephus's standard designation for the Israelites' great adversary. In AL LXX 13:1 (as throughout the book) the term used for them is ἄλλόφυλοι, while LXX B there (and five other times in Judges 10-14) has Πολιστιμ. On the point, see P. Harlé, *Les Juges*, La Bible d'Alexandrie 7 (Paris: Cerf, 1999), 58-60.

<sup>8</sup> The above formulation replaces the figurative language of 13:2b (the Lord gives the Israelites "into the hand of the Philistines"), attributing the Philistines' success to their own initiative and spelling out what the forty years of their domination entailed for Israel, i.e. the payment of taxes.

<sup>9</sup> This verb is a cognate of the noun ἐλευθερία (liberty) concerning which according to Feldman (*Josephus's Interpretation*, 148) comments: "One might almost say that liberty is the leitmotif of the history of the Jewish people as Josephus sees it."

<sup>10</sup> The above appendix to Josephus's version of 13:1 provides a transition to what follows comparable to the transition from what precedes which he introduces at the start of his rendering; see n. 6. Pseudo-Philo's *L.A.B.* 41.3 reflects the wording of 13:1 more closely: "But the children of Israel forgot the Lord their God and served the gods of the land's inhabitants. On account of this they were handed over to the Philistines (*Allophilis*; see n. 7) and served them forty years."

## II. Parents Introduced

Judges 13:2 provides a summary presentation of Samson's future father ("a certain man of the Zorah of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Manoah") and nameless mother ("his wife was barren and had no children"). Josephus's introduction of the parents-to-be markedly elaborates the Bible's minimal indications concerning them. Thus, the historian begins (5.276a) by attributing positive qualities to both figures that lack a basis in Judges 13:2 itself: "A certain Manoch,<sup>11</sup> among the most notable (ἄριστος) of the Danites and without question the first (πρῶτος) in his native place (πατρίδος),<sup>12</sup> had a wife<sup>13</sup> remarkable

<sup>11</sup> Hebrew מָנוֹחַ (Eng. Manoah); LXX AB Μανῶε.

<sup>12</sup> Josephus (like Pseudo-Philo; see *L.A.B.* 42.1) does not reproduce the name of Manoah's hometown ("Zorah") from Judg 13:1a. In Josh 15:33 this southern site is reckoned to Judah while in 19:41 it is assigned to Dan. Nodet (*Flavius Josèphe II*, 180\*, n. 9) suggests that Josephus left aside the (Danite/Judean) place name here given that in Ant. 5.175-176, anticipating Judges 18, he has already recounted Dan's move from its original southern allotment to the far north of the land.

Josephus's above embellishment of Manoah's societal status has a counterpart in *L.A.B.* 42.1 where Pseudo-Philo endows him with a seven-member genealogy extending back to Dan himself. Also certain rabbinic dicta go beyond the Bible in their positive assessment of Manoah. Thus, e.g., *Num. Rab.* 10.5 affirms that 13:2's use of the expression "his name was Manoah" in line with the introductory formulas employed elsewhere in the Bible of righteous men (Elkanah, Jesse, Boaz and Mordechai) serves to place Manoah among their company (whereas in the case of the wicked Nabal, Goliath and Shebni the phrase used is "x was his name"). Similarly, in the same passage the name "Manoah" ("rest") is explained as signifying that its bearer was enjoyed the prophetic gift since in Isaiah 11:2 the cognate verb (נח) is used of the Lord's Spirit "resting upon" the scion of Jesse. On the other hand, a certain R. Nahman (as cited in *b. 'Erub.* 18b; *b. Ber.* 61a) qualifies Manoah as an "ignorant man" (*am ha-arez*) with reference to Judg 13:11 where Manoah is said to walk behind his wife, thereby evidencing his ignorance of the rules of marital propriety according to Nahman (whose claim is, however, challenged by another R. Nahman with reference to Elkanah and Elisha, both of whom are said to have "gone after" a woman [for Elisha see 2 Kgs 4:30, while such an action is not, in fact, attributed to Elkanah in the MT]).

<sup>13</sup> Like Judges 13. Josephus leaves Manoah's wife nameless. That biblical "gap" is filled, each in its own way, by both Pseudo-Philo and rabbinic-midrashic tradition. The former (*L.A.B.* 42.1b) designates her as "Eluma the daughter of Remac" (Jacobson, *Commentary, II*, 986 connects this proper name to the Hebrew Vorlage of the woman's statement to her husband in 42.4 [et ero tacens, where tacens would render the Hebrew verbal form אָלַמָּה] this yielding the meaning "the mute one" for "Eluma" in 42:1b). In *b. B.Bat.* 91a, by contrast, the wife's name is given as "Zlelponith" (*Num. Rab.* 10.5 has "Hazelponi"), a form drawn from 1 Chronicles 4:3

for her beauty (ἐπ' εὐμορφίᾳ περίβλεπτον)<sup>14</sup> and *pre-eminent* (διαφέρον) among the women of her time."<sup>15</sup> As noted above, Judges 13:2 concludes with mention of the wife's barrenness and resultant childlessness. Josephus turns the item into an extended portrayal of the psychology of the husband of an infertile but beautiful woman in 5.276b-277a:

(5.276b) But having no children by her, and *being distressed at the lack of them, he was wont, on his frequent visits with his wife to the outskirts — where there was a great plain*<sup>16</sup> — to entreat God (τὸν θεὸν ἰκέτευσεν<sup>17</sup>)<sup>18</sup> to give them offspring of their wedlock.<sup>19</sup> (5.277a)

where in the genealogy of Judah "Hazzeleponi" appears as the sister of the three sons of "Etam." B.Bat. 91a likewise cites the name of Samson's-- biblically unattested-- sister as "Nashyan," while *Num. Rab.* 10.5 calls attention to her membership in the tribe of Judah to which Samson thus pertained by way of his mother, while via his father he was a Danite; the latter writing further qualifies the wife as a "righteous" person who as such merits the angel's visit to her.

<sup>14</sup> This phrase occurs only here in Josephus.

<sup>15</sup> Also elsewhere, Josephus either inserts-- as here-- mentions of the attractiveness of biblical women (see, e.g., *Ant.* 5.136 where he introduces a reference to the Levite's being "captivated by the beauty of his wife [compare Judg 19:1 where the woman is his concubine and nothing is said of her appearance] or embellishes the Bible's own notices on the matter (compare, e.g., 2 Sam 13:1 [Tamar, Absalom's "beautiful sister"] and *Ant.* 7.162 [Tamar "is of such striking beauty that she surpassed all the fairest women"]).

<sup>16</sup> Josephus may have found inspiration for this topographical indication in Judg 13:9 where is mention of the angel's second appearance to the wife as she is "sitting in the field."

<sup>17</sup> This same Greek phrase is used by Josephus of the supplication of another childless husband, i.e. King Hezekiah, in his version of the story of the king's sickness (see 2 Kgs 20:1-11// Isa 38:1-22) in *Ant.* 10.26.

<sup>18</sup> This inserted reference to Manoah's "praying" right at the start of the narrative accentuates the figure's piety; in Judg 13:8 it is only after his wife's report of the first angelic visitation that Manoah prays.

<sup>19</sup> Pseudo-Philo elaborates the biblical notice on the wife's barrenness in his own way in *L.A.B.* 42.1c-2. There, one reads that the coupled quarreled daily over which of them was responsible for their childless state, which Manoah calling on "Eluma" (see n. 13) to allow him to take another wife that he might have offspring by her. In the face of this ongoing dispute, the wife turns to prayer (compare Josephus where Manoah has recourse to prayer), asking God to disclose to her whether she or the husband is the "culprit" whose sins are being punished in this way (the woman concludes her prayer by alluding to the possibility that both parties may be to blame, in which case, she avers, they will bear their joint guilt and be silent before God). *Num. Rab.* 10.5 shares with Pseudo-Philo the mention of a quarrel between husband and wife, each imputing the "fault" to the other; this quarrel is resolved when the angel informs (see 13:3) the wife that she is barren and has no children.

*He was moreover madly (μανιώδης)<sup>20</sup> enamoured (ὕπ' ἔρωτος) of his wife and hence inordinately jealous (ζηλότυπος<sup>21</sup> ἀκρατῶς).*

### III. Woman-Angel Encounter

The next section within Judges 13, vv. 3-5, features an angelic communication to Samson's future mother. The segment opens in 13:3a with "an angel of the Lord" (LXX ἄγγελος κυρίου) "appearing" (LXX ὤφθη) to the woman. The Josephan rendition (5.277b) is both more elaborate and text-critically problematic, with Marcus printing one Greek text but translating another: "Now once when his wife was alone,<sup>22</sup> a spectre appeared to her from God (φάντασμα<sup>23</sup> ἐπιφαίνεται ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ),<sup>24</sup> in the likeness of a comely and tall youth (νεανία

<sup>20</sup> Josephus's other uses of this word are in *BJ* 4.45; *Ant.* 2.270; 17.125. Feldman (*Josephus's Interpretation*, 475) calls attention to the wordplay between this adverb μανιώδης and the husband's own name, Μανώλης according to Josephus.

