

THE MASSACRE OF THE PRIESTS OF NOB IN JOSEPHUS AND PSEUDO-PHILO

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Resumen

Tanto Josefo como Pseudo-Filón, autores (aproximadamente) contemporáneos, presentan una versión del relato bíblico sobre la matanza de los sacerdotes de Nob (1 Sm 21-22). El artículo comienza con unas observaciones sobre el texto que les sirve de fuente. Estudia luego las dos relecturas del episodio de Nob: contexto, texto bíblico, trama del relato, rasgos literarios e ideológicos. Y concluye con una comparación entre ambas versiones en un intento de explicar sus diferencias por cuanto se refiere al carácter general y a los destinatarios de las dos obras.

Summary

The two (approximately) contemporaneous authors Josephus and Pseudo-Philo both present a version of the Biblical story of the massacre of the priests of Nob (1 Samuel 21-22). This paper begins with some observations on the source text itself. It then studies in turn Pseudo-Philo's and Josephus' retellings of the Nob episode: context, Biblical text, story-line, literary and ideological features. The paper concludes with a comparison of the two renditions which attempts to account for the marked differences between them in terms of the overall character and intended audiences of the two works.

I. INTRODUCTION

Josephus and the anonymous we call "Pseudo-Philo" are figures with much in common. Both were highly learned Jews who took it upon themselves to retell a substantial portion of their people's Scriptures in a

critical period of Jewish history, i. e. the latter years of the first century A. D.¹ Moreover, scholars have identified a whole series of instances where the two authors agree on some point of detail when diverging from the Bible itself.² On the other hand, there are, of course, numerous differences between them as well, both on particulars and in overall approach.³ Given this state of affairs, it would seem of interest to systematically compare Josephus and Pseudo-Philo in their respective treatments of a specific Biblical passage to see what this might suggest about their similarities and differences in handling source data. The Bible passage which I have selected as the basis for such a study is one which has generated a certain scholarly interest in recent years, i. e. the story of the massacre of the priests of Nob related in 1 Sam 21:2 (English 21:1)-22:23.⁴

My investigation will proceed in four stages. First, I present some remarks on 1 Samuel 21-22 itself. Next, I shall examine, in turn, the retellings of the happening found in Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* (hereafter *BA*) chap. 63 and in Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* (hereafter *Ant.*) 6.242-270 in relation to the Bible's own account. Finally, I conclude with a comparison of the Pseudo-Philonic and Josephan renditions in which I attempt to explain various of the differences between these in terms of the distinctive overall character, aim, and audience of the two documents.

¹ In contrast to Josephus who explicitly informs us (see *Ant.* 20.267) that he finished his *Antiquities of the Jews* in the 13th year of the reign of Domitian (i.e. 93/94 A.D.), Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* provides no direct indications about its date of composition. It is generally held, however, that the work was written either shortly prior to or in the decades following the great Jewish revolt against Rome of 66-73 A.D. See F. J. Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible* (New York/Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993) 6 (prior to 70); H. Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (AGAJU 31; 2 vols.; Leiden, Brill, 1996) 1.199-210 (after 70).

² On these, see L. H. Feldman, "Prolegomenon," in M. R. James (tr.), *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo* (rpt; New York, Ktav, 1971) ix-clxviii, pp. lviii-lxi.

³ See Feldman, "Prolegomenon," pp. lxi-lxv.

⁴ I follow the Hebrew verse-numbering of 1 Samuel 21. On the Nob story, see recently C. Riepl, *Sind David und Saul berechenbar? Von der sprachlichen Analyse zur literarischen Struktur von 1 Sam 21 und 22* (ATSAT 39; St. Ottilien, EOS, 1993); P. T. Reis, "Collusion at Nob: A New Reading of 1 Samuel 21-22": *JSOT* 61 (1994) 59-73.

II. 1 SAMUEL 21-22

It is not my purpose here to offer a comprehensive treatment of 1 Samuel 21-22 in itself. Rather, I wish simply to make mention of four points about these chapters which will figure in my subsequent comparison of them with the versions of Pseudo-Philo and Josephus. These points are: 1) the immediate context of the chapters within the Book of Samuel, 2) their text, 3) story-line, and 4) (selected) literary and ideological features.

1. *Context*

1 Samuel 21-22 follows upon a three-chapter segment (1 Samuel 18-20) which focusses on the emotionally highly-charged interactions between Saul, Jonathan, and David and which provides the background for the repeated references to David's fugitive movements throughout the two chapters (see 21:2,11; 22:1,3,5). The chapters are followed, in turn, by an extended segment (1 Sam 23:1-27; 27:12) featuring David's efforts to avoid capture by Saul.

2. *Text*

The M1 and LXX texts of 1 Samuel 21-22 exhibit numerous differences. Of course, it is not possible for me even to list, much less to comment upon, all of these here.⁵ I simply wish to call attention to various divergences between the two witnesses which are of interest for our subsequent investigation of the text(s) of 1 Samuel 21-22 used by Pseudo-Philo and Josephus. Such divergences concern, e. g., the chapters' personal and place names, numerical figures cited, and designations used of characters. In MT and the Lucianic MSS of the LXX (hereafter L)⁶ the story's priest-figure is named "Ahimelech," in Codex Vaticanus (hereafter B)⁷ rather "Abimelech" (see 21,2, etc.). Both LXX witnesses call his

⁵ For a detailed discussion of the text-critical problems of 1 Samuel 21-22 which also takes into account the fragments of 1 Sam 21:3-10 found in the Qumran MS 4QSam^b, see the "textual notes" in P. K. McCarter, *1 Samuel* (AB 8; New York, Doubleday, 1980) 347-348, 355-356, 361-363.

⁶ For the Lucianic (or Antiochene) text of the LXX I use: N. Fernández Marcos / J. R. Busto Saiz, *El Texto Antioqueno de la Biblia Griega. I. 1-2 Samuel* (TECC 50; Madrid, CSIC, 1989).

⁷ For the text of B I use A. E. Brooke / N. Maclean / H. St. J. Thackeray, *The*

city "Nomba" in contrast to MT's "Nob" (21:2, etc.). According to MT and L 21:8; 22:9 the villain Doeg was an "Edomite/Idumean", while B designates him as "the Syrian." The MT further represents Doeg as "the chief of Saul's herdsmen" (RSV), in contrast to B and L's "keeper of Saul's mules." The king of Gath to whom David repairs in 21:11 is "Achish" in MT, Ἀγχόυς in B, and Ἀκχούς in L. The two LXX witnesses have David proceeding to the "city of Sareik (B) / Sarich (L)" in 22:5 instead of "the forest of Hereth" as in MT. MT 22:6b depicts Saul "sitting at Gibeah under the tamarisk tree (האשיל) on the height (ברמה)." By contrast, BL have him "sitting on the hill (ἐν τῷ βουνῷ) beneath the field (ἄρουραν) in Bama." Finally, there is a noteworthy discrepancy among the witnesses as to the number of Nob priests slain by Doeg: MT 22:18 makes it 85, B 305, and L even 350.

3. *Story-line*

The story-line of 1 Samuel 21-22 might be briefly recapitulated as follows. In the initial episode, 22:2-10, David comes to Nob where he engages in a double exchange with the priest Ahimelech, the first (vv. 3-7) involving bread, the second (vv. 9-10) weaponry. In between stands the ominous foreshadowing notice of v. 8 about the presence of Doeg at Nob on the day of David's visit. There follows a long interlude (21:11-22:5) featuring the movements of David once he leaves Nob. Within this complex one may readily distinguish four "mini-episodes": a) David's feigning madness at Gath, provoking an outburst of irritation by King Achish (21:11-16); b) David's family members and assorted malcontents gather to him at the cave of Adullam (22:1-2); c) David entrusts his parents to the king of Moab (22:3-4); and d) at the prophet Gad's direction, David heads to the territory of Judah, ending up (so MT) in the "forest of Hereth" (22:5). Following this David-centered interlude, the story of the fate of the priests of Nob resumes in 22:6-23. This segment, in turn, may be broken down into four scenes: a) Saul's berates his assembled retainers (22:6-10), this culminating in Doeg's disclosure of what he had witnessed at Nob (v. 10, cf. 21:8); b) Saul confronts Ahimelech whom he ends up condemning to death along with his family

(22:11-16); c) Saul's sentence is carried out (22:17-19); and d) the survivor Abiathar escapes to David who promises him protection (22:20-23).

