

DAVID'S SECOND SPARING OF SAUL ACCORDING TO JOSEPHUS

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Summary

This article offers a detailed comparison of Josephus' version, in Antiquities 6:310-319a, of the story of David's second sparing of Saul in relation to its Biblical source, 1 Samuel 26 (as represented by the MT, the Qumran scroll 4QSam^a, the Septuagint, the Vetus Latina, and the Targum). Questions addressed include: the Biblical text-form(s) used by Josephus, the distinctive features of his presentation of the episode, and the messages this may have been intended to convey to his Gentile and Jewish readers. It is hoped that the methodology of this study might serve as a paradigm for the study of other first-century figures whose use of the Old Testament is an important theological feature: namely, Philo and the early Christians writers of the New Testament.

1 Samuel 26 relates a poignant moment in the tortured interactions between Saul and David, *i.e.* the second sparing of the former's life by the latter and the final encounter between the pair prior to Saul's death as described in 1 Samuel 31.¹ In this essay I propose to investigate Josephus' retelling of the episode in his *Antiquitates Judaicae* (hereafter *Ant.*) 6.310-318(319a).² My investigation will

¹David's earlier, first sparing of Saul is related in 1 Samuel 24. On 1 Samuel 26 in relation to the two immediately preceding chapters, see R.P. Gordon, 'David's Rise and Saul's Demise: Narrative Analogy in 1 Samuel 24-26', *TynB* 32 (1980) 37-64.

²For the text and translation of Josephus' works, I use H.St.J. Thackeray *et al.* (eds.), *Josephus* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1926-1965 [*Ant.* 6.310-319a is found in Vol. V, ed. R. Marcus, 320-27]). I have likewise consulted the text and apparatus of 6.310-319a in B. Niese, *Flavii Iosephi Opera*, II (Berlin: Weidmann, ²1955). On Josephus' overall treatment of the two main characters of 1 Samuel 26, see L.H. Feldman, 'Josephus' Portrait of Saul', *HUCA* 53 (1982) 45-99; *idem*, 'Josephus' Portrait of David', *HUCA* 60 (1989) 129-174.

take the form of a detailed comparison of Josephus' version with its Biblical source as represented by the following major witnesses: MT (BHS), 4QSam^a,³ Codex Vaticanus (hereafter B),⁴ and the Lucianic (hereafter L) or Antiochene manuscripts⁵ of the LXX, the *Vetus Latina* (hereafter *VL*),⁶ and Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets (hereafter TJ).⁷ By means of this comparison, I hope to find answers to such overarching questions as: Which text-form(s) of 1 Samuel 26 did Josephus employ? What rewriting techniques did he apply to the data of his source and what distinctive features to his version did these generate? Finally, what influence did Josephus' awareness of the intended audience(s) for his *Ant.* (i.e. [Roman] Gentiles and fellow Jews) have upon his reworking of the Biblical story, and what message might his version be intended to convey to those audiences? For comparison, I divide up the parallel material to be studied into four units as follows: 1) contact established; 2) Saul Spared; 3) the David-Abner Exchange; and 4) the Saul-David Exchange.

Contact Established

The opening segment of 1 Samuel 26 (26:1-5 // *Ant.* 6.310-312a), relates the circumstances whereby David was placed in a position to eliminate his persecutor Saul. This turn of events is set in motion

³This Qumran MS preserves portions of 1 Sam. 26:10-12, 21, 23. For its readings, see E.C. Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus* (HSM 19; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1978) 143, 170-71; P.K. McCarter, *1 Samuel* (AB 8; New York: Doubleday, 1980) 405-407.

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

⁵For 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).

⁶The *VL* text of 1 Samuel 26 is preserved by Lucifer Calaritanus in his 'De Athanasio' (I, xv). For this, I use G.F. Diercks (ed.), *Luciferi Calaritani Opera quae supersunt* (CC SL, 8; Turnhout: Brepols, 1978) 27-29.

⁷I use the text of TJ edited by A. Sperber, *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, DE: Glazier, 1989).

when the 'Ziphites' report David's whereabouts to Saul (26:1). Josephus' version (6.310a) modifies in a whole series of respects: 'After this⁸ certain of the Ziphites came⁹ and informed Saul¹⁰ that David was *again*¹¹ in their country¹² *and that they could catch him, if Saul would lend them aid.*'¹³

⁸*I.e.* the interlude (1 Samuel 25 // *Ant.* 6.295-308), featuring David's dealings with the couple Nabal and Abigail, within the account of Saul's pursuit of David which precedes and follows. On Josephus' version of 1 Samuel 25, see C.T. Begg, 'The Abigail Story (1 Samuel 25) according to Josephus', *Estudios Biblicos* 54 (1996) 5-34. In 1 Sam. 26:1 itself, the transition to what follows is made by means of a simple 'and.'

⁹Like MT, Josephus has no equivalent to the BL plus of 25:1a specifying that the Ziphites came to Saul ἐκ τῆς ἀρχιμώδου. (This item picks up the identical plus found in BL 1 Sam. 23:19 describing the Ziphites' earlier report to Saul about David's whereabouts; there too MT and Josephus [see 6.277] lack an equivalent.)

¹⁰Josephus leaves aside the indication of 26:1 that the Ziphites came to Saul 'at Gibeah' (MT; BL 'translates' with εἰς τὸν βουνόν). This 'omission' has a counterpart in Josephus' rendering of 1 Sam. 23:19 in *Ant.* 6.277 where he passes over the same source specification as to where the Ziphites make their first report to Saul. His procedure in both instances is in line with his general tendency to dispense with minor Biblical place names that would have been both unfamiliar and strange-sounding to Gentile readers. See n. 12.

¹¹With this inserted term (I italicize such items of Josephus' presentation which lack a counterpart in the source, as well as Biblical elements without a parallel in *Ant.*), Josephus introduces an explicit *Rückverweis* to the earlier episode of the Ziphites' informing Saul about David's whereabouts (1 Sam. 23:19 // *Ant.* 6.277). Such connective indications serve to unify the various parts of *Ant.*.

¹²This generalizing phrase replaces the geographical details of the Ziphites' report as cited in 26:1b: 'Is not David [BL: 'Behold David'] hiding himself [BL adds 'with us', a reminiscence of the Ziphites' words to Saul in 23:19] on the hill of Hachilah [= L: τῶν Ἐχελά; compare B: τῶν Χελμύθ), which is on the east of Jeshimon?' (The wording of the Ziphites' report here is very similar to their earlier one as cited in 23:19, for whose three place names the Josephan parallel (*i.e.* 6.277) likewise substitutes a generalizing formula, *i.e.* 'they reported to Saul that David was sojourning among them'; see n. 10.)

¹³The above conclusion to the Ziphites' report has no counterpart in their word as cited in 26:1b which is limited to a statement about David's current whereabouts. The Josephan 'appendix' serves to motivate Saul's subsequent initiative as described in 26:2.

Note that in his rendition of the Ziphites report of 26:1b, Josephus, as frequently elsewhere in his Biblical paraphrase, transposes direct into indirect discourse. See C.T. Begg, *Josephus' Account of the Early Divided Monarchy* (*AJ* 8,212-420) (BETL 108; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1993) 12-13, n. 38.

Saul's reaction to the Ziphites' report comes in 26:2-3a: With 3000 men, the king sets off for 'the wilderness of Ziph' (so MT and B; L: 'the wilderness, the dry country'), eventually camping at the 'hill' spoken of in 26:1b. Josephus (6.310b) once again reduces the source's geographical detail, while also supplying his own localisation for Saul's camp-site: 'So with three thousand soldiers (ὀπλιτῶν, 26:2; 'chosen men [BL: ἀνδρῶν] of Israel')¹⁴ he marched against him¹⁵ and *on the approach of night* (νυκτὸς ἐπελθούσης),¹⁶ encamped at a place called Sikella (Σικέλλα).'¹⁷

1 Samuel 26:3b-4 recounts David's initial response to Saul's moves: his learning of Saul's advance, his dispatch of 'spies', and his 'knowing' of the king's coming. Here too, Josephus cuts down on source geographical allusions. On the other hand, he also inserts a notice on the mission given the spies by David in his rendition

¹⁴This term is the same as that used by Josephus in 6.283 (// 1 Sam. 24:2) where he relates Saul's earlier move against David with 3000 'soldiers'. We will be noting a whole series of terminological affinities between Josephus' renditions of 1 Samuel 26 and 24, whereby he underscores the parallelism between these two episodes featuring David's sparing of Saul's life.