<sup>21</sup> Josephus's only other use of the adjective ζηλότυπος is in *BJ* 1.440 where he employs of King Herod's passionate jealousy towards his wife Mariamme.

<sup>22</sup> Judg 13:3 lacks this specification. Josephus may have anticipated it from 13:9 which states that Manoah was "not with" his wife at the moment of the angel's second appearance. For a comparable case of Josephan anticipation of biblical data, see n. 16.

<sup>23</sup> Josephus's use of this term of the wife's visitor establishes a verbal link that figure and his designation of Gideon's angelic interlocutor as a "spectre" (φάντασμα) in *Ant.* 5.213. We will be noting other instances of verbal connections between the Josephan stories of the call off Gideon and Samson's birth story in the course of this essay.

<sup>24</sup> As will be noted, Marcus has no equivalent to the Greek word ἄγγελος in the above translation given by him in the body of his text (he does, however, offer the alternative rendering "an angel of God" in a footnote to that translation). Compare Nodet (*ad loc.*): "... il lui apparut un personnage extraordinaire (un ange de Dieu..."). The Greek text printed by both Marcus and Nodet corresponds to that of the codices MSPL, while the codices have τοῦ θεοῦ ἀστέρος, and B. Niese in his critical edition omits the word ἄγγελος, this yielding the reading on which Marcus's above translation is based. Josephus's qualification of the angel as "of God" in contrast to the "of the Lord" of Judg 13:3 corresponds to the historian's regular practice of avoiding the biblical use of κύριος as a divine designation, on which see C.T. Begg, "Josephus' Account of the Early Divided Monarchy," *BETL* 108 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 45, n. 218. On Josephan "angelology" overall, see M. Mach, "Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelglaubens in vorrabbinischer Zeit," *TSAJ* 34 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 300-32.

καλῶ...καὶ μεγάλῳ)..."<sup>25</sup>

The angel's first word to the woman in 13:3b is the direct-address announcement "you are barren and have no children [see 13:1b]; but you shall conceive and bear a son." Josephus (5.277c) omits the first, negative portion of this announcement as something already known to the reader (see 5.276a), while likewise recasting its positive component in indirect address:<sup>26</sup> "*bringing her the good news* (εὐαγγελιζόμενον)<sup>27</sup> of the approaching birth of a son *through God's good providence* (πρόνοιαν)<sup>28</sup> -- *a son goodly* (καλοῦ)<sup>29</sup> *and illustrious for strength* (ῥώμην ἐπιφανοῦς<sup>30</sup>)...."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> This appended description of the angel continues Josephus's "eroticization" of the Judges 13 story; compare *Ant.* 1.200 where to Genesis 19:1's mention of the two angels who visit Sodom Josephus adds the qualification of them as "young men of remarkably fair appearance" (νεανίσκους εὐπρεπείᾳ τῆς ὄψεως διαφέροντας); cf. further on 5.279 below.

Pseudo-Philo's presentation of the wife's interlocutor in *L.A.B.* 42.3a stands closer to the Bible's own wording: "The Lord heard her voice and sent his angel (*angelum suum*) to her in the morning...."

<sup>26</sup> On Josephus's penchant for such recasting, see Begg, "Josephus' Account of the Early Divided Monarchy," 12-13, n. 18.

<sup>27</sup> On the use of this verb and its nominal cognates in Greek literature generally, see C. Spicq, *Notes de Lexicographie néo-testamentaire Supplément*, OBO 22/3 (Fribourg: Éditions universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 296-306.

<sup>28</sup> The angelic message of 13:3b makes no such reference to God's agency in the son's birth. On πρόνοια ("providence") as a key, Stoic-influenced concept of Josephus's presentation of Israel's history, see H.W. Attridge, "The Interpretation of Biblical History in the *Antiquitates Judaicae* of Flavius Josephus," *HDR* 7 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 71-106; P. Spilsbury, "The Image of the Jew in Flavius' Josephus Paraphrase of the Bible," *TSAJ* 69 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 72-74.

<sup>29</sup> This qualification of the announced son by the angel echoes Josephus's description of the angel himself as "comely" (καλῶ) earlier in 5.277.

<sup>30</sup> This phrase occurs only here in Josephus. Its term ἐπιφανοῦς echoes the verb ἐπιφαίνεται earlier in 5.277.

<sup>31</sup> The Josephan angel's above characterization of the son has no counterpart in the message of his biblical counterpart. The reference to Samson's preeminent "strength" introduces a key feature of Josephus's portrayal of the hero; see on 5.285.

Pseudo-Philo's rendering of the angel's words to the woman of 13:3b in *L.A.B.* 43.3bc reproduces their biblical content, while also inserting several additional elements (I italicize these): "You are the sterile one [see the couple's preceding quarrel about which of them is

The angel's words to the woman continue in 13:4-5a with a series of (motivated) directives to her, his message concluding in 13:5b with the affirmation "he [the promised son] shall begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines." Reversing this sequence, the historian (5.277 *in fine*) attaches his version of 13:5b directly to his foregoing characterization of the son: "by whom, *on his reaching man's estate*<sup>32</sup> the Philistines will be afflicted."<sup>33</sup>

Having thus anticipated the announcement concerning Samson's future dealings with the Philistines of 13:5b, Josephus concludes (5.278a) the angel's message with a (shortened and rearranged) version of his directives to the mother of 13:4-5a: "He further charged her not to cut the lad's locks,<sup>34</sup> and that he was to renounce all other forms of drink<sup>35</sup>

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responsible for their childless state as cited in n. 19] who does not bring forth, you are the womb that is forbidden to bring forth. *But now the Lord has heard your voice and seen your tears and opened your womb* [compare the theological indication introduced by Josephus into his version of the angel's words; see n. 28]. Behold you will conceive and bear a son, *and you will call his name Samson.*"

<sup>32</sup> Josephus inserts this indication as to when the son's promised initiative against the Philistines will occur.

<sup>33</sup> Pseudo-Philo (*L.A.B.* 43.3g) follows the Bible in having the "delivery promise" conclude the angel's message, even as he attaches this to the dietary prohibitions imposed on him (// 13:4) as their motivation: "because he himself will free Israel from the hand of the Philistines." In *b. Sota* 10a a certain R. Hama is quoted to the effect that when the angel's promise of 13:5 about Samson's "beginning to deliver" Israel from the Philistine grip came about, Abraham's oath (Gen 21:23-24) to the Philistine king Abimelech not to mistreat him or his descendants was abrogated.

<sup>34</sup> In the sequence of 13:4-5a, the corresponding command ("no razor shall come upon his head") of 13:5aβ stands after the directives given the mother concerning her own diet prior to the baby's birth in 13:4. Josephus omits the motivation attached to the biblical shaving prohibition in 13:5bβ, "for the boy shall be a Nazirite (LXX A ἡγιασμένον ναζιραῖον, LXX B ναζιρ) to God from birth." As Nodet (*Flavius Josèphe II*, 181, n. 5) points out, Josephus does mention the existence of "Nazirites" in his version of the law of Numbers 6:1-21 in *Ant.* 4.72, where he cites their "growing their hair long and abstaining from wine." In *Num. Rab.* 10.5 it is asked why God imposed the Nazirite office with its obligation of abstinence from alcohol upon Samson. In response, the midrash avers that Samson God did so lest Samson's pursuit of his lustful inclinations go completely unchecked.

<sup>35</sup> In 13:4a it is the mother herself who is told not to drink wine or strong drink. Josephus's "transfer" of the prohibition to Samson himself has in view the subsequent course of his account



(so God commanded)<sup>36</sup> and to accustom himself to water only."<sup>37</sup> The biblical scene between the woman and the angel of 13:3-5 ends without the expected mention of the latter's withdrawal once he has concluded his message. Josephus (5.278b) fills this source gap: "*And having thus spoken the visitor departed, having come but to execute God's will* (κατὰ βουλήσιν... τοῦ θεοῦ<sup>38</sup>)."<sup>39</sup>

#### IV. Report and Prayer

A new section within Judges 13 begins in v. 6a as the woman "comes and tells her husband." At the opening of 5.279 the former's report to the latter occurs once "he arrives."<sup>40</sup> The wife's report in vv.

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(see 5.306-309) where he will depict the hero as violating the interdiction with disastrous results. He omits the further prohibition of 13:4b, i.e. that the mother is to eat "nothing unclean." (In *b. Sotah* 9b the question is raised whether this last prohibition implies that the mother had actually eaten unclean foods previously, with the answer being given that the expression "nothing unclean" is simply a summary way of referring to everything that the Nazirite is forbidden to taste according to the law of Num 6:3-4, i.e. not just wine and strong drink, but also vinegar, grape juice, fresh or dried grapes, grape skins and grape seeds.) He likewise passes over the motivation attached to the three-fold prohibition for the mother of 13:4 in 13:5aα ("for lo, you shall conceive and bear a son") with its repetition of what has already been told her in 13:3bβ.

<sup>36</sup> This invocation to the divine authority behind the angel's directives to the mother lacks a counterpart in 13:4-5. Compare Josephus's inserted reference to "God's providence" in the angelic message of 5.277.