4. *Literary and Ideological Features*

Under this final head, I wish to note two overall points about the narrative of 1 Samuel 21-22. First, the Biblical presentation gives rise to numerous ambiguities and unanswered questions.⁸ Simply by way of example, I note the following: Why does David, upon leaving Jonathan (21:1), go to Nob (21:2) in particular — and then later to the other sites mentioned by name in 21:11-22:5? What is the reason for Ahimelech's "trembling" (21:2, MT ויחרר; compare BL ἐξέσθη, "was amazed") as he meets David? Why should David specify that he wants "five" loaves from Ahimelech (21:3)? Is Ahimelech being depicted as guilty of sacrilege in handing over the "bread of the Presence" (21:7) to the non-priest David, given that Lev 24:8 reserves the consumption of such bread to "Aaron and his sons?" What is the meaning of the reference to Doeg's being "detained (MT נעצר) before the Lord" (21:8)? How had Goliath's "sword" come to be in the sanctuary of Nob (21:10), seeing that 1 Sam 17:54 states that David retained the giant's "armor" in his tent when he deposited Goliath's head in Jerusalem? What sort of object is the "ephod" behind which Goliath's sword is positioned according to Ahimelech (21:10, compare the "linen ephod" worn by the priests according to 22:18)? Why should David "fear" the words about him which King Achish's servants quote to the king (21:13)? What affect is David's feigning of madness (21:14) intended to have on Achish? How is it that David would entrust his parents to a foreigner, the king of Moab (22:3)? Where is "the stronghold" (MT מצודה) where David spends time (22:4-5)? Whence comes "the prophet Gad" who surfaces for the first time in 22:5, and what lies behind his enjoining David to proceed to Judean territory? Saul claims that "no one" has told him of Jonathan's making of a covenant with David (22:8; cf. 18:3). How then does the king know of the matter? Doeg avers that he witnessed Ahimelech "inquiring of the Lord" for David (22:10) although nothing is said of the priest's doing so in the account of 21:2-10 itself. Is Doeg lying here then? Similarly, Doeg charges simply that Ahimelech gave David "provisions". Why does he make no mention of the further

⁸ On these see, e. g., the catalogue in Reis, "Collusion," 73.

incriminating fact that those "provisions" were nothing less than the holy "bread of the Presence" (see 21:7)? How is it too that we only learn of Ahimelech's status as "son of Ahitub" and so an Elide (cf. 1 Sam 14:3) for the first time in Saul's address to him in 22:11? Why, in his speech of self-defense (22:14-15), does Ahimelech avoid addressing the charges, made by Doeg and repeated by Saul, about his having given provisions and Goliath's sword to David (cf. 22:10,13) to concentrate solely on the "inquiry" charge? In his response to that charge (22:15) is Ahimelech denying that he ever, in fact, inquired for David or is he asserting that he had done so already many times prior to David's recent visit to Nob?⁹ Why do Saul's other retainers refuse to carry out Saul's sentence (22:17), while Doeg does so without hesitation (22:18)? Is it plausible that Doeg would have been able to single-handedly butcher at least 85 (so MT) priests without the victims (or Saul's henchmen) attempting to impede him in any way? Is Doeg or Saul himself the subject of the subsequent double notice "he put to the sword" (22:19) whose object is all the human and animal inhabitants of Nob? What became of the thus depopulated city? How did Ahimelech's son Abiathar manage to escape the carnage that befell every other soul in Nob? Finally if, as he affirms to Abiathar (22:22), David realized from the start that Doeg would report his encounter with Ahimelech to Saul, why did he not take measures to "silence" the future informant on the spot?

My second point under this final heading is the observation that 1 Samuel 21-22 is the story of egregious wrong-doing on the part of its major characters: David's lie about being on a mission from the king (21:3) sets in motion the whole subsequent catastrophe. Saul and his instrument Doeg perpetrate a judicial murder, not only of Ahimelech—who seems, politically at least, to be guilty of nothing more than a good-faith mistake¹⁰— but also of the completely innocent, defenseless women and children of Nob. Ahimelech too might be judged guilty, if not of the charges for which he is executed, at least of a serious breach of sacral law, see above. It is then striking to note that the author of the chapters offers no explicit evaluation of his own concerning the characters' actions, just as he refrains from informing us of God's reaction to

⁹ Cf. the RSV rendition of Ahimelech's words in 22:15a "Is today the first time that I have inquired of God for him? No!."

¹⁰ See, however, Reis, "Collusion" (n. 4).

them. This feature is all the more noteworthy given that in similar contexts Biblical authors are not at all hesitant to tell us what they (and the Deity) thought about characters' actions and how the latter intends to deal with these (see, e. g., 1 Samuel 15; 2 Sam 11:27b).

In my study of Pseudo-Philo's and Josephus' Nob stories to which I now turn, I shall devote particular attention to how these authors deal with the above peculiarities of their source.

III. PSEUDO-PHILO

Pseudo-Philo's rendition of 1 Samuel 21-22 occurs in *BA*, chap. 63.¹¹ Already at first glance, it is apparent that his version leaves aside the bulk of the material making up the two chapters. Conversely, much of what one actually reads in *BA* 63 is without any parallel in 1 Samuel 21-22 itself. To facilitate my more detailed comparison between the Biblical story and its retelling by Pseudo-Philo, I shall employ the same four headings previously used in commenting on the former.

1. Context

Pseudo Philo follows the Bible for what concerns the immediately preceding context of the Nob-story, placing this directly after his version of the Saul-David-Jonathan interactions (1 Samuel 18-20) in *BA* 62. On the other hand, he has no equivalent to the segment dealing with David's flight before Saul (1 Samuel 23-27) which in the Bible constitutes the initial sequel to that story. Rather, in his presentation, the Nob account (*BA* 63) is juxtaposed directly with the narrative of Saul's visit to the Endor medium, *BA* 64 (// 1 Samuel 28).

¹¹ I use the Latin text of *BA* by D. J. Harrington and J. Cazeaux (eds.), *Pseudo-Philon: Les Antiquités Bibliques* 1 (SC 229; Paris, Cerf, 1976) and the English translation of this by D. J. Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo," in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* [hereafter OTP], I (Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1983) 297-377. I have likewise consulted the translations of C. Dietzfelbinger, *Pseudo-Philo: Antiquitates Biblicae* (JSHRZ II,2; Gütersloh, Mohn, 1975) and J. Hadot, "Livre des Antiquités Bibliques," in A. Dupont-Sommer / M. Philonenko (eds.), *La Bible. Écrits Intertestamentaires* (Paris, Gallimard, 1987) 1227-1390. See too the discussions of *BA* 63 in Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 215-216; Jacobson, *Commentary*, 2.1199-1203.

2. *Biblical Text*

D. J. Harrington concludes that for the books of Joshua-Judges-1 Samuel Pseudo-Philo generally depends, in first place, on a text like that found in the "Lucianic or proto-Lucianic manuscripts."¹² In the case of *BA* 63, Pseudo-Philo's affinities do seem, in fact, to be more with LXX than with MT 1 Samuel 21-22, and more specifically with B as opposed to L. In agreement with B, e. g., he calls the priest "Abimelech" (63.2) rather than "Ahimelech" (so MT L) and designates Doeg as a "Syrian" (63.2,4), not an "Edomite/Idumean" as in MT L (21:8). His further indication about Doeg's being "keeper of Saul's mules" corresponds to BL (and OL) 21:8 against MT's "chief herdsman." A final instance where Pseudo-Philo evidences clear dependence on a non-MT text concerns the number of priests slain. In two MSS of *BA* 63.3 the figure given is 375, while the remainder read rather 385.¹³ Neither of these figures is identical with those found in the various textual witnesses for 1 Sam 22:18 (MT: 85, B 305, L 350). Both are, however, clearly closer to the higher LXX total than to the much lower MT one.

3. *Story-Line*

In Pseudo-Philo's rendition it is only the concluding segment of the Biblical Nob story, i. e. 1 Sam 22:6-23 which has an actual content counterpart. In thus leaving aside the whole of 21:2-22:5, Pseudo-Philo replaces it (63.1) with a "theological introduction" to the following story. This introduction accuses (63.1a) the priests of Nob of (rather indeterminate)

¹² D. J. Harrington, "The Biblical Text of Pseudo-Philo's 'Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum'": *CBQ* 33 (1971) 1-17, p. 16. Compare Jacobson, *Commentary*, 1.255: "... there is no compelling evidence that his text was very different from MT. ... Although there are occasional instances where it appears that LAB may have had a Lucianic or a Samaritan reading, these are balanced by instances where LAB reflects an MT text in contradistinction to other text-types."