¹⁵The above notice leaves aside the double reference in 26:2 to the 'wilderness of Ziph' (so MT, B; see above) as the region to which Saul and his troops advance.

¹⁶Josephus seems to have anticipated this temporal indication from 26:7aa: 'David and Abishai went to the (*i.e.* Saul's) army by night (BL: τὴν νύκτα)'. His use of the indication already at this point provides a motivation for Saul's now suspending his pursuit of David (26:2) in order to make camp (so 26:3).

¹⁷According to 26:3 Saul's camp-site was rather 'the hill of Hachilah (BL: τοῦ [B; L: τῶ] Ἐχελά) which is beside the road on the east of Jeshimon'. Josephus apparently anticipates his alternative localization from the L reading in 26:4 where David is said to learn that Saul had come 'to Sekelag (Σεκελάγ)'; see further below. Thereby, Josephus 'resolves' the *prima facie* discrepancy in L 26:3a and 4—whose text he would seem to be following here—as to where Saul had stationed himself.

(6.311a) which reads: ‘David, hearing (ἀκούσας) that Saul was coming against him,¹⁸ sent out (πέμψας) spies (κατασκόπους = BL 26:4a) *with orders to report what part of the country Saul had now reached*;¹⁹ and when they told (φρασάντων) him²⁰ that he was passing the night (διανυκτερεύειν *cf.* νυκτὸς ἐπελθούσης) at Sikella...’²¹

The narration of David’s counter-measures continues in 26:5, where he proceeds to Saul’s camp and finds the king, his general Abner, and troops all fast asleep. Josephus’ parallel introduces mention of David’s two companions who, in the source, surface abruptly (26:6) only after David has reconnoitred the camp, seemingly alone, in 26:5.²² It likewise compresses the source’s rather circumstantial indications concerning sleeping arrangements in the camp. His rendition (6.311b-312a) thus runs: ‘he set out (παραγίνεται),²³ without the knowledge (διαλαθών) of his men,²⁴

¹⁸Compare the more repetitious wording of 26:3b: ‘*But David remained in the wilderness; and when he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness....*’.

¹⁹With this inserted ‘instruction’ compare Josephus’ ‘appendix’ to the Ziphites’ report of 26:1b in 6.310a.

²⁰This phrase substitutes for the opening words of 26:4b: ‘and David knew’. It makes more explicit the connection between the spies’ mission (26:4a) and David’s own ‘knowledge’ (26:4b); the spies inform him of what they had found out in accordance with his directive to him.

²¹This notice on what David learns echoes the (anticipated) reference in 6.310b to Saul’s encamping ‘at a place called Sikella’ (see n. 17). Its wording stands closest to that of L 26:4b: ‘and he (David) knew that Saul had come *after him* to Sekelag (εἰς Σεκελάγ; *cf.* VL: *in Siclet*)’. Compare MT: ‘and he knew of a certainty (אֶל-נִכּוֹן; similarly TJ: ‘in truth’, בְּקִשׁוּט) that Saul had come’; and B: ‘and he knew that Saul had come prepared out of Keila (ἐκ Κεειλά).’ On the problem of the divergent readings in 26:4b, see R. Thornhill, ‘A Note on אֶל-נִכּוֹן, 1 SAM. XXVI 4’, *VT* 14 (1964) 462-66, who maintains that the place names of BL (and Josephus), as well as the Hebrew phrase of his title, all represent corruptions of an original הַכִּילָה (ה) אֶל = Greek εἰς Ἐχελ(α)τ, *i.e.* the ‘hill’ mentioned in 26:1, 3 (466)

²²With this anticipation of a subsequent source item, compare those involving the chronological indication and the site of Saul’s camp of 6.310b (see nn. 16, 17).

²³Note the historic present, a form often introduced by Josephus into his Biblical paraphrase in *Ant.*; see Begg, *Josephus’ Account*, 10-11, n. 32. Note too that this finite verb is a part of a hypotactic construction involving a whole series of dependent participles (ἀκούσας...πέμψας...διαλαθών). Throughout *Ant.*, Josephus regularly introduces such hypotaxis for the Bible’s parataxis (*cf.*, *e.g.*, 26:3bb-5aa : ‘and David saw...and he sent...and he knew...and David rose up and he went’).

taking with him Abisai (Ἀβισαΐον; MT 25:6: Abishai; BL: Ἀβεσσά), son of *his sister* Saruia (Σαρουΐας = BL),²⁵ and Abimelech (Ἀβιμέλεχον)²⁶ the Hittite (χεταΐον; BL: Χεταΐον).²⁷ Saul was sleeping (κοιωμένου) with his soldiers (ὀπλιτῶν; see 6.310b) and their commander (στρατηγοῦ) Abenner (Ἀβεννήρου)²⁸ lying (κειμένων) in a circle around him (περὶ αὐτοῦ ἐν κύκλῳ).²⁹

Saul Spared

The central unit within 1 Samuel 26 comprises verses 6-12 (// 6.312b-313) which describe David's sparing of the sleeping king. The unit opens with David asking Ahimelech/Abimelech and Abishai which of them will accompany him into Saul's camp (26:6a) and the latter's volunteering to do so (26:6b). Josephus, who has anticipated mention of David's companions in his description of David setting out

²⁴This phrase likely reflects the plus, qualifying David's 'setting out' in BL 26:5aa, *i.e.* λάθρα (B)/ λαθραίως (L); *cf.* VL: *occulte*.

²⁵Compare 26:7: '(Abishai) the son of Zeruah *the brother of Joab*.' Josephus derives his additional datum about 'Zeruah', the mother of Abishai and Joab, being David's 'sister' from 1 Chr. 2:16.

²⁶This is the reading of the name adopted by both Niese and Marcus; it corresponds to the Ἀβειμέλεχ of B 26:7. The codices MSP (and the Latin translation) of *Ant.* have rather Ἀχιμέλεχον agreeing with the name as read by MT and L. *Cf.* VL: 'Amalec'.

²⁷Josephus reverses in the above the order in which David's two companions are mentioned in 26:7. He does so likely in view of the greater importance of Abishai, David's nephew, who alone figures in the continuation of the narrative (like the Bible Josephus has nothing to say concerning Ahimelech/Abimelech the Hittite beyond the fact of his accompanying David to the camp).

²⁸Josephus previously introduced 'Abenar', David's 'general', in 6.129 (// 1 Sam. 14:50).