<sup>37</sup> This positive counterpart to the negative injunction about "all other form of drink" is Josephus's addition to the dietary prohibitions of 13:4. With Josephus's above version of 13:4-5abα compare that of Pseudo-Philo in *L.A.B.* 43.3ef ("He will be a Nazirite to your Lord. Make sure that he does not taste any fruit of the vine or eat any unclean thing"). Like Josephus, Pseudo-Philo "transfers" the prohibition of wine drinking from the mother to Samson himself (and omits the reiteration of the conception and birth announcement of 13:3bβ in 13:5a). On the other hand, he differs from Josephus in reproducing the statement about Samson's Nazirite status of 13:5bα and, conversely, in passing over the shaving prohibition of 13:5aβ.

<sup>38</sup> For the third time within his version of the angel-woman encounter in 5.277-278 Josephus introduces mention of the Deity; see n 36.

<sup>39</sup> Pseudo-Philo provides a similar closure notice for the angel-woman scene in *L.A.B.* 43.3h ("When the angel of the Lord had spoken these words, he departed from her").

<sup>40</sup> Josephus's formulation suggests that the husband has come in search of his wife. His doing so could be motivated by his "inordinate jealousy" of her as cited by Josephus in 5.277.

6b-7 consists of two parts: remarks about her visitor himself (v. 6b) and a (partial) citation of his words to her (v. 7; compare vv. 3b-4a, 5b α).

Josephus's rendition in the continuation of 5.279 reverses the order of these elements, likewise reducing the second to a brief allusion and giving a distinct content to the first, while also appending a notice on the emotional effect of the woman's report upon her husband. The sequence reads:

(the woman)...reported what she had heard from the angel,<sup>41</sup> *extolling the young man's comeliness and stature* (τοῦ νεανίσκου τὸ κάλλος καὶ τὸ μέγεθος)<sup>42</sup> *in such wise that he in his jealousy* (ζηλοτυπίαν)<sup>43</sup> *was driven by these praises to distraction and to conceive the suspicions* (υπόνοιαν) *that such passion arouses.*<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> In thus reducing the woman's citation (13:7) of the angel's words to her to this summary allusion, Josephus avoids the largely verbatim reproduction of the latter's words in the former's report of these.

<sup>42</sup> This element of the woman's report echoes Josephus's own description of the angel in 5.277 as νεανία κάλω παραπλήσιον καὶ μεγάλω. With this part of the Josephan wife's report compare her words in 13:6b "A man of God came to me, and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible (so MT and LXX B [φοβερὸν]; LXX AL have ἐπιφανής, "distinguished"); I did not ask him whence he was, and he did not tell me his name." Josephus's rendering focusses all attention on the visitor's appearance, his description of this perhaps being inspired by the LXX AL term for the angel's countenance.

<sup>43</sup> Mention of this harks back to the reference to Manoah's being "inordinately jealous" (ζηλότυπος) of his wife in 5.277.

<sup>44</sup> In comparison with the biblical wife's words, Josephus's version, in line with his handling of Judges 13 as a whole, gives a highly eroticized character both to her report and to the husband's reaction to this; see n. 25.

Also Pseudo-Philo goes his own way in his rendering of 13:6-7 in *L.A.B.* 42.4. Here, she comes to her husband "in the house" and confesses that she had been in the wrong in the quarrel between them concerning the responsibility for their childlessness (see 42.1 and cf. n. 13), her realizing this being due to the angel's announcement to her of her current sterility and her coming conception and giving birth (see 42.3 and cf. n. 31). To this declaration by the wife Pseudo-Philo then appends, at the start of 43. 5, the notice that "Manoah did not believe his wife."

*Num. Rab.* 10.5, by contrast, calls attention to the wife's "omission" of the angel's declaration to her "you are barren" in her report of 13:7, attributing this to her unwillingness to disclose this defect in herself. That same rabbinic passage likewise comments on the woman's

Manoah's response to his wife's report according to 13:8 is to petition the Lord to have the "man of God" (Tg. prophet of the Lord) revisit them in order to "teach them what we are to do with the boy that will be born." Josephus (5.280a) makes the woman herself be the one to pray at this juncture, also supplying a motivation for her doing so and rewording the second component of her petition: "*But she, wishing to allay her husband's unreasonable distress (ἄλογον...λύπην),*<sup>45</sup> entreated God (τὸν θεὸν ἰκέτευε)<sup>46</sup> to send the angel<sup>47</sup> again *that her husband also might see (ὄραθῆι) him.*"<sup>48</sup>

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addition (13:7 *in fine*) of the phrase to the day of his death" when reporting the angel's announcement about Samson being a Nazirite "from the womb" in 13:5. That addition, it is averred, reflected the woman's ignorance that Samson would be deprived of his Naziritship before his death-- a fact of which the angel himself was well aware of.

<sup>45</sup> This phrase occurs only here in Josephus.

<sup>46</sup> This is the same phrase used of Manoah himself in 5.276. Josephus thus parallels husband and wife in "the entreating of God" he ascribes to both. In LXX A 13:8 the expression used of Manoah's petition is ἐδεήθη... τοῦ κυρίου.

<sup>47</sup> In 13:8 Manoah asks for the renewed dispatch of "the man of God," an expression which Josephus avoids both here and in its previous occurrence in the woman's report of 13:7.

<sup>48</sup> This concluding element of the wife's petition replaces that which Manoah's ends in 13:8, i.e. "and teach us what we are to do with the boy that will be born." Josephus's replacement formulation alludes back to the woman's motivation in making her prayer (i.e. to placate the husband's jealousy). The replacement might further be influenced by the consideration that in what precedes Josephus has had the angel tell the wife what is to be done with Samson once he is born (see 5.278) and she, in turn, has reported this to her husband (5.279) such that the biblical Manoah's concluding request might appear otiose at this point.

In contrast to Josephus, Pseudo-Philo (*L.A.B.* 42.5) follows the Bible (13:8) in having Manoah be the one to pray once the wife has made her report to him. The Pseudo-Philonic husband makes his prayer in a state of "confusion and sadness" evoked by his wife's words; ascending to the "upper chamber" (as had the wife earlier; see 42.2, cf. n. 19), he queries God "... am I not worthy to hear the signs and wonders that God has done among us or to see the face of his messenger?"

## V. Second Appearance Reported

Manoah's prayer of 13:8 evokes a positive response: God listens and the angel reappears to the woman who, this time, is "sitting in the field," her husband being absent (13:9), whereupon the woman runs off and reports the return of "the man" to him (13:10). Josephus's version of this sequence (5.280b) takes care to have the woman ask for and obtain the angel's permission to fetch her husband:

And again by the grace of God (χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ)<sup>49</sup> the angel came, while they were in the suburb (ἐν τῷ προαστείῳ)<sup>50</sup> and appeared (φαίνεται)<sup>51</sup> to the woman when parted from her husband. *She besought him to stay until she could fetch her husband and, obtaining his assent, went in pursuit of Manoch.*<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> This phrase might be seen as Josephus's equivalent to the opening words of 13:9, "And God listened to the voice of Manoah." On the term χάρις in Greek literature generally, see C. Spicq, *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire II*, OBO 22/2 (Fribourg: Éditions universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 960-66.

<sup>50</sup> In 13:9 the woman is "sitting in the field" for the angel's second appearance. Josephus has already mentioned "the suburb" (τὸ προάστειον) as a place frequented by the couple in 5.277; see n. 16

<sup>51</sup> Compare the compound form ἐπιφαίνεται used of the angel's first appearance in 5.277.

<sup>52</sup> In his version of 13:9-10 Josephus omits the woman's report to her husband once she finds him as cited in v. 10b: "Behold, the man who came to me the other day has appeared to me." Pseudo-Philo (*L.A.B.* 42.6a) represents the angel as reappearing to the woman "in the field" while her husband is praying "in the house" (see 42.5 and cf. n. 48). Whereas neither the Bible nor Josephus cite any word spoken by the angel on his second visit to the woman, Pseudo-Philo (42.6b) has him directing her to "run and summon" her husband whom "God has deemed worthy to hear my voice," and the woman does so according to the opening words of 42.7. *Num. Rab.* 10.5 raises the question of why if, as 13:9a states, God heard Manoah's voice, the angel goes not to him, but rather to the woman in 13:9b. The midrash offers several alternative/complementary answers to this query: if the angel had gone to Manoah at this point he would have had to repeat to him everything he had already told the wife or his going to her was a way of increasing the husband's appreciation of his wife (as one who is twice vouchsafed the visit of an angel).

