

## THE ADVENTURES OF JONATHAN ACCORDING TO JOSEPHUS

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**Abstract.** Throughout 1 Sam 14,1-46 the figure of Jonathan is the center of attention as he routs the Philistines, but then faces death at the hands of his father Saul. Josephus retells the biblical account of Jonathan at length in *Ant.* 6.106-129a. This essay provides a close reading of Josephus' version in comparison with both the various text-forms of 1 Samuel 14 and the wider ancient Jewish-Christian tradition. Among its findings: Josephus used a text of 1 Samuel 14 which stands closer to that of the LXX than to the MT. In his rewriting, he accentuates both the positive and negative qualities of Saul, even while he makes Jonathan even more a model figure than he is in the Bible. Finally, Josephus' affinities with other earlier Jewish-Christian utilizations of the 1 Samuel 14 story appear minimal.

**Keywords:** Josephus, rewritten Bible, Saul, Jonathan, Philistines.

1 Sam 14,1-46 relates the adventures of Saul's son Jonathan who, after first setting in motion a great Israelite victory over the Philistines, comes very close to being executed by his own father.<sup>1</sup> In this essay I wish to examine Josephus' retelling of Jonathan's experiences by Josephus in his *Antiquitates Judaicae* (hereafter *Ant.*) 6.106-129a.<sup>2</sup> My essay will address three wider questions regarding the Josephan version: Firstly, in view of the marked differences among the ancient textual witnesses for 1 Sam 14,1-46, i.e. MT (BHS), the Qumran manuscripts from Cave 4,<sup>3</sup> Codex Vaticanus (hereafter B)<sup>4</sup> and the Antiochene or Lucianic (hereafter

<sup>1</sup> For 1 Sam 14,1-46 I have consulted the following commentaries: P. K. MCCARTER, Jr., *1 Samuel*, WBC 8, New York, 1980, 234–252; R. W. KLEIN, *1 Samuel*, WBC 10, Waco, TX, 1983, 129–143; A. CAQUOT and P. DE ROBERT, *Les Livres de Samuel*, COT 6, Genève, 1994, 153–170.

<sup>2</sup> For the text and translation of *Ant.* 6.106-129, I use R. MARCUS, *Josephus* V, LCL, Cambridge, MA–London, 1938, 218–231. I have likewise consulted the more recent text and translation of and notes on the passage in E. NODÉ, *Flavius Josephus III Les Antiquités Juives Livres VI et VII*, Paris, 2001, 35–42\* as well as the translation and notes in C. T. BEGG, *Flavius Josephus Translation and Commentary, 4 Flavius Josephus Judean Antiquities 5-7*, Leiden, 2005, 128–134.

<sup>3</sup> 4QSam<sup>a</sup> is extant for portions of 1 Sam 14,2-25, 28-34 (and 47-51), while 4QSam<sup>b</sup> preserves 1 Sam 14,41-42 in part. For the texts of the two manuscripts I use F. M. CROSS *et al.*, *Qumran Cave 4 XII 1-2 Samuel*, DJD 17, Oxford, 2005, 72–75 (4QSam<sup>a</sup>) and 224–225 (4QSam<sup>b</sup>). Cf. the translation of this material in M. ABEGG, Jr., P. FLINT, and E. ULRICH, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, San Francisco, 1999, 226–227.

<sup>4</sup> For the text of B 1 Sam (Rgns) 14,1-46, I use A. E. BROOKE, N. MACLEAN, and H. St. J. THACKERAY, *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Text of Codex Vaticanus II:I*, 1 and II Samuel, Cambridge, 1927, 40–46. I have likewise consulted the translation of and notes on this passage in B. GRILLET and M. LESTIENNE, *Premier Livre des Règles*, La Bible d'Alexandrie 9.1, Paris, 1997, 248–266.