²⁹Compare the more expansive, repetitive wording of 26:5abb 'and David saw the place where Saul lay (MT; L: [ἐκάθευδε], > B), with Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army (BL: ἀρχιστράτηγος); Saul was lying (BL: ἐκάθευδεν) within the encampment (RSV; MT: חַיִּטָּיִם; BL: ἐν λαμπήνῃ, 'in a chariot'; VL: *in stragulis praeclaris*), while the army (BL: ὁ λαός) was encamped around him (BL: παρεμβεβληκῶς κύκλῳ αὐτοῦ)'.

for the camp (see above), leaves this sequence aside.³⁰ Instead, he proceeds (6.312b) immediately to the following moment of the intruders' entry into the camp: 'David penetrated (εἰσελθών) to the king's camp'.³¹ In next relating what transpired there, Josephus includes a statement on the self-restraint displayed by David *vis-à-vis* his persecutor, a statement prefixed to the 'quotation' in 26:8 of Abishai's proposal about what should be done at this moment: '*yet he would not himself slay (ἀναιρεῖ)*³² *Saul,*³³ *whose sleeping-place he recognised from the spear (δόρατος) fixed (παρεπεπήγει) (in the ground) at his side.*'³⁴

1 Samuel 26:8-9 features Abishai's request that, taking advantage of their God-given opportunity (26:8a), he be allowed to run Saul through with the spear (26:8b), along with David's prohibition of this (26:9a) and its motivation (26:9b), invoking the inviolability of the 'Lord's anointed'. Josephus drastically abridges this whole sequence. His reason for doing so would seem to be a concern not to subject readers to a repetition here of the very similar proposition made to David and his negative response shortly before, *i.e.* in the 'cave story' of 1 Samuel 24, as in 24:5 and 24:7 in particular (*// Ant.* 6.284). The Josephan substitute for the source's

³⁰In so doing he eliminates a range of puzzlements posed by the source's presentation: its seemingly 'too late' mention of the pair accompanying David (see above), as well as the questions of why Abishai volunteers while Ahimelech does not and of what then became of the latter figure.

³¹Compare 26:7aa 'So David *and Abishai* went (B: εἰσπορεύεται; L: εἰσπορεύονται) to the army by night (see 6.310a)'. Josephus will mention Abishai's presence in the camp with David in what follows, thereby presupposing the notices of 26:7aa concerning the former's entry. He leaves aside the references in 26:7abbb to the sleeping arrangements in the camp which largely duplicate what has already been described in 26:5abb.

³²Note the historic present.

³³With the above insertion, Josephus accentuates the magnanimity of David who makes no personal use of the opportunity given him to rid himself of his persecutor.

³⁴The above formulation incorporates the allusion in 26:7ba to Saul's 'spear (BL: δόρυ) struck (B: ἐνεπεπγός; L: ἐμπεπηγός) *in the ground* at his head'. Josephus' elaboration of the item provides a narrative function for the erected spear just as it also offers an explanation as to how the intruders were able to single out Saul within the mass of sleeping bodies.

reminiscence of that previous exchange reads as follows: ‘nor would he allow Abisai,³⁵ who wished to kill (φονεῦσαι)³⁶ him *and darted forward* (ὠρμηκότα) *with that intent*,³⁷ to do so.’

David amplifies his initial reply to Abishai (26:9) in 26:10-11a with further statements about who is (26:10) and is not (26:11a) the proper requiter of Saul. Josephus reverses the sequence of these two components of David’s address, likewise recasting this in indirect address and adding a narrative conclusion concerning its affect upon Abishai. His parallel to 26:10-11a thus goes: ‘He objected that it was monstrous (δεινόν) to slay (ἀποκτεῖναι) the king elected of God (τὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χειροτονημένον βασιλέα),³⁸ *even if he was a wicked man* (πονηρός),³⁹ saying that from Him *who had given him*

³⁵This narrative notice takes the place of the quotation of 26:9a: ‘But David said to Abishai, “Do not destroy (MT, L; B: μή ταπεινώσης) him (Saul)”’. From 26:9 Josephus leaves aside the ‘motivation’ of 26:9b (‘for who can put forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed and be guiltless?’), whose content seems to duplicate David’s subsequent statement in 26:11a (‘The Lord forbid that I should put forth my hand against the Lord’s anointed’).

³⁶This verb echoes the declaration Josephus attributes to David in 6.284 (// 1 Sam. 24:7): ‘It is not right to murder (φονεύειν) one’s own master’. The above notice condenses to its core content Abishai’s word as cited in 26:8: ‘God has given your enemy into you hand this day; now therefore let me pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear, and I will not strike him twice.’

³⁷This notice has no equivalent in 26:8 where Abishai’s initiative is limited to the words he addresses to David. The insertion adds drama to the proceedings (and highlights the danger facing the unsuspecting Saul).

³⁸Variations of this construction with God as subject of the verb χειροτονέω and the accusative βασιλέα occur in *Ant.* 6.54 (of Saul as here); 7.27, 53; 9.108. The above statement is Josephus’ anticipated version of David’s affirmation as cited in 26:11a: ‘The Lord forbid that I should put forth my hand against the Lord’s anointed (BL: χριστὸν Κυρίου)’. In reformulating this source word, Josephus avoids, as regularly elsewhere in his Biblical paraphrase, three of its component features, *i.e.* the opening oath formula (this likely out of a concern to preclude any possible abuse of the divine name), the ‘un-Greek’ use of ‘the Lord’ as a divine title (see Begg, *Josephus’ Account*, 45, n. 218), and the term ‘Messiah’ with its provocative connotations for potential Roman readers given recent Jewish attempts to regain political independence (on the point, see Feldman, ‘David’, 131, 173-74).

³⁹This implied characterization of Saul echoes the (Biblically un-paralleled) statement concerning the king which Josephus attributes to David in 6.284 (compare 24:7): ‘And even though he treats me ill (πονηρός), yet I must not do the same to him.’ Both there and here in 6.312, Josephus goes beyond the Bible in highlighting the depravity of Saul as a foil to the forbearance of his victim David.

the sovereignty (δόντος τὴν ἀρχήν)⁴⁰ punishment (δίκην) would come *in due time*.⁴¹; *and so he stayed Abishai from his purpose* (ὀρμῆς).⁴²

David's address to Abishai (26:9-11) ends up in 26:11b with his directing the latter to 'take' Saul's spear and water jar as the two of them now depart. This injunction involves the difficulty that in 26:12aa it is David himself who 'takes' the objects in question. Faced with the discrepancy, Josephus (6.313) elects to leave aside David's closing word and to move immediately to his parallel to 26:12aa: 'However, in token (σύμβολον) that he might have slain (κτεῖναι, cf. ἀποκτεῖναι, 6.312) and yet had refrained (ἀποσχέσθαι),⁴³ he took (λαβών; BL: ἔλαβεν) the (literally his, αὐτοῦ) spear⁴⁴ and the flask

⁴⁰This phrase, another alternative for the source's 'anointed of the Lord', echoes David's previous reference to Saul as 'the king elected of God' (see n. 38). In thus insisting on God's past 'making' of Saul, Josephus' David sets up his subsequent affirmation, *i.e.* it is for God (alone) to 'unmake' him; see above.

⁴¹Compare the 'prediction' attributed to David in 26:10: 'As the Lord lives [see n. 38], the Lord will smite (so MT: יִכְּנֶנֶי; B: παιδεύσῃ; L: πείσῃ); or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle and perish.' Josephus' formulation, in which Saul's coming fate is attributed exclusively to God, avoids the source's 'misleading' suggestion that the alternative possible fates awaiting the king as cited in 26:10b would/could come about without divine involvement.

⁴²This appendix on the affect of David's words upon their addressee lacks a counterpart in 1 Samuel 26. Together with the introductory notice ('... nor would he permit Abisai, who wished to kill him and darted forward [ὄρμηκότεα] with that intent, to do so') earlier in 6.312, it constitutes a framework around the intervening reported speech of David which underscores the efficacy of that speech. (1 Samuel 26 itself gives no indication as such concerning the affect of David's words, 26:9-11a, upon Abishai.)

⁴³This inserted preface to the source notice on David's 'taking' provides a rationale for his act which has in view his subsequent use of the objects taken, see 6.315.

⁴⁴Ulrich, *Qumran Text*, 170-171, calls attention to the fact that in his specification that David took 'his' (Saul's) spear Josephus goes together with the (partially reconstructed) reading of 4QSam^a 26:12, *i.e.* תַּחַן חַנִּיתוֹ, as against both MT and BL, which have simply 'the spear'.

of water (τὸν φακόν τοῦ ὕδατος = BL) that was placed just beside Saul (26:12a from Saul's head).'