## VI. Angel-Manoah Interaction

The longest section within Judges 13, vv. 11-20, features a series of exchanges between Manoah and the angel in the presence of the wife who herself remains silent throughout. The segment opens in v. 11a with Manoah following his wife to the angel.<sup>53</sup> There then follows a two part question and answer sequence in vv. 11b-13: Manoah asks the angel whether he is the man who has spoken to his wife and is told that he is (v. 11b); the former asks about the promised child's manner of life and what "he is to do" (v. 12), the angel responding that the wife is to observe his previous directives, among which he singles out the prohibitions of her eating products of the vine and anything unclean (see v. 4) for explicit mention (vv. 13-14). The historian compresses this opening double exchange into a single one, likewise giving it a content of his own in 5.281ab: "But the husband, *on beholding* (θεασόμενος) *the angel*,<sup>54</sup> *even then did not desist from his suspicion* (υπονοίας),<sup>55</sup> and he requested him to repeat to him all that he had revealed to his wife.<sup>56</sup> The angel having declared that it would suffice that it should be made known to her alone...."<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> As pointed out in n. 12, various rabbinic authorities assert that Manoah's allowing his wife to walk ahead of him is evidence of the former's ignorance of marital propriety.

<sup>54</sup> This mention of Manoah's getting sight of the angel calls attention to the fulfillment of the woman's prayer of 5.280, i.e. that her husband might "see" (ὄραθῆναι) the angel. The allusion takes the place of the notice of 13:11a about Manoah's "going after" his wife and "coming to the man" with its potentially problematic indication about the wife's preceding her husband (see previous note).

<sup>55</sup> Josephus's insertion concerning Manoah's continuing "suspicion" upon sighting the angel harks back to 5.279 where he notes that the wife's report about her visitor's handsomeness caused him "to conceive the suspicions (υπρόνοιαν) that such passion [jealousy] arises."

<sup>56</sup> This single "request" takes the place of the two separate queries Josephus directs to the angel in 13:11bα ("Are you the man who spoke to this woman") and 13:12 ("Now when your words come true, what is to be the boy's manner of life, and what is he to do?"). In *Num. Rab.* 10.5 Manoah's question of 13:12 is motivated by the consideration that whereas he has had a report of the angel's previous announcement from his wife (see 13:6-7) women's testimony is not to be relied on, and so he wishes to hear the matter from the angel's own lips.

<sup>57</sup> The angel's single response to Manoah's single request in Josephus's presentation replaces the former's double reply to the latter's two distinct questions (see previous note) in

The exchange between Manoah and the angel takes a new turn in 13:15 where the former asks that he be allowed to "retain" the latter and prepare a kid for him. The angel then responds in 13:16a that he will not eat Manoah's food, while also directing that any burnt offering prepared by him be offered to the Lord, with 13:16b appending the parenthetical notice "for Manoah did not know that he was the angel of the Lord." Following this conversational sequence, Manoah asks (13:17) the visitor's name "so that when your words come true, we may honor you," to which, in turn, the angel replies with a counter-question in 13:19, i.e. "why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful (Tg. interpreter)?" Josephus reverses the sequence of this double question and answer exchange in 5.281c-282a:

(5.281c) ...Manoah bade (ἐκέλευεν) him say who he was, in order that on the birth of the child, they might tender him their thanks (χάριν)<sup>58</sup> and make him a present.<sup>59</sup> (5.282a) He replied *that he had need of naught, for it was not from want that he had announced this good news*

13:11b-14, i.e. "I am" (v. 11bβ) and "Of all that I said to the woman let her beware. She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, neither let her drink wine nor strong drink, or eat any unclean thing; all that I command her let her observe" (vv. 13b-14), the second reply reutilizing language that has already been twice employed in the biblical account; see 13:4 (the angel's earlier directives to the woman) and 7 (the woman's report of these to her husband).

Pseudo-Philo too presents a shortened version of the double exchange of 13:11-14 with a distinctive content in *L.A.B.* 42.7, "(The wife ran and called her husband [see n. 52]), and he hurried and came to the angel in the field. The angel said to him, 'Go in to your wife and do all these things.' But he said, 'I am going, but see to it, sir, that your word be accomplished regarding your servant [compare 13:12aβ now when your words come true...].' And he said, 'It will be done.'"

<sup>58</sup> This term for "thanks" echoes the reference to "the grace (χάριν) of God" in 5.280.

<sup>59</sup> Compare Manoah's (direct address) question of 13:17: "What is your name, so that when your words come true, we may honor you?" (MT LXX A; LXX B: "May your words come true and we shall honor you.") Josephus has Manoah spell out both what is intended by the angel's words "coming true" (i.e. the birth of the child) and how the parents' will "honor" him (i.e. with thanks and a present). Josephus's elucidation of the biblical Manoah's reference in 13:17 to the "honor" he intends to show the angel in terms of the "present" he wishes to give him has a counterpart in *Num. Rab.* 10.5 which states (with reference to Balak's promise of great honor [i.e. gifts] to Balaam) that the phrase of 13:17 "can only allude to a present."

*of the birth of a child* (εὐαγγελίασθαι περὶ τῆς τοῦ παιδὸς γονῆς<sup>60</sup>)<sup>61</sup>; and though Manoch invited him to stay and partake of hospitality,<sup>62</sup> he consented not.<sup>63</sup>

The verbal exchange of 13:11-18 concluded, Manoah (13:19) proceeds to offer the kid (see 13:15) along with a cereal offering upon "the rock to the Lord..." The historian interjects (5.282b) a preliminary to this initiative by the husband: "*Howbeit, at his earnest entreaty, he was persuaded to remain that some token of hospitality might be*

<sup>60</sup> Compare the very similar wording of the angel's announcement to the wife in 5.277: εὐαγγελιζόμενον...παιδὸς γονῆν.

<sup>61</sup> The above angelic response has no direct equivalent in either of the answers the angel makes to Manoah's questions in 13:15-18 (see 13:16,18). It might, however, be seen as an implicit explanation of the angel's refusal (see 13:16a) to eat the food Manoah has proposed to prepare for him.

<sup>62</sup> This narrative notice is Josephus's (repositioned) version of Manoah's word to the angel in 13:15: "Pray, let us detain you, and prepare a kid for you."

<sup>63</sup> Compare the angel's opening response to Manoah's plea of 13:15 (see previous note) in 13:16a, i.e. "If you detain me, I will not eat of your food." Josephus omits both the angel's further response in 13:16aβ ("but if you make ready a burnt offering, then offer it to the Lord"; see, however, n. 67) and the attached parenthetical notice of 13:16b ("For Manoah did not know that he was the angel of the Lord").

Pseudo-Philo (*L.A.B.* 42:8) reduces the double exchange of 13:15-18 to a single one, at the same time giving it a content of his own: Manoah said to him, "If I could, I would persuade you to enter my house and eat bread with me. When you leave, I would give you gifts to take with you to offer as a sacrifice to the Lord your God." The angel said to him, "I will not enter your house with you, not eat your bread nor take your gifts. If you offer sacrifice from alien things, I cannot show favor to you." On the distinctive features of this sequence and suggestions about where Pseudo-Philo found his inspiration for them, see Jacobson, *Commentary II*, 998-91. Like Josephus, Pseudo-Philo makes no use of the (displaced) notice about Manoah's not knowing the identity of the angel of 13:16b.

*Num. Rab.* 10.5 attributes the angel's refusal of Manoah's offer of hospitality in 13:16a to the concern that a prophet of the Lord like himself not be thought to take payment for their missions. Commenting on 13:16b (Manoah's not knowing the angel's identity), the midrash comments that this serves to explain the man's offer of hospitality to him in 13:16a, i.e. he was under the mistaken impression that angels partake of food (compare the declaration about his "needing naught" that Josephus ascribes to the angel above). It further explains the angel's question of 13:18 about why Manoah is asking his name as signifying that the question is otiose since Manoah will never see the angel again.

brought to him."<sup>64</sup> Only then (5.283) does he give his (elaborated and modified) rendering of the notice of 13:19 on Manoah's sacrifice: "So, Manoch *having killed* (θύσαντος) *a kid* (ἔριφον; LXX AB τὸν ἔριφον τῶν ἀγῶν) *and bidden* (κελεύσαντος<sup>65</sup>) *his wife to cook it*<sup>66</sup> *when all was ready, the angel ordered* (κελεύσαντος)<sup>67</sup> *them*<sup>68</sup> *to set out the loaves* (ἄρτους) *and the meat* (τὰ κρέα)<sup>69</sup> *upon the rock* (ἐπι τῆς πέτρας; LXX AB ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν) *without the vessels* (χωρὶς τῶν ἀγγείων)."<sup>70</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Josephus's above insertion-- without parallel in either the Bible or Pseudo-Philo-- is necessary for the further course of his narration (in which the angel remains present), given that in the immediately preceding 5.282a (see above) he has forthrightly declined Manoah's invitation to "stay and partake of hospitality."

<sup>65</sup> This is the same verb used in 5.281 in reference to Manoah's "bidding" (ἐκέλευεν) to reveal his identity.

<sup>66</sup> These preliminary measures on the part of the couple have no parallel in 13:19 (where, moreover, nothing is said of the wife's role in the sacrifice; see n. 69).

<sup>67</sup> This is the same term Josephus uses in 5.281 where Manoah "bids" (ἐκέλευσεν) the angel say who he is. In 13:19 Manoah arranges the sacrificial elements on his own initiative, whereas Josephus only doing so when ordered by the angel; compare the analogous case of 5.280c where Josephus in his version of 13:10, represents the woman as first asking the angel's consent before going to fetch her husband.