¹³ The latter figure is that read by Harrington-Cazeaux, *Pseudo-Philon*, *ad loc.* Feldman, "Prolegomenon," cxlii; Hadot, *Antiquités Bibliques*, *ad loc.* and Jacobson, *Commentary*, *ad loc.* while Dietzfelbinger, *Antiquitates Biblicae*, *ad loc.* reads 375.

cultic offenses¹⁴ and cites God's decision (63.1b) to punish the city's inhabitants because of their imitation of the reprobate sons of Eli.¹⁵

Following his self-devised introduction, Pseudo-Philo turns to a highly selective, free reproduction of the content of 1 Sam 22:6-23. In place of the source's scene of Saul's querying his retainers and Doeg responding (vv. 6-10), he has Doeg take the initiative in coming to report to Saul (63.2a).¹⁶ The content of Doeg's report likewise diverges in several respects from its prototype in 22:10. Negatively, Pseudo-Philo's Doeg makes no mention of two of the three charges advanced by his Biblical

¹⁴ BA 63.1a reads in Harrington's OTP rendition: "In that time the priests who dwelt in Nob were profaning the holy things of the Lord (*contaminantes sancta Domini*) and desecrating (*expropriantes*) the first fruits of the people." It is not immediately clear what Pseudo-Philo has in mind with these accusations. C. Perrot / P.-M. Bogaert, *Pseudo-Philon: Les Antiquités Bibliques 2* (SC 230; Paris, Cerf, 1976) 241 tentatively suggest that they represent a negative, generalized interpretation of the reference in 1 Sam 21:4-7 to Ahimelech's handing over the "holy bread" to David. Compare Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 215 who, with regard to this proposal, avers "... Pseudo-Philo apparently does not mean that." The question is further complicated by the uncertainty as to the reading of the final verbal form in 63.1. As noted above, Harrington in *OTP* (see p. 375, n. a) reads *expropriantes*; Harrington-Cazeaux, *Pseudo-Philon*, 1.378 (see also Perrot-Bogaert, *Pseudo-Philon*, 2.241) read *exprobantes* with the MSS, rendering this "ils profanaient les prémices (en les distribuant) au peuple," while also suggesting *appropriantes* as a possible conjecture. Jacobson, for his part (*Commentary*, 1.85) proposes the reading *expropriantes primitiva a populis* which he renders (2.1198) "they took from the people the first fruits for themselves." In any case, as Perrot-Bogaert, *Pseudo-Philon*, 2.241 point out, Pseudo-Philo's denunciation of the Nob priests stands in contrast to Rabbinic tradition (see, e. g., y. *Sanh.* 10.2; *Midr. Tanhuma* [Buber] 3.45) which affirms that all of them were worthy of the high priestly dignity.

¹⁵ Here, Pseudo-Philo introduces a *Rückverweis* to an earlier Biblical incident, i. e. the account of the wicked deeds of Hophni and Phineas in 1 Sam 2:11-17, 22-25 to which his own parallel is BA 52. Such "cross references" are a hallmark of BA, see O. Eissfeldt, "Zur Kompositionstechnik des Pseudo-Philonischen Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum," *Kleine Schriften 3* (Tübingen, Mohr [Siebeck], 1966) 340-353. In this connection, it might be noted that elsewhere as well Pseudo-Philo casts Nob in a bad light, there too deviating from the Bible in doing so. According to Judges 19 (see v. 14) the rape and murder of the Levite's concubine is perpetrated by the men of Gibeah of Benjamin where the hapless couple had stopped for the night. By contrast, in BA 45 the incident takes place in Nob, whither the couple came after being refused admittance to Gibeah (see 45.1).

¹⁶ In introducing the figure of Doeg here Pseudo-Philo combines data from 1 Sam 22:10 (his report to Saul) and 21:8 (his position as "keeper of Saul's mules," so LXX). His doing so evidences that Pseudo-Philo was familiar with the content of 21:3-10 even though he opted not to reproduce it as such, see above.

namesake (Abimelech's "inquiring" for David and giving him provisions), just as he leaves aside the specification that it was *Goliath's* sword he handed over to David. Positively, he has Doeg accuse Abimelech of "making plans (*consilia*)" with David and sending him away "in peace."

Next, Pseudo-Philo (63.2b) extracts two elements from the Biblical exchange between king and priest (22:11-16), i. e. Saul's summoning of Abimelech (// 22:11aα) and his passing the death sentence upon him (// 22:16). To the latter item he attaches a motivation, itself inspired by the wording of Doeg's charge in 62.2a (cf. also the motivation attached to Saul's order that the priests be killed in 22:17, "because their hand also is with David"), i. e. "because you made a plot (*consilium*) with my enemy." Pseudo-Philo continues to abridge in his handling of the "execution scene" of 22:17-19. In his rendition, Saul does not order others (first his guard and then, on their refusal, Doeg, so 22:17-18a) to kill Abimelech and his brethren. Rather, the king himself immediately slays the priests,¹⁷ the number of the slain not being specified for the moment (compare 22:18b). Likewise leaving aside the notice about the fate of the rest of Nob's inhabitants (22:19), Pseudo-Philo (63.2c) directly juxtaposes Saul's murderous deed (cf. 22:18b) with mention of Abiathar as the sole escapee and his report to David (// 22:20-21).

The Biblical account of the Nob happening concludes in 22:22-23 with David's words of confession and reassurance to Abiathar. For these, Pseudo-Philo substitutes a conclusion of his own, consisting of a two-part announcement concerning the fate awaiting those held responsible, in one way or other, for the massacre (63.3-4), plus a "source notice" for Saul's kingship (63.5) The identity of the speaker of the initial announcement (63.3) which is introduced with the phrase "he said to him" is left ambiguous. In light of what precedes where Abiathar has just reported to David, the speaker would appear to be David. Given the concluding content of the announcement, however with its statement "I will deliver them into the hand of their enemies," one is led to identify the speaker rather as God

¹⁷ Pseudo-Philo may have found his inspiration for making Saul himself the priests' executioner in 22:21 where Abiathar tells David that "*Saul* had killed the priests of the Lord." In addition, for one familiar with the Biblical account, Pseudo-Philo's formulation might well be understood in a causative sense, i. e. Saul caused the priests to be killed, i. e. by Doeg, cf. Perrot and Bogaert, *Pseudo-Philon*, 2.241; Jacobson, *Commentary*, 2.1199. Thus, there is no necessary "contradiction" with the Bible's presentation.

himself.¹⁸ The focus of this first announcement is the people's complicity in what has happened. Earlier, they had intervened to rescue the individual Jonathan from death at his father's hands,¹⁹ they have now kept silent in the face of Saul's killing – as we now hear – of no less than 385²⁰ priests.²¹ In punishment the people are, the speaker (God) states, shortly to be delivered by him into the hands of their enemies and will "fall wounded" (*cadent vulnerati*) with their king (Saul). In formulating this prediction of upcoming punishment for people and king, Pseudo-Philo obviously has in view the story of the battle of Mt. Gilboa as told in 1 Samuel 31 (// BA 65).²²

In 63.4 Pseudo-Philo has God announce punishment for the story's other culprit, Doeg. A "fiery worm" (*vermis igneus*)²³ will attack his

¹⁸ So Dietzfelbinger, *Pseudo-Philo*, 260, n. 3; Jacobson, *Commentary*, 2.1199 (who suggests that a Hebrew text reading וַיִּאֱמַר אֱלֹהִים "was mistaken as" וַיִּאֱמַר אֱלֹהֵי).

¹⁹ The reference here is to 1 Sam 14:45 where the people nullify Saul's condemnation of Jonathan to death for his unwitting violation of Saul's battlefield "curse" upon any who would eat until the evening (14:24). As so often in BA, Pseudo-Philo here in 63.3 makes a "delayed use" of a Biblical episode which he earlier passed over. Compare, e. g., BA 23:6-7 where in his rendition of Joshua's farewell discourse (// Joshua [23-]24), he incorporates a midrashic reminiscence of the covenant-making scene of Gen 15:9-21 of which he says nothing in his actual account of Abraham's life in BA 6-8. See Jacobson, *Commentary*, 1.225-227 for further examples of the phenomenon (and its reverse) in BA.

²⁰ Here, Pseudo-Philo makes delayed use of the figure from 22:18 for the number of priests killed. On the problem of the reading here, see n. 13.

²¹ *Similarx*, 95, as Dietzfelbinger, *Pseudo-Philo*, 261, n. d, points out, Pseudo-Philo, in his version of the story of the Levite's concubine (Judges 19-21), has God instruct the priest Phineas to tell the people that he has allowed them to be defeated by the Benjaminites because, whereas they were great disturbed by the latter's violation of the woman, they had remained "silent" regarding Micah's idol-making (cf. Judges 17-18), see BA 47.7-8. In addition, the charge about the people's "silence" here in BA 63.3 has a certain counterpart in Rabbinic tradition where (see, e. g., *b. Sanh.* 20a; *Num. Rab.* 23.13) one opinion advanced as to why God punished Abner, Saul's general (1 Sam 14:55, with ignoble death (cf. 2 Sam 3:33-34) is that Abner had failed to speak out against Saul's killing of the priests (the former source also quotes the alternative opinion that Abner did, in fact, protest but was ignored by Saul). See n. 24.