The 'sparing scene' (26:6-12) concludes (26:12abb) with the intruders making their escape undetected due to the 'deep sleep from the Lord' (so MT, BL, TJ; *VL: timor domini*) that had overtaken those in the camp. In line with a tendency that manifests itself in many contexts of his Biblical paraphrase, Josephus leaves aside the 'theological note' of 26:12bb,⁴⁵ substituting alternative indications concerning David's successful penetration of and escape from Saul's camp. His rendition (6.313b) of the source notice on David's exit states then: 'and unseen by any in the camp where all lay fast asleep (κατακοιμωμένων),⁴⁶ he passed out,⁴⁷ *having safely accomplished all the things that the favourable opportunity* (καιροῦ)⁴⁸ *and his daring* (τόλμης) *had enabled him to inflict on the king's men.*'⁴⁹

The David-Abner Exchange

David's sparing of Saul as described in 26:6-12 finds its initial sequel in the exchange between David and the royal general Abner

⁴⁵On Josephus' tendency to 'detheologize' the Biblical account in view of the skeptical proclivities of Gentile readers, see L.H. Feldman, 'Use, Authority and Exegesis of Mikra in the Writings of Josephus', in M.J. Mulder and H. Sysling (eds.), *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (CRINT 2/1; Assen: van Gorcum, 1988) 455-518, 503-506. As Feldman himself observes, however, this 'tendency' is by no means consistently operative in Josephus' presentation (see, e.g., 6.312 where Josephus' David, in contrast to 26:10, attributes any fate that may befall Saul to God).

⁴⁶Compare 26:12ba: 'no man saw it, or knew it, nor did any awake; for they were all asleep (BL: ὑπνοῦντες).'

⁴⁷Compare 26:12ab: 'and they (David and Abishai) went away'. Josephus' singular verb keeps attention focussed on the story's hero David; compare 6.312, where he reads the 'and David and Abishai went to the army by night' of 26:7aa as 'David penetrated to the king's camp'.

⁴⁸This term constitutes another verbal echo of Josephus' version of 1 Samuel 24 where it figures twice; see 6.284, 288.

⁴⁹This editorial comment—which takes the place of the theological 'explanation' for David's escape in 26:12 (see n. 45)—accentuates the stature of David who makes both daring and effective use of the opportunities that come his way.

concerning this event (26:13-16 // 6.314-315). The exchange itself is preceded by a notice on David's stationing himself on a hill at some distance from the camp (26:13). This notice itself begins with a reference to David's 'crossing over to the other side'. Picking up on this indication, Josephus (6.314) specifies what it was that David 'crossed' at this point: 'Then, after crossing (διαβάς; BL: διέβη) a stream⁵⁰ and climbing (ἀνελθών; BL: ἔσπε to the top of a hill (ἐπὶ τὴν κορυφὴν...τοῦ ὄρους = B 26:13) *from which he could be heard...*'.⁵¹

From his hilltop David calls to Saul's army and Abner (26:14a). Josephus inserts mention of the effect of this call, likewise transposing David's challenging question ('Will you not answer, Abner?') into indirect address: 'he shouted (ἐμβοήσας) to the troops (στρατιώταις) of Saul (BL: τὸν λαόν) and to *their commander* (στρατηγῶ, see 6.312) Abenner,⁵² and *awakening them from their sleep*,⁵³ addressed him *and his people* (τὸν λαόν; so BL 26:14a, see above).⁵⁴ Abner's reply as cited in 26:14b differs according to the witnesses. In MT he asks 'who are you that calls to the king?', while in B his question runs simply 'who are you who calls?', and in L (= VL) 'who are you who calls me? who are you?' Josephus' rendering

⁵⁰Compare Marcus, *Josephus*, V, 323, who sees Josephus' reference to a 'brook' here as inspired by the closing words of 26:13, *i.e.* 'with a great space (so MT, BL; VL: 'way') between them'. In this connection, he comments: 'Josephus naturally thought of the space as being a *wady*, the bed of a winter stream...such as are common in Palestine'.

⁵¹This phrase takes the place of the closing words of 26:13: 'with a great distance between them'. It supplies an implicit motivation for David's ascending 'the hill' at this juncture, just as it makes clear that even 'on the other side (of the stream)' David is still within hearing distance of the camp—the presupposition for the following exchanges.

⁵²Like BL and VL, Josephus has no equivalent to MT 26:14a's identification of Abner as 'son of Ner' at this juncture.

⁵³This inserted indication that David's shout did, in fact, awaken those in the camp is appropriate, given the emphasis on their profound sleep in what precedes; see 6.313 // 26:12b.

⁵⁴In 26:14a, David's question is addressed to Abner alone. Josephus' having David address his troops as well may reflect the fact that in the continuation of his discourse (see 26:15-16) second person singular and plural verbs alternate—as they do in Josephus' own presentation; see above.

of the question stands closest to that of L: ‘*when the commander heard* (ἐπακούσαντος) *this*,⁵⁵ and asked who was calling him (τίς ὁ καλέσας αὐτόν ἐστίν)...’.⁵⁶

The Biblical David does not, as such, respond to Abner’s query (26:14b) about his identity; instead, he begins immediately to pose a series of questions of his own to the latter (26:15). His Josephan counterpart first pauses (6.315a) to answer the question posed him: ‘David replied, “*I, son of Jesse, the fugitive* (φυγάς) *from you.*”⁵⁷ From the three questions which David addresses to Abner in 26:15, Josephus leaves aside the first (‘are you not a man?’) which appears rather oddly superfluous. Conversely, he expatiates in his (interwoven) version of the two following questions: ‘But how comes it that one so great (μέγας) as thou, holding the first rank in the king’s service,⁵⁸ art so negligent (ἀμελῶς) in guarding (φυλάσσεις) the person of thy master (δεσπότης),⁵⁹ and that sleep is more to thy liking than his safety and protection (σωτηρίας καὶ προνοίας)?’⁶⁰

At the end of 26:15 David shifts from questioning Abner to informing him of the penetration of the camp for whose security the latter was responsible. Thereafter, following the parenthetical opening words of 26:16 (‘this thing that you [sg. = Abner] have done is not good’), David pronounces a plural ‘you’ (= Abner and his men)

⁵⁵This inserted transitional phrase picks up on the (likewise inserted) indication about David’s reason for ascending the hill earlier in 6.314, *i.e.* ‘from which his voice could be heard (ἐξάκουστος)’.

⁵⁶Compare Abner’s direct address question in L 26:14b: τίς εἶ, ὁ καλῶν με.

⁵⁷David’s self-characterization as a mere ‘fugitive’ here sets up the ironic contrast in what follows between himself and the mighty Abner who, nonetheless, has been unable to defend the king against the fugitive’s approach.

⁵⁸This characterization of Abner represents an elucidation and elaboration of David’s second question to him in 26:15: ‘who is like you in Israel?’

⁵⁹Compare David’s concluding question in 26:15: ‘Why then have you not kept guard (BL: φυλάσσεις = Josephus) over your lord (BL: κύριον) the king?’