<sup>68</sup> This angelic "order" is unparalleled in 13:19 where Manoah acts on his own initiative in presenting the sacrifice. That order might, however, be seen as a reflex of the angel's earlier declaration to Manoah in 13:16aβ ("if you make ready a burnt offering, offer it to the Lord") that Josephus does not utilize in its biblical position; see n. 63.

<sup>69</sup> Compare 13:19 where the reference is to Manoah's taking "the kid and the cereal offering (so RSV; MT חמנה; LXX τὴν θυσίαν). Josephus appears to interpret MT's term in the line of the RSV as referring specifically to a "cereal offering." The above sequence contains a series of terms in common with Josephus's account of Abraham's hospitality to his angelic visitors in *Ant.* 1.197 (// Gen 18:6-7): "(Abraham) ordered loaves (ἄρτους) of fine flour to be made forthwith and killed (θύσας) a calf and cooked (ἔπιτήσας) it..." (Conceivably, Josephus biblically unparalleled reference to Manoah's ordering his wife to cook the kid represents a reminiscence of Gen 18:6 (// *Ant.* 1.197) where Abraham directs his wife to prepare flour cakes for his angelic visitors; see n. 66). On Judg 6:19-20 as another possible influence on Josephus's rendering of Judg 13:19, see following note.

<sup>70</sup> In MT and LXX A 13:19 the account of Manoah's sacrificial activity concludes with the indication that he make his offering to the Lord "and working wonders, while Manoah and his wife looked on" (RSV emends to "[to the Lord], to him who works wonders"), while LXX B terminates the verse "then he [Manoah] interrupted his action (διεχώρισεν ποιῆσαι), while Manoah and his wife looked on." Marcus (*ad loc.*) suggests that Josephus's above reference to the "vessels" "possibly has some connection with the strange reading" of LXX B concerning Manoah's "interrupting" the proceedings. Nodet (*ad loc.*), for his part, sees a possible



Judges 13:20 tells of the sequels to Manoah's initiatives in 13:19: a flame goes up from the altar towards heaven in which the angel ascends, as Manoah and his wife look on, after which they prostrate themselves. Omitting the closing reference to the couple's prostration, Josephus's version (5.284a) embellishes other elements of this presentation of the angelic visitor's departure: "*That done, he [the angel] with the rod (τῆ ῥάβδῳ) which he held touched the meat (ἄπτεται...τῶν κρεῶν) and, and a fire (πυρός) blazing out, it was consumed along with the bread,*<sup>71</sup>

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inspiration for Josephus's mention of the vessels' being left aside in Judg 6:19-20 (a passage not reproduced by Josephus in his version of the Gideon story, but which does contain a number of terms in common with 5.283): "So Gideon went into his house and prepared a kid (LXX AB ῥθρον αἰγῶν) and unleavened cakes of flour; the meat (LXX AB τὰ κρέα) he put in a basket (LXX A ἐπὶ το κανοῦν; LXX B ἐν τῷ κοφίνῳ) and the broth he put in a pot (LXX A εἰς χύτρον; LXX B ἐν τῇ χύτρῳ) ...And the angel of God said to him, Take the meat and the unleavened cakes (LXX A ἄρτους) and put them on this rock (LXX πέτραν)...." See n. 71 on Josephus's use of Judg 6:21 from the biblical call story of Gideon in his version of the sacrifice scene of Judg 13:20.

Pseudo-Philo's rendition of 13:19 at the opening of *L.A.B.* 42.9 introduces a two-fold mention, inspired by the double allusion to this in Judg 13:20 (see n. 71), of an "altar," constructed on by Manoah on the rock where he offers his sacrifice: "Manoah built an altar upon the rock and offered sacrifices and burnt offerings. When he had cut up the meats and placed them on the altar..." (cf. Judg 6:24 [no parallel in Josephus] Gideon subsequently builds an altar at the site of the rock where he had sacrificed and from which the angel had departed [see 6:20-23] to which he gives the name "The Lord is peace" and which is said to still stand at "Ophrah of the Abiezrites.")

<sup>71</sup> The above elaboration of the opening words of 13:20 ("and when they went the flame went up towards heaven from the altar") provides an explanation both of how the fire was ignited and of its effect upon Manoah's offerings. For his formulation here Josephus clearly seems to draw on the account concerning the angel's response to Gideon's offering given in Judg 6:21abα (but not reproduced by him in his own version of Gideon's call): "Then the angel of the Lord reached the tip of the staff (LXX AB τῆς ῥάβδου) that was in his hand and touched the meat (LXX AB ἤψατο τῶν κρεῶν) and the unleavened cakes, and there sprang up fire (LXX AB πῦρ) from the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes...." (Josephus's rendering of 13:20 does not reproduce its double mention of "the altar" as the place from which the flame arises, perhaps because this structure is not cited either in the preceding 13:19 or in Judg 6:21 where, both times, the reference is simply to "the rock" as the place of sacrifice.)

while the angel borne on the smoke *as on a chariot*,<sup>72</sup> was *plainly* (φανερός)<sup>73</sup> seen by them ascending into heaven (εἰς οὐρανόν<sup>74</sup>)."<sup>75</sup>

## VII. Manoah-wife exchange

The immediate sequels to the angel's ascent (13:20) are related in Judges 13:21-23. That section commences in v. 21 with the narrator's double notice that the angel did not hereafter appear to the couple and that Manoah then realized that the visitor was "the angel of the Lord" (compare 13:16b which states that Manoah did not know the angel's identity). Josephus passes over this whole sequence.<sup>76</sup> In so doing he proceeds immediately to the exchange between Manoah and his wife related in vv. 22-23. That exchange itself opens with Manoah's declaration (v. 22): "We shall surely die because we have seen God (MT LXX: Tg.: the angel of the Lord)." Josephus's indirect discourse version (5.284b) introduces mention of the husband's psychological state: "Manoah *thereat fearing* that some mischief might befall them

<sup>72</sup> Josephus inserts this comparison of the medium of the angel's ascent with a "chariot."

<sup>73</sup> This form echoes the verb φαίνεται used of the angel's second appearance to the woman in 5.280.

<sup>74</sup> In Judges 13:20 the corresponding phrase "towards heaven" (LXX A εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν/ LXX B ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ) is used, not of the angel's heavenward ascent, but rather of the fire's going up in that direction.

<sup>75</sup> Josephus's above version of 13:20aββα ("...the angel of Lord ascended in the flame of the altar while Manoah and his wife looked on") conflates the two distinct components of that sequence.

Like Josephus Pseudo-Philo (*L.A.B.* 42.9b-10a) introduces his rendering of 13:20 with a reminiscence of Judg 6:21 (see n. 71), while diverging from him in reproducing the biblical verse's closing notice on the couple's prostrating themselves. His version thus reads: "... the angel sent forth his hand touched it with the tip of his staff. Fire came forth from the rock, and devoured the burnt offerings and sacrifices. The angel of the Lord went up from him [Manoah] in the flame. When Manoah and his wife saw these things they fell on their faces...."

<sup>76</sup> Pseudo-Philo has no equivalent to the content of 13:21 either.

from their vision of God (τῆς ὄψεως τοῦ θεοῦ)...."<sup>77</sup> To Manoah's assertion of v. 22 the wife responds reassuringly in v. 23 that if the Lord had indeed meant to "kill" the two of them, he would not have gone to the trouble of accepting their sacrifice, nor shown and announced to them all that he in fact had. The Josephan wife (5.284c), e.g., turns the negative possibility cited by her biblical counterpart (the Lord's "killing" them) into a statement about the positive import of the experiences God had vouchsafed the couple: "The wife *bade him take heart* (θαρσεῖν),<sup>78</sup> since it was for their good<sup>79</sup> that it had been given them to see God (τὸν θεὸν...ὄραθῆναι)."<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Josephus tones down the drastic language ("we shall surely die") used by the biblical Manoah of the consequences of the couple's "seeing God." In *Gen. Rab.* 45.7 Manoah's fear of death that the angel's visit occasions is contrasted with the case of the much earlier Hagar who saw "five angels" (see Gen 16:7-12 with its repeated mentions of the "angel of the Lord") without experiencing any such fear.

<sup>78</sup> This inserted exhortation by the wife picks up on the (likewise inserted) mention of Manoah's "fearing" in what precedes.

<sup>79</sup> With this formulation Josephus turns into a positive affirmation the (negated) possibility to which the wife alludes at the opening of 13:23, i.e. "if the Lord had meant to kill us..." Compare Tg.'s softening of this drastic MT formulation: "if it were pleasing before the Lord that we should die...." In his rendering of both Manoah and the wife's words of 13:22 and 23 respectively, Josephus, it will be noted, avoids having them associate "death/killing" with their vision of God.

<sup>80</sup> This conclusion to the woman's discourse picks up on her husband's reference to their "vision of God" (τῆς ὄψεως τοῦ θεοῦ) in 5.284b. It takes the place of the catalogue of benefits cited by the woman in the apodosis of her statement in 13:23: "(If the Lord had meant to kill us), he would not have accepted a burnt offering and a cereal offering at our hands, or shown us these things, or announced to us such things as these."