²² According to Dietzfelbinger, *Pseudo-Philo*, 261, n. e the phrase "fall wounded" used of the people here in 63.3 derives from LXX 1 Sam 31:1 (πίπτουσιν τραυματίαι) as opposed to MT's וַיִּפְּלוּ חַלְלִים which RSV renders "(they) fell slain". Compare, however, Jacobson, *Commentary*, 2.1200 who avers "... one can be certain that LAB exactly followed the Hebrew at 31:1... The fact is that חַלְלִים essentially means 'gravely wounded' and thus is susceptible to being rendered both 'wounded' and 'dead'."

²³ Jacobson, *Commentary*, 2.1200 states concerning this phrase: "I do not know

tongue, causing him to rot away (*tabescere faciet*),²⁴ after which his everlasting dwelling place will be with the reprobate Jair in "inextinguishable fire."²⁵ Thereafter, in 63.5 Pseudo-Philo rounds off his version of the Nob-story with a source-notice for Saul's reign: "All the things that Saul did, and the rest of his words, and how he pursued David,"²⁶ are they not written in the Book of the Kings of Israel?" This notice represents an imitation by Pseudo-Philo of a formula, employing the question form, regularly used for the kings of Israel and Judah – though not of Saul himself- in the Books of Kings and Chronicles. It likewise has a counterpart in the similar notices which Pseudo-Philo, here as well without Biblical warrant as such, introduces in connection with his earlier accounts of Gideon (35.7), Samson (43.4), and Saul himself (56.7).²⁷

anything about of 'fiery worms' [i. e. elsewhere in ancient Jewish-Christian literature]." Accordingly, he proposes (*ibid.*) several possibilities concerning an original reading in which that peculiar reference would have been absent, e. g., that the word *igneus* has been interpolated here from the phrase *in igne* two lines later.

²⁴ Compare *BA* 44.9 where God announces that "worms" will come out of the rotting body of the mother of Micah, the idol-maker (cf. Judges 17). As Perrot-Bogaert, *Pseudo-Philon*, 2.241 note, this punishment involves an application of the talion-principle to Doeg: since he had used his tongue to bring harm on the priests, God will single out his tongue for retribution. Cf. *Deut. Rab.* 5.10 which quotes the statement of R. Samuel b. Nahman according to whom three groups of people ended up being slain as a result of Doeg's slanderous use of his tongue, i. e. Doeg himself, Saul who gave heed to the slander, and its object, the inhabitants of Nob (in the version of this saying cited in *Num. Rab.* 19.2 a fourth, ultimate victim of Doeg's slander is mentioned as well, i. e. Abner; see n. 21).

²⁵ On Jair, see *BA* 38, an elaboration of the summary notices of Judg 10:3-5 concerning this "minor judge." Pseudo-Philo there relates that when he sentenced seven Israelites who refused to sacrifice to Baal to be burned to death, an angel delivered them and announced (38.4) that Jair himself would be consumed by fire and have his "dwelling" there. Cf. also *BA* 23.6 where Joshua recalls how God showed Abraham "the place of fire" reserved for evildoers. Rabbinic tradition numbers Doeg among those who have no place in the world to come, see *m. Sanh.* 10.2; *b. Sanh.* 106b (here R. Johanan is quoted as stating that a destroying angel "burnt Doeg's soul"); *Gen. Rab.* 32.1 (38.1); *'Abot R. Nat.* 36; 41. For further parallels, see Jacobson, *Commentary*, 2.1201.

²⁶ This phrase alludes to the content of 1 Samuel 23-27 concerning Saul's pursuit of David which, as noted above, Pseudo-Philo does not reproduce as such.

²⁷ In this last instance, the events recorded in the "Book of the Kings of Israel" are those surrounding Saul's appointment as king as related in *BA* 56 (// 1 Samuel 8-10).

4. *Literary and Ideological Features*

Summing up on relationship between *BA* 63 and its biblical source, one might say that in his version Pseudo-Philo "frames" selected elements of 22:6-23 (// 63.2) with an introduction (63.1) and conclusion (63.3-5) of his own creation. The components of this framework serve to connect Pseudo-Philo's Nob story with a whole series of other Biblical episodes, i. e. the depravity of Eli's sons (1 Samuel 2// *BA* 52), the people's deliverance of Jonathan (1 Sam 14:45, no parallel in *BA*), and the coming overthrow of Saul and his people by the Philistines (1 Samuel 31// *BA* 65). The framework elements likewise evidence points of contact with Rabbinic traditions on the lack of protest against Saul's order (see n. 21), the talion punishment of Doeg's evil tongue (see n. 24) and his everlasting *postmortem* fate (see n. 25). In substituting such a framework for the material of 1 Sam 21:2-22:5 (as well as by leaving aside much of 22:6-23 itself), Pseudo-Philo disposes of many of the problematic features of the two Biblical chapters as cited above. On the other hand, his presentation is not without ambiguities and puzzlements of its own. What, e. g., concretely was the nature of the crimes with which the Nob priests are charged in 63.1 (see n. 14), and who is the speaker of the announcement in 63.3 (see n. 17)? The most distinctive feature of *BA* 63 vis-à-vis its Biblical source is, however, the former's massive introduction of explicit references to God, along with moralizing commentary on the characters' actions and the punishments these evoke which are so conspicuously absent in the latter. Thereby, Pseudo-Philo turns the episode into a double story of crime and (well-deserved) punishment. First, the Nob priests are guilty of cultic offenses and suffer annihilation at Saul's hands for this. But also those involved in the Nobites' destruction – the informant Doeg, the killer Saul, and the unprotesting people – are guilty too and they also will receive fitting recompense. Such an emphasis on the working out of moral causality in Israel's history is a constant feature of Pseudo-Philo's work – one which he introduces also in many other contexts where the corresponding Biblical account lacks it.²⁸

²⁸ On this feature, see Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 247-248.

IV. JOSEPHUS

Josephus' extended rendition of 1 Samuel 21-22 stands in *Ant.* 6.242-270.²⁹ In treating his version I use the same four headings previously employed for the Bible and Pseudo-Philo.

1. *Context*

Josephus gives the Nob story the same immediate context it has in Scripture with an account of the Saul-Jonathan-David interactions preceding (6.193-241// 1 Samuel 18-20) and the narrative of David pursued by Saul (6.271-326// 1 Samuel 23-27) following.

2. *Biblical Text*

There are a variety of indications of Josephus' dependence on a text more like that of LXX than MT throughout 6.242-270. In agreement with B he calls the priest "Abimelech" (6.242, etc.) and Doeg a "Syrian" (Σύρος 6.244// 21:8). Abimelech is "astonished (ἐθαύμασε)" to see David appear, as in BL 1 Sam 21:2 (ἐξέστη), whereas MT refers to him as "trembling." *A la* BL 1 Sam 21:8, Doeg's occupation is that of "keeper of the king's mules" (6.244); contrast MT's "chief herdsman." The Josephan king of Gath bears the same name, i. e. Ἄγγους as in B (6.245// 21:11); contrast MT "Achish," L Ἀκχούς. The name of the site, i. e. "Saris" to which David betakes himself when commanded by the prophet in 6.249 is clearly closer to the readings of B (Σαρεΐκ) and of L (Σαρίχ) 1 Sam 22:5 than to MT's "forest of Hereth". Finally, Josephus' reference (6.251) to "the hill" (βουνόν) where Saul confronts the Benjaminites and his seating himself there at the "Arura" (Ἀρούρης) parallels BL 1 Sam 22:6 "on the hill (βουνῶ) under the arouran (ἀρούραν)" against MT's "at Gibeati: under the tamarisk tree (Hebrew לְשֵׁן)." ³⁰

²⁹ For the text and translation of the works of Josephus I use H. St. J. Thackeray et al. (eds.), *Josephus*, 10 vols. (LCL; Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press / London, Heinemann, 1926-1965 [*Ant.* 6.242-270 is found in vol. V, 287-301 where the translation and notes are by R. Marcus]). I have likewise consulted the text and apparatus of *Ant.* 6.242-270 given by B. Niese, *Flavii Iosephi Opera* II (Berlin, Weidmann, 1955) 57-63.

³⁰ Also to be noted is that the Lat translation of Josephus (6.260) which Marcus,

3. *Story-line*

Josephus in 6.242-270 does offer a content parallel for each of the happenings recorded in 1 Samuel 21-22. At the same time, he freely expands, abridges, re-arranges and otherwise adapts the source material. Here, I shall confine myself to a selective review of the more noteworthy of these Josephan rewriting techniques.