⁶⁰This collocation recurs in *Ant.* 2.219; *cf.* 2.236. The accusation italicized above has no equivalent as such in David’s word to Abner in 26:15-16. It might, however, be viewed as Josephus’ substitute, inspired by the emphasis on the ‘sleep’ of all in the camp in what precedes, for David’s general, parenthetical statement at the opening of 26:16: ‘this thing that you (sg., Abner) have done is not good.’

worthy of death for their failure to guard the king (26:16abba). Josephus situates David's report of what happened (26:15bb) between the 'sentence' of 26:16ab and the motivating accusation of 26:16ba. His re-arrangement of the source sequence reads: 'This conduct indeed merits (ἄξια) the punishment of death (θανάτου),⁶¹ for *a little while since* some men (τινάς)⁶² penetrated right through (εἰσελθόντας...εἰς; BL: εἰσηλθεν εἰς) *your* (pl. ὑμῶν) *camp* to the king's person (26:15bb *to destroy* the king your [sg.] lord) *and to all the others* (ἐπὶ τὸν βασιλέα καὶ πάντα τοὺς ἄλλους),⁶³ and you (pl.) did not even perceive (ἐνοήσατε) it.'⁶⁴

David concludes his address to Abner and his troops (26:15-16) by mockingly inviting Abner to seek the royal spear and water-jar, 26:16bb. Josephus' version (6.315c) spells out the conclusion Abner is to draw from his (vain) search: 'Look now (ζήτησον; BL: ἴδε) for the king's spear and his flask of water, *and thou wilt learn* (μαθήσῃ) *what mischief* (κακόν) *has befallen in your midst* (ὑμᾶς) *without your knowing of it* (ἐντὸς γενόμενον).'⁶⁵

⁶¹Compare 26:16ab: 'as the Lord lives, you deserve to die (literally you are sons of death; BL: υἱοὶ θανάτου)'. Josephus' wording elucidates the meaning of the source's Semitic idiom. As with those of 26:10,11 (see nn. 38, 41), Josephus leaves aside David's opening oath formula in 26:16ab.

⁶²The use of this term represents an implicit 'correction' of the wording of 26:15bb which speaks of 'one of the people' having entered the camp, whereas, in fact, the pair David and Abishai had done so (see 26:7).

⁶³This entire phrase is lacking in the codices RO and is omitted by Niese; the 'Epitome' has no equivalent for the words 'and all the others'.

⁶⁴Compare 26:16ba: '...who did not (so MT, L; > B) keep watch (BL: οἱ φυλάσσοντες; cf. [οὐ] φυλάσσεις, 26:15) over your lord, the Lord's anointed'. As in his rendering of 26:10-11 in 6.312, Josephus here leaves aside the source's use of the term 'Messiah'.

⁶⁵With the above 'appendix' concerning the purpose of the search for the missing objects, compare Josephus' likewise inserted notice on the rationale for David's removing these in 6.313 (cf. 26:12) 'in token that he might have slain him (Saul) and yet refrained'. In contrast to his procedure earlier in our pericope, Josephus retains the direct discourse of David's word (26:15-16) throughout his rendition of this in 6.315. He likewise imitates the source's mixing of singular and plural forms of address in David's speech.

The Saul-David Exchange

The story of 1 Samuel 26 concludes in 26:17-25 (// 6.316-319a) with a citation of a two-part exchange between the king and David which ends with the two of them going their separate ways. Their exchange commences in 26:17a with Saul ‘recognizing David’s voice’ and then asking ‘Is this your voice, my son David?’ This royal question might well appear otiose; if Saul has already ‘recognized’ the voice of the one speaking, why does he need to ask about the matter? Accordingly, Josephus leaves aside the question of 26:17ab,⁶⁶ while, conversely, amplifying the notice of 26:17aa with mention of a further ‘realisation’ on the king’s part: ‘Then Saul, when he recognized the voice (γνωρίσας...φωνήν; BL: ἐπέγνω...φωνήν), and learned (μαθών)⁶⁷ that though he (David) had had him at his mercy, being asleep and neglected by his guards (τῆς τῶν φυλασσοόντων ἀμελείας),⁶⁸ he had not slain (ἀπέκτεινεν) him but spared the life which he might justly have taken (δικαίως ἀνελῶν).’⁶⁹

Given Josephus’ omission of Saul’s question of 26:17ab, it is not surprising that he likewise leaves aside David’s self-identification in response thereto as cited in 26:17b (‘it is my voice, my lord, O king’, MT).⁷⁰ What is more noteworthy is the fact that Josephus

⁶⁶Similarly, in 6.290 he omits Saul’s very similar (and equally otiose) question to David (‘Is this your voice, my son David?’) of 24:17.

⁶⁷This term echoes the μαθήση (subject Abner) of David’s word as cited in 6.315.

⁶⁸This phrase picks up the wording of David’s accusation of Abner in 6.315: ἀμελῶς...φυλάσσεις.

⁶⁹The wording of Saul’s above ‘realisation’ about what David might have done but did not is reminiscent of the notice Josephus prefaces to his mention of David’s making off with the king’s possessions (// 26:12) in 6.313, *i.e.* ‘in token that he might have slain (κτεῖναι) him and yet had refrained’. Thereby, he underscores the success of David’s plan that motivates his taking of the objects. Josephus’ use of the term δικαίως in the phrase ‘justly have taken’ above establishes another terminological link between his versions of the two Biblical stories of David’s sparing Saul, 1 Samuel 24 and 26, in that words of the dikai-stem constitute a *Leitwort* in his rendering of 1 Samuel 24 in 6.282-291; see, *e.g.*, the phrase dikaiva" ajmuvnh" (‘righteous vengeance’) which David affirms he has refrained from perpetrating upon Saul in 6.289.

⁷⁰Recall too that Josephus has already had David identify himself as ‘son of Jesse’ in response to Abner’s question (26:14b) in 6.315.

likewise passes over the entire sequence of 26:18-20 in which David (1) directs reproachful questions to Saul (26:18), (2) evokes two possible sources for Saul's current persecution of himself (*i.e.* God himself and 'men') and their respective implications (26:19), (3) appeals to the Lord not to let him be killed 'away from his presence' (26:20a), and (4) once again (see also 26:18) accuses Saul of unjustly pursuing him (26:20b). Why did Josephus elect not to incorporate this sequence into his own presentation? I suggest that his primary reason for not doing so was the desire to avoid a duplication of David's 'apology' as set out in his earlier address to Saul in 6.285b-289 (itself an elaborated version of 24:10-16, MT) which covers much of the same ground as do his words in 26:18-20.⁷¹

In any event, Josephus' presentation moves directly from Saul's 'recognition' (26:17aa) to the king's word to David as cited in 26:21. That word itself is a complex one, consisting of opening confession of wrongdoing by Saul, assurance for David together with a motivation for this in terms of David's recent sparing of him, and renewed confession by the king. Josephus replaces Saul's initial confession ('I have done wrong', 26:21aa) with a (indirect discourse)

⁷¹Other, supplementary reasons for the omission may also be proposed. For one thing, Josephus may have felt uncomfortable with the theological conceptions expressed (or insinuated) in 26:19, *i.e.* the Lord as a potential 'inciter' to evil acts, *in casu* Saul's unjust pursuit of David; and the seeming equation of absence from the holy land ('the heritage of the Lord') with the worship of 'other gods'. Further, supposing him to have had before him the reading of 26:20b supported by MT, L, and *VL*, where David designates himself as a 'flea' pursued by Saul (B and TJ read 'my life'), Josephus may well have wished to avoid such excessive self-denigration on David's part given Aristotle's deprecation (with which his Gentile readers would surely have been familiar) of 'undue modesty' (μικροψυχία). On this latter concern and its influence upon Josephus' retouching of the Biblical portrait of Saul, see Feldman, 'Saul', 80-82. Note further that in his version of David's earlier address to Saul (24:10-16, MT) in 6.285b-289, Josephus leaves aside 26:14 where David calls himself both a 'dead dog' and a 'flea' (so 26:20, MT, L). Finally, it might be suggested that the rather hectoring tone of David's words to Saul in 26:18 and 20 could seem to militate against the accentuation of the former's magnanimity which characterizes Josephus' retelling of 1 Samuel 26 (and of 1 Samuel 24 as well); see further nn. 85, 90.

expression of gratitude by him to which, in turn, he appends an expanded version of the assurance of 26:21ab: '(he) gave him thanks for his preservation (σωτηρίας)⁷² and exhorted him to be of good courage (θαρρύντα) and, without fear (μηδέν...φοβούμενον) of suffering further injury (δεινόν)⁷³ from himself, to return (ἀναχωρεῖν) to his home.'⁷⁴ As noted above, Saul's assurance to David (26:21ab) is 'motivated' (26:21ba) by the former's acknowledgement about the latter, *i.e.* 'because my life was precious (BL: ἔντιμος) in your eyes this day'. Josephus' Saul is more expansive in his recognition (6.317) of David's benignity: 'For, he said, he was persuaded that he did not love (ἀγαπήσειεν) his own self (αὐτόν)⁷⁵ so well as he was loved (στέργεται)⁷⁶ by David.' Saul's word to David of 26:21 ends up in 26:21bb with an emphatic, albeit indeterminate, recognition of how badly he has conducted himself with regard to David ('behold I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly'; compare 'I have sinned', 26:21aa). Josephus supplies an elaborate content to the royal confession:

seeing that he had pursued this man who might have been his safeguard (φυλάττειν)⁷⁷ and who had given many proofs of his

⁷²This term ironically echoes David's accusation of Abner in 6.315, *i.e.* 'sleep is more to thy liking than his (Saul's) safety (σωτηρίας) and protection'. As the king himself now recognizes, whereas Abner, his own designated protector, had neglected his 'safety', David, his (purported) enemy has ensured this. The term further recalls the notice of 6.290 (*cf.* 24:17): 'Saul, in wonder at his extraordinary escape (σωτηρίας)...'.