In *L.A.B.* 42.10b Pseudo-Philo has both husband and wife make the declaration attributed to the former in 13:22 (and 5.284b): "we will die because we have seen the Lord face to face." He then (42.10c) has Manoah continue with the ("unbiblical") statement "It was not enough that I saw him but I also asked his name, not knowing that he was the minister of God" (in Pseudo-Philo's own presentation Manoah has not in fact asked the angel his name; with this affirmation by him he thus presupposes the relevant biblical notices of 13:16b-17 previously passed over by him). Finally, in 42.10d ("The angel who had come was named Fadahel") Pseudo-Philo supplies a name for the couple's visitor who remains anonymous in both the Bible and Josephus (compare his naming the wife "Eluma" in 42.1).

### VIII. Samson's Emergence

Judges 13 concludes with a series of notices (vv. 24-25) in which attention shifts from the parents to Samson himself: the boy is conceived, born, named, grows, and is blessed by the Lord (v. 24) whose spirit "begins to stir him"<sup>81</sup> in Mahanehdan between Zorah and Eshtaol" (v. 25). Of the five items comprising v. 24, Josephus (5.285a) reproduces the first three, "delays" his version of the fourth, and replaces the fifth (the Lord's "blessing" of the boy)<sup>82</sup> with two indications peculiar to himself: "And the woman conceived *and paid good heed to the injunctions laid upon her*<sup>83</sup>; and when the infant was born they called<sup>84</sup> him Samson (Σαμψών),<sup>85</sup> a name which means 'strong' (ισχυρόν)."<sup>86</sup> As for the content of the appended v. 25, the

<sup>81</sup> This is RSV's rendering of the MT *hapax* verbal phrase לָבִיחַ. In LXX AL (συμπορεύεσθαι) VL Vg. the reference is to the Spirit's "accompanying" Samson, while LXX B (συνεπορεύεσθαι) has it "accompany him on his sorties (against the Philistines). Finally, Tg. speaks of the Spirit's beginning to "strengthen him" (לְהַחֲזִיקוֹ) (Conceivably, familiarity with the tradition reflected in this targumic translation inspired Josephus's interpretation of the name "Samson" as meaning "strong" in 5.285; see n. 86).

<sup>82</sup> In *b. Sotah* 10a the content of the divine "blessing" cited in 13:24 is elucidated in terms of God's giving Samson a seminal flow like that of a fast-flowing stream.

<sup>83</sup> This inserted item highlights the woman's obedience to the angel's directives as cited in 5.278.

<sup>84</sup> In 13:24 it is the mother alone who gives Samson his name.

<sup>85</sup> MT שַׁמְשׁוֹן (Eng. Samson); LXX AB Σαμψών.

<sup>86</sup> Judg 13:24 provides no such explanation of the meaning of Samson's name (which is generally understood to derive from the Hebrew word "sun" [שָׁמַשׁ], an understanding is already intimated in *b. Sotah* 10a which avers that Samson was called by the name of the Holy One and proceeds to adduce Ps 84:12, "The Lord is a *sun* and a shield"). On Josephus's (peculiar) interpretation of the name (which has already been prepared by the angel's allusion to the child's being "illustrious for strength [רָוַמְהַן])" in 5.277 and which reechoes throughout his following account of the hero's exploits as its *Leitwort* / *Leitmotif*, see S. Rappaport, *Agada und Exegese bei Flavius Josephus* (Frankfurt am Main: Kauffmann, 1930), xxxii; Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, 465-66 and nn. 11-12; see also n. 81 (where the Tg.'s reference to the Spirit's "strengthening [MT stirring] Samson" in 13:25 is proposed as a possible source of inspiration for Josephus's explanation of the hero's name).

Pseudo-Philo's version (*L.A.B.* 43.1a) of 13:24 reads as follows: "In those days Eluma [see 42.1] conceived and bore a son and called his name Samson, and the Lord was with him." Like 13:24 and against Josephus Pseudo-Philo thus has the mother alone to be the one to name Samson. (In contrast to both other accounts, he [see 42.3] has the angel prescribe the child's name to the mother before its birth.)

historian gives this a wording of his own, likewise omitting the Bible's mention of the divine spirit<sup>87</sup> and its three proper place names<sup>88</sup>: "And the child grew apace<sup>89</sup> and it was plain from the frugality (σωφροσύνης)<sup>90</sup> of his diet (δίαίτων)<sup>91</sup> and his loosely flowing locks<sup>92</sup> that he was a prophet (προφητεύσων)."<sup>93</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Josephus's avoidance of 13:25's allusion to the "Spirit (LXX πνεῦμα) of the Lord's "stirring" Samson (Tg. speaks of "a spirit of power from before the Lord" beginning to "strengthen" him) is in line with his general tendency to omit or reword biblical mentions of the human (and especially) the divine "spirit." On the phenomenon, see E. Best, "The Use and Non-use of Pneuma by Josephus," *NovT* 3 (1959): 318-25; J.R. Levison, "Josephus' Interpretation of the Divine Spirit," *JJS* 47 (1996): 234-55.

<sup>88</sup> In contrast to Josephus's omission to the mention of the Spirit's "stirring Samson" in 13:25 and the place names cited in that verse, talmudic tradition (see *b. Sotah* 9b) expatiates on these items. In the compendium of rabbinic traditions cited in this passage one reads that the spirit's operation on the lad represents the fulfillment of Jacob's announcement in Gen 49:17 that "Dan [i.e. the tribe to which Samson belonged on his father's side; see Judg 13:1] shall be a serpent in the way"; that the "stirring" cited in 13:25 involved the *Shechinah's* ringing like a bell before Samson (this on the basis of the word association drawn between 13:25's verbal form לִבְעִי ["to stir him"]) and the reference to the golden "bell" [פֶּתִיל] worn by the priest in Exod 28:34; and that the sites "Zorah" and "Eshtaol" mentioned at the end of the verbal were two great mountains that Samson "uprooted and ground against each other."

<sup>89</sup> This indication represents Josephus's repositioned rendering of the fourth item comprising 13:24 (see above), i.e. "and the boy grew."

<sup>90</sup> In using this term of the young Samson, Josephus attributes to him one of the four Greek cardinal virtues. On the word and its cognates in Greek literature generally, see Spicq, *Notes II*, 867-74.

<sup>91</sup> This term recurs in Ant. 5.306 where, in introducing the story of Samson's deception and betrayal by Delilah (// Judg 16:4-21), Josephus states "he was already transgressing the laws of his forefathers and debasing his own rule of life (δίαίτων) by the imitation of foreign usages." On the word, see further Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, 472. Samson's (water-only) regime is prescribed for him by the angel in 5.278.

<sup>92</sup> Also this indication (see previous note) harks back to the angel's directives concerning the child in 5.278 where the mother is told "not to cut the lad's locks."

<sup>93</sup> Feldman (*Josephus's Interpretation*, 483) points out that Josephus's ascription of prophetic status to Samson is unparalleled either in the Bible or Jewish tradition elsewhere (In *Num. Rab.* 10.5 prophetic status is attributed to Samson's father; see n. 12). That attribution is, however, in line with Josephus's tendency to go beyond the Bible in his application of the terms "prophet" and "prophecy" to scriptural figures; on the phenomenon, see L.H. Feldman, "Prophets and Prophecy in Josephus," *JTS* 41 (1990): 386-422, 389-91.

Pseudo-Philo has no equivalent to the data of Judg 13:25. To his rendition of 13:24 in 43:1a he attaches (43.1b) a notice that combines a "held-over" element of 13:24 ("and the boy grew") with the following story (Judges 14) of the hero's abortive marriage to a Philistine woman. The sequence reads: "When he [Samson] had grown up and sought to fight against the Philistines, he took for himself a wife from among the Philistines."

## IX. Conclusion

By way of conclusion to this essay, I shall now attempt to summarize my findings regarding its two opening questions. The first of those questions concerned the rewriting techniques applied by Josephus to the data of his *Vorlage in Ant.* 5.275-285 and the distinctiveness of his version of the story of Samson's birth that results from their application.

Among Josephus's rewriting techniques in our passage, we identified, first of all, numerous instances of his additions to or elaborations of the Bible's presentation. Examples include: the transitional phrases at the start and end of 5.275 (compare Judg 13:1); the inserted characterizations of Manoah and his wife (5.276-277a, compare 13:2); the description of the angel (5.277b, compare 13:3); the angel's mention of the divine role in Samson's birth and of the hero's "strength" (5.277c, compare 13:3,5); the visitor's departure (5.278b); the wife's report of the angel's handsomeness and Manoah's emotional response to this (5.279, compare 13:6-7); the woman's requesting permission to fetch her husband (5.280 *in fine*, compare 13:10); Manoah's continued "suspicion" upon his meeting the angel (5.281a, compare 13:11); the angel's declaration about his "needing naught" (5.282a, compare 13:16a) and eventual agreement to remain (5.282b); the additional details concerning Manoah's sacrifice and the angel's ascent (5.283-284a, compare 13:19-20); Manoah's "fear" and his wife's exhorting him to "take heart" (5.284bc, compare 13:21-22); and the woman's obedience to the angel's directives prior to Samson's birth along with the appended interpretation of the hero's name (5.285, compare 13:24).