In rendering the exchange(s) between David and Abimelech of 1 Sam 21:2-10 in 6.242-244, Josephus eliminates the whole discussion concerning the different types of bread featured in 21:3-7 which Gentile readers would not likely find either comprehensible or of any interest.³¹ His David simply asks for "provisions" (ἐφόδια) and "obtains" these from Abimelech without more ado (6.243-244). Whereas the source "interrupts" David's double request (for bread and weapons) with the parenthetical notice on Doeg's presence (21:8), Josephus cites the two requests back-to-back, and only then makes reference to Doeg (6.244). He leaves aside as well the opaque reference to Doeg's being "detained before the Lord" of 21:8. Picking up on his own earlier account (see 6.192, compare 1 Sam 17:54), he has Abimelech remind David of the latter's having "dedicated" Goliath's sword "to God"; thereby, he accounts — as the Bible itself does not — for its current presence at the sanctuary of Nob (6.244, compare 21:10a).³²

following Niese, adopts, gives the same figure for the number of priests slain as does B 1 Sam 22:18, i. e. 305. The significance of this datum is, however, relativized by the fact that the Greek witnesses of *Ant.* offer a variety of other figures: 85 (so RO = MT), 385 (MSP = BA 63.2); 530 (the "Epitome"). See Marcus, *Josephus*, V, 296, n. 1, 297, n. a; Feldman, "Prolegomenon," cxlii (he opts for the reading 385).

³¹ Also elsewhere, Josephus, with a view to holding the interest of Gentile readers, either omits entirely or drastically reduces by way of generalization the Bible's "cultic particulars." See C. T. Begg, *Josephus' Account of the Early Divided Monarchy (AJ 8,212-420)* (BETL 108; Leuven, Leuven University Press / Peeters, 1993) 277 and n. 1826. In passing over the mention in 21:7 about Abimelech's giving David the holy bread of the Presence, Josephus is likewise absolving the priest of any suspicion of sacrilege. His concern with disposing of such a suspicion with regard to a priestly figure is understandable given his pride in own priestly ancestry, see *Vita*, 1-2.

³² Josephus' double reference to David's disposition of the sword accentuates the latter's piety (in 1 Sam 17:54 David appears to keep Goliath's armor for himself). On this feature see L. H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of David": *HUCA* 60 (1989) 129-174, pp. 156-164.

Josephus' rendition of the story of David's stay in Gath (6.245-246// 21:11-16) evidences small-scale additions of various sorts. "Gitta" (Gath) is specified as a "city of the Philistines" and situated "beyond Hebrew territory." On the psychological level, the content of David's "fear" of Achish (see 21:12), is spelled out (namely, that he would be put to death by "Anchus"), as is the motivation behind the strange actions performed by him (see 21:14), i. e. "so as to convince the king of his malady." The Gathites' quotation of the acclamation of the Israelite women (21:12b, see 1 Sam 18:6) is reformulated so as to focus attention on the key issue: the quote omits the opening reference to Saul's achievements and explicitly mentions that those slain by David were "Philistines," i. e. compatriots of the inhabitants of Gath, itself a "city of the Philistines" according to 6.245.³³ Similarly, in place of the rhetorical question with which Achish concludes his words in 21:16 ("Shall this fellow come into my house?"), Josephus (6.246) represents him as "ordering David's instant expulsion." Thereby, he accounts better for David's "departing from there (i. e. Gath)" as mentioned immediately thereafter (see 22:1).

Ant. 6.247-249 is Josephus' counterpart to 1 Sam 22:1-5, the segment concerning David's "stations" after leaving Nob. Here too, Josephus brings a variety of rewriting techniques to bear. Additions include an opening reference to the localization of "Adullam" (22:1) in "the tribe of Judah" (6.247), allusion to David's mental state as he departs for Moab (i. e. "encouraged" by his growing support, 6.248; compare 22:3), and underscoring of the fugitive's piety via the inserted note on his "obedience" to the prophet's directive (6.249; compare 22:5).³⁴ Conversely, the place name "Mizpeh (of Moab)" is omitted (6.248; compare 22:3), as is that of the prophet (i. e. Gad, so 22:5) who tells David to repair to Judah.³⁵ Josephus' rewording of David's appeal to the king of Moab of 22:3 in 6.248 displays two characteristic features of his history overall: substitution of indirect for direct discourse and what L. H. Feldman calls "detheologizing."³⁶ In further noting that David's parents did not merely

³³ Compare Josephus' rendition of 1 Sam 18:6 in *Ant.* 6.193 where, similarly, he has the women acclaim Saul's slaying "many thousands of Philistines."

³⁴ On this last point, see n. 32.

³⁵ Also elsewhere Josephus frequently omits minor Biblical place and proper names whose strange sounds would likely prove off-putting to Gentile readers. See Begg, *Josephus' Account*, 276 and n. 1825.

³⁶ Compare "Pray let my father and my mother stay with you, till I know what God

stay with the king (so 22:4), but also were "shown every honour" by him (6.248) Josephus builds up the stature of David himself.

In reviewing Josephus' treatment of 1 Sam 22:6-23 in 6.250-270, we might distinguish the same four scenes identified earlier within the former text. The first of those scenes (22:6-10// 6.250-254) describes Saul's coming to learn of what had transpired at Nob. Josephus amplifies the scene's opening reference (22:6) to the king's hearing of David and his men's visit to Nob with an extended account of the consternation the report occasioned Saul (6.250). Saul's presence "at the hill" (so BL 22:6; compare MT "at Gibeah") is explained in terms of this being the site of his "palace" (6.251a), while the superfluous detail about the king's having "his spear in his hand" (22:6) is omitted. Josephus likewise elaborates on Saul's address to his retainers (22:7-8): Saul begins by recalling his own benefactions to the Benjaminites (6.251a) before sarcastically alluding to those they think to gain from David (6.252a// 22:7b). To the king's initial, general charge that all his hearers are now arrayed against him (// 22:8aα), he has Saul add the "motivation" "*because* my own son Jonathan himself has taken this stand and has persuaded you to do the like" (6.251b). By way of the alternative formulation in 6.252b-653, he avoids the source's repetition of the phrase "no one discloses" (RSV) in the subsequent accusations of 22:8aβb. He highlights Doeg's role as the sole informant against David by prefacing (6.254) his parallel to 22:9a with the notice "when the king was silent, no other of those present made reply; only...". Also noteworthy are Josephus' modifications of Doeg's actual words as cited in 22:9b-10. Here again, direct gives way to indirect discourse. Doeg's qualification of Abimelech as "son of Ahitub" is omitted.³⁷ The informant's initial charge about Abimelech's having "inquired

will do with me" (22:3) vs. "David besought him to keep them (his parents) until he himself should what was finally to become of him" (6.248). On Josephus' penchant for transposing Biblical direct into indirect address, see Begg, *Josephus' Account*, 12-13, n. 38 and the literature cited there. On his general tendency to reduce the Bible's explicit references to God, see L. H. Feldman, "Use, Authority, and Exegesis of Mikra in the Writings of Josephus," in M. J. Mulder / H. Sysling (eds.), *Mikra* (CRINT 2:1; Assen, van Gorcum / Philadelphia, Westminster, 1988) 455-518, pp. 503-507. As Feldman, "David," 161-164 notes, however, in the specific case of David, Josephus tends to accentuate God's role at the expense of David himself (whom, with Roman readers in view, he is careful not to unduly exalt, given his status as wellspring of Jewish Messianic hopes with their politically explosive potential).

³⁷ The reiterations of this indication in 22:11,12 are likewise passed over by

(MT לַאֲשֵׁר, Β ἠρώτα, L ἐπηρώτα) of the Lord (MT)/ God (BL)" is made more specific: "through the priest's prophecies (προφητεύσαντος)³⁸ David had learnt what was to come." Doeg's subsequent source accusations (giving of provisions and Goliath's sword) are rounded off with a further one: "he (David) had safely been sent on his way to those whom he was seeking."³⁹

The second scene within the complex of 1 Sam 22:6-23 recounts the Saul-Abimelech exchange (vv. 11-16// 6.255-258). From the opening of this scene Josephus omits the notice that Abimelech and his house actually did appear before Saul when summoned (v. 11b) as well as the king's opening address to the priest and the latter's respectful reply (v. 12). Instead, he has Saul preface (6.255a) his accusations (// v. 13) with the reproachful words "what wrong have I done to thee or what injury that...?"⁴⁰ Similarly, his Saul accentuates the charges of 22:13⁴¹ with his concluding assertion "... assuredly thou were not ignorant that he (David) was fleeing from me and that he hated my house" (6.255c).