⁷³In his use of this term in reference to his promised future treatment of David, Saul echoes David's own declaration concerning himself as cited in 6.312: '(he objected that) it was monstrous (δεινόν) to slay the king elected of God.'

⁷⁴The elements italicized above represent Josephus' amplification of Saul's assurance of 26:21ab: 'Return (BL: ἐπίστρεφε), my son David, for I will no more (MT; L: [ἔτι = Josephus]; > B) do you harm (κακοποιήσα)'.

⁷⁵This is the conjecture of E. Bekker, inspired by the Latin (*semetipsum*), and followed by Marcus. Niese reads αὐτόν with the Greek witnesses.

⁷⁶On Josephus' 'love terminology', see A. Schlatter, *Die Theologie des Judentums nach dem Bericht von Josephus* (BFCT 2:26; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1932) 154.

⁷⁷Saul's use of this verb in reference to David's potential 'guarding' of himself ironically echoes what David says to Abner, Saul's designated protector, in 6.315, *i.e.* 'how comes it that...thou... art so negligent in guarding (φυλάσσεις) the person of thy master'?

loyalty (δείγματα τῆς τῆς εὐνοίας)⁷⁸ and that he had forced him to live so long in exile (ἐν φυγῇ),⁷⁹ in terror of his life (ταῖς περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀγωνίαις),⁸⁰ bereft of friends and of kindred (φίλων καὶ συγγενῶν),⁸¹ while he himself had been repeatedly (πολλάκις)⁸² spared (σωζόμενος)⁸³ and had received at his hands a life (ψυχὴν)⁸⁴ clearly marked for destruction (ἀπολλυμένην).⁸⁵

David commences his response to Saul in 26:22 by directing that someone be sent to retrieve the royal spear. Josephus (6.318) has David not ‘forget’ to mention the other object taken by him as well: ‘David then bade him send someone to fetch (πέμψαντα ἀπολαβεῖν) the spear *and the flask of water*.’⁸⁶ David’s reply continues in 26:23,

⁷⁸This phrase is hapax in Josephus; compare, however, the equivalent expression ἀπόδειξις εὐνοίας used in Josephus’ version of 1 Samuel 24 in 6.286 where David is addressing Saul concerning his (David’s) conduct towards him.

⁷⁹This phrase echoes David’s own self-characterization in his reply to Abner in 6.315: ‘I, son of Jesse, the fugitive (φυγάς) from you’.

⁸⁰This expression occurs only here in Josephus.

⁸¹Josephus uses the above collocation (in this or the reverse order) twenty times elsewhere in his writings: see Begg, *Josephus’ Account*, 214, n. 1405 for references. The combination likely reflects Greco-Roman court honorifics.

⁸²This word is lacking in the codices RO and is omitted by Niese.

⁸³In using this verb of David’s treatment of himself, Saul echoes his earlier acknowledgement in 6.291 (*cf.* 24:20): ‘thou (David) hast shown thyself this day to have the righteousness of the ancients, who bade those who captured their enemies in a lonely place to spare their lives (σώζειν).’

⁸⁴This recognition on Saul’s part about David’s dealings with him stands in contrast to his admission earlier in 6.317 that he himself had forced David to live ‘in terror of his life (ψυχὴν)’.

⁸⁵The above elucidation/expansion of Saul’s confession in 26:21bb throws into relief the contrast between his and David’s modes of acting, that contrast being clearly to the advantage of the latter. At the same time, Josephus’ reformulation avoids what might appear as the excessively self-denigrating terms (‘I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly’) of the Biblical Saul’s confession about himself (see n. 71).

⁸⁶Compare 26:22: ‘And David made answer, “Here is the spear, O king [thus MT *ketiv*; the *qere* and the versions read: ‘behold the spear of the king’]! Let one of the young men come and fetch (BL: λαβέτω) it”’. As with Saul’s preceding speech (26:21), Josephus transposes the opening of David’s reply (26:22) from direct into indirect discourse. See, however, the continuation of the latter above.

first with a theological affirmation by him concerning God's righteous judgement (26:23a) and then with a reminder of his own magnanimous dealings with Saul (26:23b). Josephus' equivalent to these items (for which he shifts from indirect [see above] to direct discourse⁸⁷) runs: 'adding, "God shall be the judge (δικαστῆς) of the character (φύσεως) of either (ἐκαστέρω) of us and of the actions arising therefrom.⁸⁸ He knows (οἶδε) that when this day I had the power to slay thee (ἀποκτεῖναι σε δυνηθείς) I refrained (ἀπεσχόμην)."⁸⁹

At this point in Josephus' rewriting of 1 Samuel 26 there occurs another noteworthy omission of source material by him, comparable to his treatment of 26:18-20. Specifically, Josephus passes over both David's concluding appeal for divine vindication (26:24) and Saul's response (26:25a), calling David 'blessed' and predicting his future successes. How is this new, larger-scale omission to be explained? With regard, first of all, to David's appeal of 26:24 ('Behold as your life was precious this day in my sight, so may my life be precious in the sight of the Lord, and may he deliver me out of your [Saul's] hand'), this might, in fact, seem to add little to what has already been stated by him concerning God's righteous judgement and his own good conduct in 6.318b (// 26:23). In addition, David's

⁸⁷Such shifts (or the reverse) within one and the same speech by a given character are not infrequent in *Ant.*; see Begg, *Josephus' Account*, 123-24, n. 772.

⁸⁸Compare 26:23a: 'The Lord rewards every man (BL: ἐκάστῳ = Josephus) for his righteousness and faithfulness (BL: δικαιοσύνας...καὶπίστιν)'. Josephus' above rendition of David's theological statement is reminiscent of the one he attributes to him in 6.289c (// 24:16): 'May God be judge (δικάσειε) thereof and examine the motives (τρόπον) of us both (ἐκατέρου)'. Note too 6.290 (*cf.* 24:17), where Josephus introduces a reference to Saul's amazement at David's 'forbearance and nature (φύσιν)'.