Conversely, however, Josephus also omits or abbreviates many component of the Judges narrative: the Israelites' defection and the Lord's delivering them into the Philistines' power (13:1 compare

5.275); the reference to "Zorah" as Manoah's hometown in 13:2, elements of the angel's announcement/directives to the woman of 13:3-5 (compare 5.277c-278a) and of the latter's initial report to her husband (13:6-7, compare 5.279); the wife's second report of 13:10b; Manoah's initial inquiry about the angel's identity and the latter's response to this (13:11); Manoah's twofold allusion to his intention of doing something for his visitor, both before (13:15) and after his asking the latter's name (13:18a); the angel's suggestion that Manoah offer a sacrifice to the Lord and the attached notice about Manoah's not knowing that his visitor was an angel (13:16); the angel's counter-question to Manoah's asking his name (13:18b); the cessation of the angel's visits and Manoah's realization concerning his identity (13:21); the woman's catalogue of the benefits God had bestowed on the couple (13:23, compare 5.284 in fine); the Lord's "blessing" of Samson (13:24, compare 5.285a); and the mention of the "Spirit of the Lord" and the three proper place names in 13:25 (compare 5.285b).

Josephus also, several times, rearranges the sequence of the Judges account. Thus, his reference to the "suburb" to which the couple repairs in 5.276 and his specification that the wife was "alone" for the angel's first appearance to her (5.277b) both seem to draw on subsequent elements of the biblical presentation; see nn. 16,21. Similarly, the historian reproduces those elements of the angel's words to the woman of 13:4-6 that he does utilize in 5.277c-278a in a different order, i.e. 13:3b, 5b $\beta$ , 5a $\beta$ ,4, while in his version of the wife's report of 13:6-7 in 5.279 he cites her (much abbreviated) quotation of the angel's words (13:7) before her description of the visitor (13:6).

Finally, Josephus modifies and adapts the source story in still other ways. On the terminological level he avoids using Judges' title "the Lord" for the Deity (see n. 24) and its mention of the divine "Spirit" (see n. 87). Stylistically, he regularly substitutes indirect for

the Bible's direct discourses when citing characters' words (see n. 26). Josephus's modifications also, however, extend to the content of the Judges narrative. The Philistines subjugate Israel without anything being said of God's role in this (compare 5.275 and 13:1). It is Samson himself rather than his mother who is refrain from alcoholic drinks (compare 5.278a and 13:4). The woman's report follows her husband's "arrival" rather than her "coming" to him (compare 5.279a and 13:6). She, not he, prays that the angel might reappear and does this with a different end in view (compare 5.280a and 13:8). Whereas the biblical wife simply runs off to husband once the angel reappears (13:10a), her Josephan counterpart first asks (and receives) the visitor's consent to her fetching him (5.280c). The historian supplies a new content for the exchange between Manoah and the angel of 13:12-13 in 5.281ab (see nn. 56,57). Manoah's placement of the sacrificial elements comes in response to the angel's instructions (5.283b) rather than on his own initiative (so 13:19; see n. 67). The drastic language used by Manoah about the couple's certain "death" in 13:22 and the wife's allusion to the Lord's "killing" them in 13:23 is markedly toned down by Josephus in 5.284bc (see n. 79). Both husband and wife name their son (5.285a), rather than the latter alone doing this as she does in 13:24. And lastly, Josephus's concluding allusion to Samson's prophetic status betoken by the "frugality of his diet and his loosely flowing locks" in 5.285b takes the place of the notice of 13:25 about the Spirit's "beginning to stir him in Mahanehdan, between Zorah and Eshtaol."

What now is distinctive about Josephus's portrayal of Samson's birth story, given his application of the above four categories of rewriting techniques<sup>94</sup> to the data of Judges 13? Overall, the historian

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<sup>94</sup> As will have become clear over the course of my discussion, Josephus's various rewriting techniques in 5.275-285 are intimately interconnected. Thus, e.g., his omission of the



offers a streamlined retelling of the biblical account in which its verbal repetitions (compare, e.g., the angel's words to the woman of 13:4-6 and the latter's report of these in 13:7), narrative *longueurs* (see, e.g., the protracted interaction between Manoah and the angel in 13:11-20), and place names that would have been unfamiliar to his Gentile target audience<sup>95</sup> ("Zorah" in 13:2; "Mahanehdan," "Zorah" and "Eshtaol" in 13:25) are either eliminated or reduced. On the other hand, Josephus also amplifies the source presentation in a variety of ways and with a range of purposes/effects. The transitional formulations introduced by him at the start and end of 5.275 (compare 13:1) smooth the connection with what precedes and follows, respectively. In 5.278b he supplies a closure notice for the (first) encounter between the angel and the wife that one might expect to find at the end of the unit 13:3-5, but does not; see also his interjected remark (5.282b) that the angel did agree to remain to be entertained by Manoah after his initial refusal to do so as reported in 5.282a (// 13:16aá). Overall, Josephus's rewriting goes beyond the biblical narration in its inserted indications concerning characters' social status (see 5.276a: Manoah); appearance (see 5.276a: the wife; 5.277a: the angel); and psychology (see 5.276bc [Manoah's distress over his childlessness, infatuation with and jealousy towards his wife]; 5.279 [the activation of his jealousy and suspicion by the wife's report]; 5.281a [his continued "suspicion" upon meeting the angel]; 5.284bc Manoah's "fear" of the untoward consequences of his vision of God and the wife's appeal that

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notice on the Lord's handing the Israelites over to Philistine domination of 13:1 in 5.275 goes together with a modification of the biblical presentation there according to which the Philistines "conquered the Israelites" by their own power.

<sup>95</sup> On cultivated Gentiles as Josephus's primary intended audience in the *Antiquities*, see Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, 46-49.

he be "of good cheer"]<sup>96</sup> Overall, too, Samson's birth story as retold by Josephus takes on a highly eroticized character that it lacks in the Bible itself (see nn. 25,44).<sup>97</sup> His reworkings of the source notices on the woman's running off to get her husband (13:10a) and Manoah's arranging the sacrificial elements on his own initiative (13:20) in 5.280c and 5.283, respectively bespeak a concern for proper procedures and etiquette in the relationship between inferiors and superiors that comes to expression often elsewhere in his work. Whereas in many cases the *Antiquities* does evidence a "detheologizing" tendency in its rewriting of the biblical record,<sup>98</sup> this tendency is not clearly operative in 5.275-285 itself where Josephus's omissions of source references to the Deity (see, e.g., the mention of God's role in handing the Israelites into the power in 13:1 that is eliminated in 5.275 and his non-reproduction of the "blessing notice" of 13:24 in 5.285a) are counterbalanced by a series of interjected allusions to divine involvement that the Bible itself lacks (see 5.277c, 278a, 278b). Theologically, as well, Josephus's version evidences a concern to downplay the "negative" features in Judges' references to the Deity; see the just-cited omission of the allusion (13:1) to God's handing his own people over to Philistine oppression in 5.275 and the toning down of the language of "death" and "killing" that Manoah and his wife use in relation to God in 13:22-23 in 5.284bc. In the same line, Josephus's general tendency to downplay and denigrate biblical women which

<sup>96</sup> On such enhanced "psychologizing" as a hallmark of Josephus's retelling of biblical history, see Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, 197-204.

<sup>97</sup> Such embellishment of the romantic/erotic aspect of biblical history is characteristic of Josephus's retelling of that history throughout *Antiquities* 1-11; see Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, 185-88.

<sup>98</sup> On this feature of Josephus's retelling of biblical history, see Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, 205-9.

figures throughout the *Antiquities*<sup>99</sup> is not particularly in evidence in 5.275-285 where, e.g., he "transfers" Manoah's prayer of 13:8 to the wife (see 5.280a), assigns her a role in the sacrifice (5.283) of which 13:20 says nothing, and highlights her obedience to the angel's instructions prior to Samson's birth (compare 5.285a and 13:24). As for Samson himself, the ultimate protagonist of Judges 13, Josephus accentuates his stature in several particulars: he (rather his mother) is to observe the prohibition of drinking alcohol (compare 13:4 and 5.278a); an impressive explanation of his name as meaning "strength" is supplied (compare 13:24 and 5.285a), and, in a way unparalleled elsewhere in Jewish tradition both biblical and extra-biblical, the exalted status of "prophet" is awarded to him (compare 13:25 and 5.285b; cf. n. 93). Finally, as we noted in several instances, Josephus enriches his rendition of Judges 13 with elements inspired by other contexts of the Bible (and/or his versions of these). So, for example, his embellished account (5.283) of Manoah's sacrificial preparations in comparison with that of 13:20 seems to stand under the influence of the story of Abraham's entertainment of his angelic visitors in Genesis 18:6-7// *Ant.* 1.197 (see n. 69), while his interjected mention of the angel's touching the meat with his staff represents a re-application of a feature that figures in the Gideon-angel interaction recorded in Judges 6:21 (see n. 71). By means of this procedure Josephus calls readers' attention to the analogies between the different moments of biblical history, thereby inviting them to recognize the unity of that history.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>99</sup> On the phenomenon, see Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, 188-92.