Josephus. The omission likely reflects the fact that in other OT contexts (see 2 Sam 8:17// 1 Chr 18:16; 1 Chr 5:34; 6:37-38) "Ahitub" appears rather as the father of Zadok, representative of a rival priestly line to the Elides, the dynasty of which Ahimelech, son of Ahitub and brother of Ahijah, was a member, as emerges from a combination of 1 Sam 14:3 and 22:10. Cf. *Ant.* 8.11 where Josephus calls Eli the "grandfather" of Abiathar, this making him, rather than "Ahitub" (so 1 Sam 22:10), the father of Abimelech, Abiathar's father.

³⁸ Josephus' introduction of this term reflects his penchant for employing the words "prophet" etc., where the Biblical parallel text does not, as well as his associating of the priesthood with prophetic activity. See L. H. Feldman, "Prophets and Prophecy in Josephus": *JTS* 41 (1990) 386-422, pp. 389-391, 419-421.

³⁹ This concluding charge echoes David's statement about his having made a rendezvous with his men as cited in 1 Sam 21:3 (// *Ant.* 6.243).

⁴⁰ Compare 6.251 where the Josephan Saul starts off his accusatory address to the Benjaminites by reminding them of his benefactions to them. In both cases the intent of the inserted opening element is to underscore the perfidity of the accused whom Saul has actively benefitted (6.251) or never harmed (6.255). Note that, in contrast to his handling of several previous speeches in 1 Samuel 21-22, Josephus does retain the source's direct discourse in reproducing the words of Saul and Abimelech from 22:11-16.

⁴¹ In his wording of these charges, Josephus (6.255) employs the phrase "(why didst thou) deliver oracles concerning the future (περι τῶν μελλόντων ἐχημάτων)" in place of the expression "inquire of God" used in 22:13. This phrase is a variation of the term "prophecy" which he uses to render the occurrences of the source expressions in 6.254 (// 22:10) and 6.257 (// 22:15). See nn. 38,42.

Thereafter, Josephus prefaces Abimelech's words of self-defence (// 22:14-15) with an extended editorial comment (6.256a) which prepares readers for the tack the priest will take in his reply: "The high priest did not resort to a denial of what had taken place, but frankly confessed that he had rendered those services, yet not to gratify David, but Saul." In rendering the priest's actual speech, he transposes the rhetorical questions of vv. 14 and 15a into statements by him. Between the first and second of these statements he further inserts an parenthetical observation by Abimelech in support of his preceding claim (// v. 14) that he had not viewed David, the recipient of a whole series of honors from Saul, as the latter's enemy: "Men bestow such dignities not on their enemies but on those who show them the greatest goodwill and esteem." Abimelech's affirmation about this not being "the first time" that he had provided David with supernatural direction (// v. 15a)⁴² is likewise amplified: "often have I done so on other occasions as well."⁴³ Following his elaborated version of the priest's double protestation of innocence from 22:14-15a, Josephus inserts an additional claim by him (6.258c) whose wording echoes that of his editorial introduction to Abimelech's speech in 6.256a (as well as David's own words to him as reported in 21:3//6.242). This reads: "And when he told me that he had been sent by thee in great haste on a certain matter (πρόξιν),⁴⁴ had I refused any of his desires, I should have thought to be gainsaying thee rather than he."⁴⁵ In 22:15b Abimelech rounds off his self-defence with the plea that Saul not hold him or his household guilty, given his total ignorance of "all this", i. e. the king's allegations about David. Josephus amplifies the priest's final word,

⁴² As in 6.254 (compare 22:10), Josephus replaces the source reference to an "inquiring of God" with the term "prophesy" (προφητεῖαι)." See n. 38.

⁴³ By means of his transposition/expansion of the rhetorical question of 22:15a ("Is today the first time I have inquired of God for him? No!", so RSV), i. e. "Nor was this the first time that I had prophesied for him; often have I done so on other occasions as well" (6.257b), Josephus resolves the source's ambiguity as to whether Abimelech is affirming or denying that he had earlier inquired of the Lord for David. See above in the text.

⁴⁴ Compare 6.242 (// 21:3): "(David) replied that he had been charged by the king with a secret matter (πρόξιν)..."

⁴⁵ With the concluding words of Abimelech's affirmation above, compare Josephus' statement in 6.256 "(Abimelech) frankly confessed that he had rendered these services, yet not to gratify David but Saul."

likewise transposing its claim of ignorance into a positive statement about a good deed done by him in good faith: "Therefore think not ill of me, nor, *from what thou now hearest of David's designs*, regard with suspicion *what I then deemed an act of humanity*⁴⁶; for it was to thy friend and to thy son-in-law and captain that I rendered it, not to thine enemy." ⁴⁷

The scene between king and priest (22:11-16) climaxes in v. 16 with Saul pronouncing the death sentence upon Abimelech and his ancestral house. Josephus leaves aside this word of Saul's which, in content, appears to duplicate his following execution command of v. 17.

The third scene making up the story of the Nob massacre is 22:17-19// 6.259-260, the account of the massacre itself. Josephus (6.259a) precedes his rendition of Saul's command to his retainers (// 22:17a) with an editorial notice on the (non)-effect of Abimelech's plea upon him: "These words of the high priest did not persuade Saul, for fear is strong enough to disbelieve (μηδ' ... πιστεύειν)⁴⁸ even a truthful plea (ἀληθεῖ ... ἀπολογία)." There follows his (indirect discourse) version of the royal command (v. 17aα) with its motivation (v. 17aβ), charging the priests with treason, omitted: "he ordered (κελεύει)⁴⁹ his soldiers to surround him and his kin (μετὰ τας γενεάς)⁵⁰, and slay them." Conversely, he does provide a motivation for the retainers' refusal to comply with Saul's command (// v. 17b): "... dreading more to offend the Deity (τὸ θεῖον εὐλαβουμένων) than to disobey the king...". As in 22:18, Josephus then has Saul entrust the deed to Doeg who does carry it out, acting, however,

⁴⁶ In the above formulation note the contrast between the "then" and the "now": Saul, according to Abimelech, has only just now learned of David's treachery himself; thus, he can hardly blame him for acting on what was supposed up till this point concerning David's relation to the king by everyone, Saul himself included. Josephus leaves aside Abimelech's plea for his household from his version of 22:15b, thereby keeping attention focussed on Abimelech personally.

⁴⁷ Note the inclusion here at the end of Abimelech's discourse with its opening words in 6.256: "I knew him (David) not... for thine enemy... but as thy captain,... thy son-in-law and kinsman."

⁴⁸ On Josephus' use of "belief" terminology, see D. R. Lindsey, *Josephus and Faith: πίστις and πιστεύειν as Faith Terminology in the Writings of Flavius Josephus and the New Testament* (ALGHJ 19; Leiden, Brill, 1993).

⁴⁹ BL εἶπεν. Here, as often elsewhere, Josephus introduces an historic present form where the LXX reads a past form. See Begg, *Josephus' Account*, 10-11, n. 32.

⁵⁰ Compare 22:17 "the priests of the Lord." The codices RO, followed by Niese, omit the above phrase.

not alone, "but taking to help others as wicked (πονηρούς) as himself."⁵¹ As noted, 22:19 leaves ambiguous the one responsible for the subsequent butchery of Nob's human and animal inhabitants — is it Doeg or Saul himself? Josephus clarifies the point, even while eliminating mention of the slain beasts and adding a notice on the fate of the city itself: "Moreover *Saul* sent men to Naba... and slew all therein, sparing neither women nor infants nor those of any age, and burnt (ἐνέπρησε) the town."⁵²

The narrative of the Nob massacre has as its fourth, final scene the exchange between the fugitive Abiathar and David, 22:20-23. Josephus mentions Abiathar's escape (// 22:20) at the opening of 6.261. Before continuing with the remainder of the source account, however, he interposes a long segment without Biblical parallel (6.261b-268). This segment comprises two elements. In the first (6.261b) Josephus links the Nob event with an earlier prophetic announcement of which it constitutes the fulfillment: "Now all these things came to pass in full accordance with what God had foretold (προεφήτευσεν) to Eli the high priest, when He declared that by reason of the iniquities of his two sons his posterity should be destroyed."⁵³ The second, much more lengthy, element (6.262-268) presents Saul's killing of the priests as exemplifying the nefarious affects of power upon those who come to possess it. Here, for the benefit of his Greco-Roman readers, Josephus points up the lesson implicit in the Nob story in terms that would be familiar to them, i. e. the nexus between prosperity and *hubris* manifest in the modest youth Saul becoming a crazed killer once he acceded to kingship.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Note the explicit evaluation of Doeg which Josephus introduces here; see also his previous designation of the deed which Saul commands him to perform as "murder" (φόνον). On the varying figures for the priests slain by Doeg and his confederates given in the MSS of *Ant.* 6.260 (i. e. 85, 305, 385, 530), see n. 30.