⁸⁹Compare 26:23b: 'for the Lord gave you into my hand today, and I would not put forth my hand against the Lord's anointed.' The wording of David's above affirmation about himself is quite reminiscent of the editorial notice inserted by Josephus in 6.313 concerning the rationale for David's taking of Saul's spear and water-jug 'in token that he might have slain him (κτεῖναι δυνηθείς ἀποσχέσθαι)'. The formulation echoes as well David's earlier statement to Saul in 6.289 (*cf.* 24:12b): 'I refrained (ἀπεσχόμην) from righteous vengeance'.

appeal for divine rescue from Saul's hand in 26:24b could appear as an ungracious—albeit implicit—dismissal of the assurances given him by Saul in 26:21 (// 6.316), which, in turn, would conflict with the image of David's magnanimity *vis-à-vis* Saul which Josephus has been highlighting throughout his version of 1 Samuel 26 (and of 1 Samuel 24).⁹⁰ As for Saul's 'last word' (26:25a) with its prediction of David's successful future ('Blessed be you, my son David! You will do many things and will succeed in them'), this would seem repetitive of the similar prediction Saul makes to David in 24:21 (// 6.291).⁹¹

In thus jettisoning (for whatever reason) the sequence of 26:24-25a, Josephus proceeds directly from David's affirmations in 26:23 (// 6.318b) to the notices on the two figures' separation of 26:25b (// 6.319a). As the sectioning/ paragraphing of our editions of *Ant.* makes clear, Josephus' rendition of 26:25b functions more as an introduction to the following narrative (David's sojourn in Philistia, 1 Samuel 27 // *Ant.* 6.319-326) than as a conclusion to the sparing story of 1 Samuel 26.⁹² In order, however, to round off my investigation of the historian's handling of the data of 1 Samuel 26, I note here the wording of his (elaborated) parallel to 26:25b at the opening of 6.319. It reads: 'So Saul, *having for the second time escaped* (διαφυγών)⁹³

⁹⁰See n. 71. In this connection, it is of interest to note that in his version of David's words to Saul (1 Sam. 24:10-16) in 6.285b-289, Josephus leaves aside several of the former's more pointed pleas to God with regard to the latter, *i.e.* 'may the Lord avenge me upon you' (24:13ab) and '(may the Lord) give sentence between me and you...and deliver me from your hand (24:16; *cf.* 24:24b, 'may he deliver me out of all tribulation'). See further Feldman, 'David', 151-52.

⁹¹1 Sam. 24:21 (MT) reads: 'And now, behold, I know that you (David) shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.' Josephus (6.291a) renders it: 'I fully believe that God is reserving the kingdom for thee and that dominion over all the Hebrews awaits thee.'

⁹²In function of this 'reapplication' of the data of 26:25b, Josephus reverses the source's order, telling first of Saul's departure (// 26:25bb) and then, in a lead-in to his version of 1 Samuel 27 where David repairs to Philistia, of David's (// 26:25ab); see above.

⁹³The application of this term to Saul himself ironically echoes the earlier use of 'flight terminology' for David in 6.314 (David calls himself a 'fugitive' [φυγάς] from Abner) and 6.317 (Saul acknowledges that he has forced David to live 'in exile' [ἐν φυγῆ]). The interplay of the terminology in question suggests that the 'fugitive' David has indeed turned the tables on his pursuer Saul, putting him in situations where it is his life that is threatened.

*from David's hands,*⁹⁴ returned (ἀπηλλάσσετο) to his *palace and his country;*⁹⁵ but David, fearful of being captured by Saul if he remained where he was, deemed it wise to go down to the land of the Philistines and abide there.⁹⁶

Conclusions

By way of conclusion, I shall now attempt to briefly synthesize my findings on its opening questions. Regarding the first of those questions, *i.e.* the text-form(s) of 1 Samuel 26 used by Josephus, our reading did not bring to light clear, positive evidence for the presence of readings peculiar to MT in his version.⁹⁷ On the other hand, we have identified noteworthy affinities between *Ant.* 6.310-319a and the Biblical text represented by BL, the latter witness in particular. These

⁹⁴This inserted phrase with its reference to Saul's double 'escape' points up the connection between the two 'sparing stories' (1 Samuel 24 and 26), and serves to round off the sequence of *Ant.* (6.282-318) in which those two stories figure.

⁹⁵Compare the much briefer notice of 26:25bb: 'and Saul returned (B: ἀνέστρεψεν; L: ἐπέστρεψεν) to his place (so MT, L; B: 'way')'. With Josephus' above 'specification' concerning Saul's 'destination', compare 6.291c where he reformulates 24:23ba ('then Saul went home' [so MT, L; B: 'to his place']) in more definite terms: 'David...let Saul depart to *his kingdom*.'

⁹⁶The above sequence, inspired by the wording of David's self-reflection in 27:1a ('And David said in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better than that I should escape to the land of the Philistines"'), which itself prepares the notice of 27:2 (// 6.319b) on David's betaking himself to Achish king of Gath, takes the place, in Josephus' presentation, of the vague (and otiose) notice of 26:25ba: 'and David went his way (so MT, L; B: 'to his place').'

⁹⁷We did note one 'negative' communality between Josephus' version and MT *contra* BL 1 Samuel 26; that is, their lack of counterpart to the latter's specification (26:1a) that the Ziphites came to Saul 'from the dryland'. The significance of this 'agreement' is, however, quite minimal given Josephus' clear tendency, throughout 6.310, to reduce the geographical indications with which 26:1-3 abounds.

include the following: the site-name for Saul's camp ('Sikella,' 6.310, 311 // L 26:4; see nn. 17, 21); the 'stealthiness' of David's approach (6.310 // BL 26:5), the omission of Abner's patronymic (6.314 = BL 26:14a), and Abner's asking who had called *him* (6.314 = L 26:14b). On a more minor note, we likewise cited E.C. Ulrich's observation (see n. 44) that in specifying (so 6.313) that David took 'his' (Saul's) spear, Josephus goes together with 4QSam^a 26:12 against both MT and BL ('the spear'). It would appear then that, Josephus' text(s) of 1 Samuel 26 was (were), in any case, a 'non-MT' one.⁹⁸

The second of my opening questions had to do with the 'distinctiveness' of Josephus' rendering of 1 Samuel 26 and the rewriting techniques which serve to generate this.⁹⁹ In this regard, perhaps the most noteworthy distinguishing feature of the Josephan *relecture* is its streamlining of the source account. In particular, the historian leaves aside entirely both David's speech (26:18-20) and the final exchange between him and Saul (26:24-25a). These larger omissions reflect, I suggest, Josephus' concern not to duplicate material already sufficiently dealt with in the earlier 'sparing story' of 1 Samuel 24 (// *Ant.* 6.282-291), as well as allowing him to bypass the segments which pose problems for the image of David he is trying to convey (see nn. 71, 85, 90). Beyond these two rather extended sequences, Josephus also, however, for a variety of reasons (as indicated above), either simply omits or drastically abridges a whole series of shorter source items. Examples of this latter category of omissions include the following: the plethora of proper place names of 26:1-3; the identification of Abishai as 'brother of Joab' (26:6; *cf.* 6.311); the exchange between David and Abishai (26:6b); Abishai's proposal (26:8, *cf.* 6.312); David's directive to Abishai about 'taking' Saul's possessions (26:11b); David's opening question to Abner about his being a 'man' (26:15aa); the divine source of the sleep into which

⁹⁸For more on the question of the Biblical text(s) of 1 Samuel used by Josephus, see S. Brock, *The Recensions of the Septuaginta Version of 1 Samuel* (Quaderni di Henoch 9; Turin: Zamorani, 1996) 210-16.

⁹⁹As would be expected, these techniques are very often 'overlapping', the application of one (*e.g.*, rearrangement of the source's sequence) triggering recourse to another as well (*e.g.*, omission of source data).

all have fallen (26:12bb; see n. 45); Saul's query about David's 'voice' (26:17ab) and the latter's reply (26:17b); and David's final 'going his way' (26:25ba). As will be recalled, many of these omitted/abridged elements raise difficulties of various sorts within the flow of the Biblical narrative. Accordingly, Josephus' 'elimination' of them results in a version of the story that is more internally coherent and smoother-reading than is its *Vorlage*.