<sup>100</sup> For further discussion of the distinctive features of 5.275-285 vis-à-vis Judges 13, see Houtman, "Die Macht des Nacherzählers," 37-39.

My second opening question asked about Josephus's handling of the Judges 13 story in comparison with its treatment by Pseudo-Philo (*L.A.B.* 41.3-43.1) and the rabbinic-midrashic tradition generally. With his fellow Jewish historian (and likely approximate contemporary) Pseudo-Philo, Josephus, as we have noted, shares a number of communalities in his rewriting of the biblical narrative. In general, both authors make much more of the "marital psychology" of Manoah and his wife than does Judges 13 itself. They likewise agree in several more particular features of their respective adaptations of/deviations from the source account. Both, e.g., apply the angelic prohibition of alcohol to Samson himself rather than his mother (5.278a and 42.3f; compare 13:4) and both add a mention the angel's departure following his first appearance to the woman (see 5.278b and 42.3 *in fine*). Strikingly too, they each, seemingly independently, embellish the sacrifice scene of 13:20 with a feature (the angel touching the offerings with his staff) inspired by a separate biblical context, i.e. Judges 6:21 (see nn. 71,75). Also, on the "negative" side, neither writer reproduces the question and answer sequence concerning the angel's identity of 13:11, the remark about the cessation of the angel's appearances and Manoah's realization of his identity of 13:21, and the notice on the Spirit's "stirring" Samson of 13:25.<sup>101</sup> The foregoing parallelisms between their versions, must, however, be balanced against the numerous and marked differences in their respective renditions of Judges 13, of which I recall only a sample here: In contrast to Josephus (5.275), Pseudo-Philo (41.3) does follow 13:1 in citing both

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<sup>101</sup> The above parallels are part of a whole series of points of contact between Josephus and Pseudo-Philo in their respective retellings of biblical history; for a listing of these, see L.H. Feldman, "Prolegomenon," in M.R. James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo* (New York: Ktav, 1971 [rpt., original 1917]), lviii-lx.

Israel's defection and the Lord's handing the people over to Philistine domination. Whereas in both the Bible and Josephus the wife and the angel remain nameless, Pseudo-Philo supplies a name for each, i.e. "Eluma" (42.1b) and "Fadahel" (42.10d), respectively. Likewise the names of Manoah's ancestors stretching back to Dan cited in 42.1a have no counterpart in Josephus (or the Bible); conversely Pseudo-Philo lacks a parallel to Josephus's ("unbiblical") notices on Manoah's societal position (5.276a), his wife's beauty (5.276b) and the angel's handsomeness (5.277a). The quarrel between Manoah and his wife that occupies so large a place in Pseudo-Philo's presentation is absent from both the Josephan and the biblical narratives (although it is cited in rabbinic-midrashic tradition; see n. 19). Conversely, the "eroticism" that characterizes Josephus's version is much less in evidence in Pseudo-Philo's rendering (and in Judges 13 itself). In contrast to both the Bible and Josephus, Pseudo-Philo (42.3d) has the angel prescribe the name to be given the child, while he follows (43.1a) the former (see 13:24) contra the latter (see 5.285a) in representing the mother the sole namer of her son. Pseudo-Philo likewise goes together (42.5) with the Bible (see 13:8) against Josephus (see 5.280a) in making the husband the one who prays for the angel's return, even as neither the Bible or Pseudo-Philo mention the prayer that Josephus (5.276c) attributes to Manoah prior to the angel's first appearance. Whereas Josephus replaces the woman's *sua sponte* leaving of the angel to fetch her husband as told in 13:10a with mention of her asking the angel's leave to summon her husband (5.280c), in Pseudo-Philo (42.6c) it is the angel himself who instructs the woman to call her husband. The exchanges between the angel and Manoah reported in 42.7-8 differ markedly from those cited in either 13:12-18 or 5.281-582 (see nn. 59, 63). Unlike Josephus, Pseudo-Philo (42.10a) does have an equivalent to the notice of 13:20b $\beta$  on the prostration of the couple in response to the angel's ascent, but differs from both in attributing (42.10b)

the assertion about the fatal consequences of their *visio Dei*, not to Manoah alone (so 13:22 and 5.284b), but rather to the two of them. Finally, Josephus's attached remark on the meaning of Samson's name (i.e. "strong") in 5.285a is unparalleled in the "naming notices" of either 13:24 or 43.1a.<sup>102</sup>

As for the similarities and differences between Josephus and rabbinic-midrashic tradition in their respective treatments of Judges 13 that my second question also asked about, the latter clearly outweigh the former-- doing so to a much greater extent than is the case with Josephus and Pseudo-Philo's renditions of the biblical chapter. Thus whereas both historians offer (more or less) complete, while likewise reworded, *Nacherzählungen* of the scriptural story, in rabbinic-midrashic tradition features a series of comments on particular verses of Judges 13 which it cites verbatim. That tradition likewise goes far beyond either Josephus or Pseudo-Philo in its effort to fill "gaps" left by the biblical account (e.g., why did the woman not mention the angel's declaration about her being sterile in her report to her husband and inform him that Samson would be a Nazirite "till the day of his death" when the angel had made no such announcement [see 13:7 and cf. n. 44]) and its often "fantastic" adducing of other biblical passages to elucidate what is recorded in Judges 13 (see, e.g., the midrashic embellishments of 13:25 cited in n. 86). Nor does, e.g., the wider tradition's naming of Manoah's wife and mention of the couple's quarrel over the responsibility for their childlessness (see n. 13), its assertion about Manoah's being an "ignoramus" (see n. 12),

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<sup>102</sup> Like the previously mentioned parallels between Josephus and Pseudo-Philo's versions of Judges 13, so also the differences between these are part of a whole series of divergences between them in their overall retellings of biblical history, on which see Feldman, "Prolegomenon," lxi-lxvi.

and its claim that God's "blessing" of Samson (see 13:24) represents an allusion to the hero's extraordinary seminal flow (see n. 82) find a parallel in Josephus's presentation. On the other hand, we did note occasional (minor) points of contact between distinctive features of Josephus's retelling of the Judges story and the rabbinic-midrashic commentary on this: both, e.g., address the question of why the angel declines the meal offered him by Manoah in 13:16a (see n. 63) and both interpret Manoah's proposed "honoring" of the angel (13:17) in terms of the "present" he wishes to give him (see n. 69).

In sum then, Josephus's account of Samson's birth represents a distinctive telling of that episode *vis-à-vis* both its biblical *Vorlage* and other early Jewish treatments of this -- a telling that well repays the close attention I have tried to give it in this essay.

## ABSTRACT

This article offers a detailed comparative study of Josephus's version (*Ant.* 5.275-285) of Samson's birth in relation both to its biblical *Vorlage* (Judg 13) and the treatment of this by Pseudo-Philo (*L.A.B.* 41.3-43.1) and rabbinic-midrashic tradition. In comparison with Judges 13, Josephus, e.g., "streamlines" its presentation, while also accentuating the story's psychological and erotic dimensions. With Pseudo-Philo Josephus has in common his interjected reminiscence of Judges 6:21 (the angel's touching Gideon's sacrifice with his staff-tip), while he diverges from his fellow historian in, e.g., leaving both Manoah's wife and the angelic visitor nameless and not mentioning the quarrel between the couple as to which of them is responsible for their childlessness that figures so prominently in the Pseudo-Philonian account. Finally, Josephus has little in common, either in form or content, with the peculiarities of the rabbinic-midrashic tradition's handling of the Judges story (although he does share its elucidation of Manoah's declaration about wishing to "honor" the angel [Judg 13:17] in terms of his intention of giving him a "present").

## 撮 要

作者就史學家約瑟夫對參孫出生之記述 (*Ant.* 5.275-285)，詳細比較相關之聖經文本 (參士十三)，以及偽斐羅 (*L.A.B.* 41.3-43.1) 與猶太拉比經學傳統對有關記述的處理手法。比較士師記十三章時，約瑟夫言簡意賅地鋪陳故事，同時凸顯相關故事的心理與肉慾層面。而就偽斐羅的處理手法，約瑟夫同樣插入對士師記六章二十一節所載事件 (耶和華的使者伸杖觸及基甸所獻的食物) 的憶述；但另一方面，約瑟夫也沒有提說瑪挪亞妻子與來訪的耶和華使者的名字，也不交代瑪挪亞夫婦爭論沒有後嗣責任誰屬的問題。而偽斐羅的記述卻在這方面大加着墨。最後，儘管約瑟夫也同樣闡明瑪挪亞透過獻上「禮物」，而向耶和華的使者「表達敬意」的立心 (參士十三17)，可是，無論在形式與內容上，約瑟夫對參孫出生的記述，與猶太拉比經學傳統處理士師記故事之手法特色，雷同之處卻微乎其微。