⁵² This added detail might be inspired by the fate of Nob's successor as Israel's "sacred city", i. e. Jerusalem which was "burnt down" by the Babylonians in 587 B. C. (2 Kgs 25:9// *Ant.* 10.146-147 with the same verb, i. e. ἐπιπρημι, as here in 6.260) and again by the Romans in 70 A. D. (see *Bellum Judaicum* 6.363,407). See also n. 54.

⁵³ The *Rückverweis* here is to God's word to Eli mediated through Samuel as cited in *Ant.* 5.350 (// 1 Sam 3:11-14). Josephus' insertion of the above fulfillment notice is reflective of his recurring emphasis on the realization of the predictions made by Biblical prophets, that realization manifesting their status as "true" prophets; see Feldman, "Prophets," 407-11.

⁵⁴ For an analysis of the segment and its affinities with Hellenistic historiography,

Following the long interlude of 6.261b-268, Josephus resumes his reproduction of 1 Sam 22:20-23, begun at 6.261a, in 6.269-270. Contextually, this new segment adheres quite closely to the source⁵⁵: Abiathar flees to David and tells him of what has happened (6.269// 22:20-21). David, in turn, admits that he realized Doeg would inform Saul and so feels himself to be responsible for the Nob massacre, but now urges Abiathar to stay with him where he will be safe (6.270// 22:22-23). In fact, the only element of the source sequence without a parallel in Josephus' rendition is David's (self-evident) declaration in v. 23αββα "fear not; for he that seeks my life seeks your life" (MT).

As the foregoing discussion has made clear, Josephus in *Ant.* 6.242-270 reproduces the content of 1 Samuel 21-22 *in extenso*; every component segment of the two chapters has a counterpart of some kind in his version. On the other hand, he takes, as we have also noted, considerable liberties with the details of the Biblical presentation. Most notable, perhaps, are his expansions of source data. These additions vary widely in both length and character. Some provide particulars about places mentioned: Gitta is "a city of the Philistines" lying outside Hebrew territory (6.245, compare 21:11), while the hill on which Saul takes his seat is the location of his "palace" (6.251, compare 22:6). Others expatiate on characters' emotions and motives: the nature of David's "fear" of Achish ("Anchus") and the reason for his feigning madness (6.245; compare 21:13-14), Achish's own "anger" towards his servants (6.245),

see L. H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Saul": *HUCA* 53 (1982) 45-99, pp. 89-90. The inserted reflections of 6.262-268 draw on, while also varying and amplifying, the content of the preceding narrative. See in particular 6.268 where the historian affirms that Saul slew "three hundred priests and prophets"; compare 6.260 where it is Doeg and his confederates who kill Abimelech and his kin, to the number of 305 (so the reading followed by Niese and Marcus) and nothing is said of "prophets" being among the victims. Likewise in 6.268 Josephus introduces a reference to "what was virtually their (the Nobites') temple" being left by Saul without priestly or prophetic personnel. This mention of the Nob "temple" has no counterpart in Josephus' own previous narrative (or in 1 Samuel 21-22 itself). I suggest that the allusion constitutes another indication of Josephus' implicit parallelizing of the fate of Nob and its successor, Jerusalem which, of course, did have a temple. See n. 52. Finally, whereas in 6.260 Josephus speaks of Saul's "burning" Nob, in the reflections of 6.262-268, he refers rather to the king's "demolishing" the city, see 6.262 (καταβαλῶν), 268 (ἐπικαταβαλῶν).

⁵⁵ Josephus' version does, on the other hand, transpose the words of both Abiathar (22:21) and David (22:22-23) into indirect discourse.

David's "encouragement" at gaining supporters (6.248, compare 22:3), Saul's consternation at what he hears of David and his retinue (6.250; compare 22:6) and his "fear" that keeps him from believing Abimelech's protestations (6.259a; compare 22:17a), as well as the "reverence" that prevents Saul's retainers from complying with his order (6.259b; compare 22:17b). Still others involve expansions of the words attributed to the story's personages, enriching these with additional elements reflective of the speaker's rhetorical prowess, see especially Saul's opening speech to his henchmen (6.255; compare 22:7-8) and Abimelech's reply to the king (6.256b-258; compare 22:14-15). Several of the additions introduce *Rückverweise* to previous moments of Josephus' history: David's "dedication" of Goliath's sword (6.244, cf. 6.192) and God's word against the Elide: (6.261b, cf. 5.350). The amplifications concerning Doeg's confederates (6.260a; compare 22:18b) and the "burning" of Nob (6.260b; compare 22:19) serve to resolve questions left unanswered in the source, see above. The inserted specification that David's myriads of victims were "Philistine:" (6.245, compare 21:12) clarifies the reason for mention of David's deed by Achish's retainers. The notice prefaced to Abimelech's speech (6.256b-258) in 6.256a intimates the character of that speech. The most conspicuous of all Josephus' amplifications of the Nob story is, however, the lengthy appended reflection, comprising no less than six whole paragraphs, on Saul's career (6.262-268) where he is clearly catering to the interests and conceptions of his Gentile public.

Josephus' omissions/abridgements of source items are less striking than his additions in the Nob story. They do, nonetheless, occur and likewise come in several varieties. Minor place (e. g., Moabite "Mizpeh," 1 Sam 22:3) and personal names ("Gad," 22:5; Abimelech's patronymic, 22:9, etc.) are left aside. Similarly, Josephus passes over details with no bearing on story's overall movement: the site of Goliath's death and the current location of his sword (21:10), Saul's killing of thousands (21:12), and the spear held by him (22:6), the "ephod" worn by the murdered priests (22:18), the slaughter of the Nob beasts (22:19), and David's paralleling of Abiathar's situation with his own (22:23). Likewise, Saul's "sentencing" of Abimelech and his house to death (22:16) is dropped, given the "duplication" of this item in the king's order to his henchmen (22:17a// 6.259a) that they kill the priests. Such omissions serve to "streamline" the flow of the story. A further, larger-scale such streamlining is achieved by Josephus at the start of his version where he dispenses with the whole dis-

inction between types of "bread" featured in 21:4-7 which non-initiated Gentile readers would likely find both puzzling and tedious. Similarly, the circumstantial opening of the confrontation scene between king and priest (22:11-12) is compressed in 6.255 in the interests of moving the narrative along more expeditiously to the dramatic moment of Saul's denunciation of the unsuspecting Abimelech (/ / 22:13).

Josephus also freely modifies source material used by him, terminologically, stylistically, and contextually. On the terminological level, e. g., Abimelech is consistently titled the "high priest" rather than simply the "priest," given his status as head of cultic center serviced by a whole group of priests (and as such a forerunner of the later "high priests" of Jerusalem). The peculiarly Septuagintal use of the term *διαθήκη* in the sense of "covenant" as found in BL 1 Sam 22:8 where Saul charges that Jonathan has made such a "covenant" with David⁵⁶ yields to more usual secular Greek terminology, i. e. *ῥρκους καὶ συνθήκας* (6.253).⁵⁷ The references to Abimelech's "inquiring of the Lord/ God" for David (22:10,12,15) are replaced by the term "prophesy" (6.254,257), a Josephan *Lieblingswort*. Examples of stylistic modifications are the sustained substitution of hypotaxis for source parataxis and the elimination of the repetitious use of the phrase "no one discloses" of 22:8 in Josephus' formulation of Saul's accusation of his retainers in 6.253. The frequent —though not invariable (see 6.251b-253// 22:7-8, Saul's address to his retainers; 6.255//22:13, Saul's accusation of Abimelech; 6.256b-258// 22:14-15, Abimelech's reply)— transposition of source direct into direct discourse (see, e. g., 6.254// 22:10, Doeg's charge; 6.270// 22:22-23, David's reply to Abiathar) constitutes another instance of a stylistically-inspired change of the original.⁵⁸ Modifications involving the source's content surface throughout Josephus' Nob story as well, these serving a variety of purposes. Achish's opened-ended rhetorical question "shall this

⁵⁶ BL's phrase here *διαθέσθαι... διαθήκην* represents an explication of MT's "abbreviated idiom," i. e. a simple *הקים בריתה* for the standard expression *הקים בריתה*. See the commentaries.

⁵⁷ On Josephus' total avoidance of the LXX's characteristic use of *διαθήκη* as an equivalent for MT's *בריתה*, see Begg, *Josephus' Account*, 100-101, n. 609 and the literature cited there.