The additions and expansions that serve to differentiate further Josephus' rendering of the source are not so striking as are its omissions and abridgements. Additions and expansions do, nonetheless, recur throughout 6.310-319a where they serve, in this case, to clarify or explicate source indications or to further character nuancing. I recall the following salient instances of the technique: the Ziphites' proposal to Saul (6.310; *cf.* 26:1b); David's directive to the spies (6.311, *cf.* 26:4); the qualification of Abishai's mother 'Zeruiah/Saruia' as David's 'sister' (6.311; *cf.* 26:6); the notice that David refrained from killing Saul himself (6.312); the identifying function of the erected spear (6.312; *cf.* 26:7); Abishai's 'darting forward' towards Saul (6.312; *cf.* 26:8); David's frustrating of Abishai's purpose (6.312); the rationale for David's taking Saul's spear and water-jug (6.313; *cf.* 26:12); the specification that what David 'crossed' (so 26:13) was 'a stream' (6.314); the characterisation of the hill as a place from which David 'could be heard' (6.314; *cf.* 26:13); the wakening effect of David's call (6.314; *cf.* 26:14); his self-identification to Abner (6.314; *cf.* 26:14); the charge about Abner's preferring sleep to duty (6.315; *cf.* 26:15); the lesson Abner is to learn from his search for the missing objects (6.315; *cf.* 26:16); Saul's 'realisation' about his narrow escape and David's benignity (6.316; *cf.* 26:17); the elaboration of the king's assurance to David (6.316; *cf.* 26:21); David's calling for the retrieval also of the water-jug (6.318; *cf.* 26:22); and the inserted reference to Saul's double deliverance (6.319; *cf.* 26:25bb). Thanks to these additions and expansions, Josephus presents his readers with a version which resolves many questions or difficulties evoked by 1 Samuel 26.

A further noteworthy distinguishing feature of Josephus' version is his re-arrangement of the source's sequence. He applies this technique with respect to, for instance: the coming of night (6.310,

anticipated from 26:7); the site of Saul's camp (6.310, anticipated from 26:4 L; see nn. 17, 21); David's being accompanied to the camp by two companions (6.311, anticipated from 26:6; recall too his reversal of the Biblical order in which the pair is mentioned; see n. 27); David's prohibition cited prior to Abishai's intent which evokes it (6.312; *cf.* 26:8-9); and the reference to Saul's departure before that of David (6.319a; *cf.* 26:25b). Via such rearrangements Josephus enhances the narrative logic of the story's unfolding.¹⁰⁰

Josephus imparts added 'distinctiveness' to his version of the source story by means of the various sorts of modifications and adaptations of its data which he permits himself. Thus, on the terminological level, he consistently avoids a number of 'problematic' phrases employed by 1 Samuel 26: the oath formulas of 26:11, 12, 16; the designation 'anointed of the Lord' (26:9, 11, 16, 23; see n. 38) and 'Lord' as divine title (see, *e.g.*, 26:10 ['the Lord'] *contra* 6.312 ['God']). In the same line, he spells out the meaning of the Semitic idiom 'sons of death' of 26:16 in 6.315 (see n. 61) More positively, he weaves through his presentation numerous 'verbal echoes' of the earlier 'sparing story' of 6.282-291 (// 1 Samuel 24)¹⁰¹ as well as ironic wordplays between the different parts of 6.310-319a itself.¹⁰² Stylistically, we noted his alternating of the source's invariable direct address with uses of indirect (see n. 13), substitution of hypotaxis for parataxis (see n. 23) and introduction of a number of historic present forms (see n. 23). Josephus' 'modifications' also, however, extend to the source's content as exemplified by the following items: David's successful escape from the camp is attributed to 'the favourable opportunity and his daring' (6.313), not a God-sent 'trance' (so 26:12). In his speech to Abner, David 'corrects' his Biblical

¹⁰⁰Thus, *e.g.*, his 'anticipated' mention of the two accompanying David (6.312) eliminates the surprise one might experience in learning, for the first time, only in 26:6 that David did, in fact, have companions on his trek to Saul's camp (compare the opposite impression left by the description of 26:5).

¹⁰¹See, *e.g.*, nn. 14, 36, 39, 48, 69, 72, 78, 83, 88, 89.

¹⁰²See, *e.g.*, nn. 57, 72, 77, 79, 84, 93, 94.

counterpart's reference to 'one of the people' having penetrated the camp (26:16), speaking instead of 'some men' who did this (6.315), thus bringing his statement into line with the previous account. Saul's self-accusations (26:21) are likewise given a more definite content (6.317) and the king's destination upon leaving David specified (6.319a; *cf.* 26:25ba). As has been pointed out over the course of this study, the above modifications serve to generate a range of distinguishing features for Josephus' version: improved Greek style, narrative variation, elimination of phraseology that would be unfamiliar or offensive to Gentile readers, 'detheologising', rectification of apparent Biblical 'errors', intensification of irony, and enhanced verbal paralleling of the two 'sparing stories'.

A final 'distinguishing feature' of Josephus' retelling of 1 Samuel 26 concerns the nuances of his characterisation of the story's two main characters. In the case of David, Josephus goes beyond the source in highlighting his positive stature as a man of successful 'daring' (see 6.313), and, above all, magnanimity in his dealings with his persecutor.¹⁰³ Conversely, his Saul appears even more reprobate than his Biblical counterpart. This accounts for the inserted qualification of him as 'a wicked man' in David's word to Abishai (6.312), and the elaboration of the king's acknowledgement of his mistreatment of David in 6.317 (*cf.* 26:21). In Josephus' rendering, then, the contrast between the two personages appears still sharper than in the source narrative.

The last of my opening questions asked how Josephus' consciousness that he was writing his *Ant.* for two definite (and distinct) audiences, *i.e.* (Roman) Gentiles and fellow Jews,¹⁰⁴ may have affected his approach to the retelling of the story of 1 Samuel 26. In response to this question I would offer the following suggestions. With Gentile readers in view, Josephus endeavours to produce a

¹⁰³Josephus highlights this last feature of David's character both positively, in his additions to and expansions of the Biblical account (see, *e.g.*, his elaboration of Saul's words of recognition for David's treatment of him, 6.317; *cf.* 26:21) and negatively, *i.e.* by his omission of source material where David denounces Saul (26:18-20; see n. 71) or appears to rebuff the king's assurances (26:24; see n. 90).

¹⁰⁴On Josephus' double audience for *Ant.*, see Feldman, 'Mikra', 470-71.

version that they would find stylistically more palatable and terminologically less off-putting (*e.g.*, he nowhere confronts them with the source's provocative *Leitwort*, *i.e.* 'Messiah'). In addition, he offers Gentile readers, in the person of David, an exemplar of qualities especially appreciated by them (and ones which Jews were thought to lack): *i.e.* (military) courage¹⁰⁵ and magnanimity.¹⁰⁶ In his outstanding exemplification of the latter quality in his dealings with his tormentor Saul, David would, however, also have something to offer Josephus' fellow Jews, many of whom, like David, had suffered much at the hands of their compatriots during the internecine conflicts that had accompanied the recent Great Revolt, and who would naturally be tempted to nurse grudges and plot revenge against the co-religionists who had wronged them. Against this background then, the David of Josephus' version might be seen as calling Jewish victims of other Jews to adopt a stance of forbearance like his own, confident that divine 'punishment would come in due time' (so 6.312) upon the 'Sauls' of their own day.¹⁰⁷

The foregoing discussion will at least, I hope, have made clear that there is much more going on in Josephus' retelling of 1 Samuel 26 than a quick perusal of *Ant.* 6.310-319a might indicate. Perhaps this study may also provide something of a methodological paradigm for the study of other first-century authors who made use of the Old Testament in their writings: namely, Philo and the New Testament.

¹⁰⁵On Josephus' apologetic highlighting of David's courage and military acumen throughout his portrayal of him, see Feldman, 'David', 141-47.

¹⁰⁶On magnanimity (μεγαλοψυχία) as a quality extolled by Aristotle and exemplified by the Josephan David, see Feldman, 'David', 154-55.

¹⁰⁷On the many reflexes of Josephus' first-hand experience of the horrors of intra-Jewish feuding during the Revolt in *Ant.*, see, *e.g.*, L.H. Feldman, 'Josephus' Portrait of Joab', *Estudios Bíblicos* 51 (1993) 323-51, esp. 335-50.