⁵⁸ See also 6.243 (/ / 21:3-4) where David's word to Abimelech begins in direct but then shifts to indirect discourse.

fellow come into my house?" (21:16) is transposed into a narrative notice that helps account for David's immediately following departure from Gath: "he gave orders for David's instant expulsion" (6.246). Mention of David's leaving his parents with the king of Moab and of their staying with him (22:4) is recast (6.248) so as to accentuate David's stature: the king "accords David this favor" and shows his parents "all honour." The uncertainty as to the subject of the annihilatory actions reported in 22:19 (Saul? Doeg?) is resolved by means of Josephus' rendition in 6.260 "Saul sent men to Naba... and slew all therein...".

Finally, on occasion, Josephus also ventures to rearrange the source's sequence. Thus in 6.244b he "repositions" the parenthetical reference to Doeg's presence at Nob which in 1 Samuel 21 is situated between (v. 8) David's first (vv. 3-6) and second request (v. 9) after the second request (6.244a) and before the priest's response to this (6.244c).⁵⁹

4. *Literary and Ideological Characteristics*

Through the application of his various rewriting techniques Josephus does resolve many – though not all – of the ambiguities and unanswered questions presented by the Biblical Nob account to which I called attention above.⁶⁰ In addition, Josephus' own narrative is not without internal discordances of its own; in particular, the reflection of 6.262-268 diverges in a whole series of points from the preceding narrative of 6.260.⁶¹ The version of the Nob story generated by Josephus' rewriting techniques likewise stands in marked contrast to the "objective", a-theological presentation of the source. The editorial appendix in 6.261b, e. g., explicitly affirms that the fate of the Nob priests was the realization of a divine decree earlier made known to Eli, their progenitor. The deed Saul directs Doeg

⁵⁹ It is difficult to perceive any rationale for this rearrangement beyond a simple desire for variation vis-à-vis the source in that in its Josephan placement the Doeg notice appears just as "disruptive" as does its Biblical counterpart in its setting.

⁶⁰ A problematic element of the source account which is not disposed of in Josephus' rewriting is, e. g., the seeming discrepancy between the narrative of 21:2-10 which says nothing of Abimelech's "inquiring of the Lord" for David and 22:10 where Doeg charges the priest with having done so. The same discrepancy surfaces in Josephus whose version of the former text (6.242-244) does not mention the matter, but who then reproduces Doeg's charge from 22:10 in 6.254.

⁶¹ See n. 54.

to perform is expressly designated as "murder" (φόνον, 6.259; compare 22:18a) and Doeg's fellow killers are qualified by the phrase "as wicked as himself" (6.260; compare 22:18b). Similar, evaluatively-charged terminology is used also of Saul who according to 6.262 "perpetrated a cruel deed" and felt "neither pity for infants nor reverence for age." More generally, the whole of 6.262-268 represents Josephus' extended, Hellenizing "moral" for the Nob story which the Bible itself leaves without commentary of any sort. On the other hand, Josephus, like his source, makes no comment on David's "lie" to Abimelech (6.243// 21:3) which sets the whole tragedy in motion.

V. CONCLUSIONS

By way of conclusion to this presentation, I wish now to sum up on the similarities and differences between Josephus' and Pseudo-Philo's respective retellings of the Biblical Nob story. First the similarities. Of these, some (the name "Abimelech" rather than "Ahimelech" for the priest, the qualification of Doeg as a "Syrian" and the overseer of the royal mules) reflect the two authors' use of a similar Biblical text, one more like the LXX (B in particular) than our MT. In addition, however, Josephus and Pseudo-Philo agree on several points against all our Biblical textual witnesses. Both, e. g., explicitly invoke God's role in the disaster that befalls the Nob priesthood (see *BA* 63.1; *Ant.* 6.261), both also citing the depravity of the earlier Elides in this connection. At least some MSS of both *BA* (63.3) and *Ant.* (6.260) give an identical figure, i. e. 385 for the number of priests slain which has no counterpart in any of the totals cited in the Biblical witnesses. In their renditions of Doeg's report to Saul (*BA* 63.2; *Ant.* 6.254) both authors have him add a charge, not mentioned in the source as such (compare 22:10) about Abimelech's having "peacefully" dismissed David. Finally, a "negative agreement" between them may be noted as well: neither takes over the Bible's qualification of Ahimelech as "son of Ahitub" (compare 22:9,11,12). Also "negatively," neither author cites the following items from the sequence of 22:11-12: the priests' actual appearance before the king and the preliminary exchange between Saul and Abimelech.

Much more numerous than their similarities are, however, the dissimilarities between Josephus' and Pseudo-Philo's Nob stories. In

general, Josephus, obviously, gives a much more detailed, "faithful" rendition of the content of 1 Samuel 21-22, all of whose component scenes do have a counterpart in his version, than does Pseudo-Philo who encases selected phrases of 22:6-23 within a framework entirely of his own creation. This overarching difference appears to be grounded in the divergent character and purpose of their two histories as a whole. Josephus at the opening of *Ant.* (see 1.17) explicitly commits himself not to omit anything from the Scriptural records of his people which he is proposing to retell. At least in the case of 1 Samuel 21-22, he does fulfill that stated promise to a considerable degree. Moreover, Josephus is writing in first place for a Gentile public who could not be presumed to be at all familiar with the Bible's narratives and so would need to have these related for them *in extenso*.⁶² In the case of Pseudo-Philo, by contrast, it would appear that he was writing exclusively for a Jewish audience whose familiarity with the content of their own Scriptures would allow them to readily "fill in the blanks" left in his retelling (e. g., the whole exchange between Abimelech and David, 21:2-10).⁶³

Beyond their different degrees of "fidelity" to the source account, Josephus' and Pseudo-Philo's Nob stories diverge in many other respects as well. Stylistically, Pseudo-Philo, like his Biblical source, employs direct discourse throughout⁶⁴, whereas Josephus recasts many of the speeches of 1 Samuel 21-22 in indirect discourse. God nowhere speaks in *Ant.* 6.242-270⁶⁵; the bulk of *BA* 63 consists precisely of divine announcements (see vv 1,3-4). Accordingly, Pseudo-Philo's version of the episode has a much more markedly "theocentric" character than does Josephus', another point of difference which manifests itself throughout their respective works.⁶⁶ Moreover, while God's announcements in *BA*

⁶² On Gentiles as Josephus' primary intended audience, see Feldman, "Mikra," 479.

⁶³ On this difference between the two authors, see Feldman, "Prolegomenon," lxxv.

⁶⁴ On Pseudo-Philo's penchant for direct address, see Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 20-22.

⁶⁵ In 6.261 one has simply an editorial reminiscence of God's earlier word to Eli, see n. 53.

⁶⁶ On Josephus' tendency to "de-theologize" biblical history throughout *Ant.*, see Feldman, "Mikra," 503-506. On God as "the most important character" in *BA*, see Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, 223-29; cf. Jacobson, *Commentary*, 1.242-244 for further comments on the point.

63.3-4 focus on the punishments awaiting the miscreant Israelites, Saul, and Doeg, Josephus' version does not address this matter as such. Conversely, Pseudo-Philo has no equivalent to the Hellenizing editorial reflection on Saul's career as exemplifying the corrupting effects of power given by Josephus in 6.262-268.

Other, more particular differences between the two rewritings of the Nob story include the following. God in Pseudo-Philo accuses the Nob priests of wrongdoing like that of Eli's sons (63.1). For Josephus — as in the Bible itself — they appear rather as innocent victims; they suffer in consequence of the sins of the earlier Elides, not for their own (see 6.261a). Josephus likewise goes together with the Bible against Pseudo-Philo in having (6.254// 22:10) Doeg make his charges against Abimelech in response to Saul's complaint rather than himself taking the initiative in reporting to Saul (so *BA* 63.2). Similarly Pseudo-Philo's Doeg expressly accuses Abimelech of conspiring with David — a charge not voiced by his Biblical or Josephan namesakes. On the other hand, Doeg's accusation as cited in *BA* does not mention Abimelech's giving of provisions to David as do its parallels in 22:10 and 6.254. Pseudo-Philo does (63.2) reproduce the words of Saul's sentence on Abimelech from 22:16 which Josephus leaves aside, the only instance in the Nob story where the former gives a source item lacking in the latter. Again deviating from both the Bible (22:18) and Josephus (6.260), Pseudo-Philo (63.2) represents Saul as personally killing the priests. Lastly, the concluding "source notice" of *BA* 63.5 has no counterpart in either the Bible or Josephus.

Despite their constituting only a very limited portion of the works to which they belong, Pseudo-Philo's and Josephus' Nob stories, in their similarities and differences, provide instructive indications as to how these two contemporary Jewish historians went about retelling the same Biblical narrative. The findings of this study further suggest that a similar comparative investigation might profitably be extended to other parallel narratives of their respective "rewritten Bibles."