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The Hellenistic Biographical History of King Saul: Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews* 6.45-378 and 1 Samuel 9:1-31:13.

Josephus gave a clear center to his voluminous work *Antiquities of the Jews*: he ended book 10 with the exile in Babylon. Books 1-10 follow the Pentateuch and the deuteronomistic history Joshua-2 Kings. Books 11-20 are less closely related to biblical books. The story about King Saul comprises most of book 6.45-378.

The text used by Josephus, the Hebrew story about King Saul, has a very clear outline: 1. 1 Sam 9:1-15:35: election, coronation, victories and rejection by God; 2. 1 Sam 16:1-31:13: David, Saul and others; Saul's death. The first part is strictly concentrated on Saul's ascent, the second part ending with his death is expanded by the court history with many important figures<sup>1</sup>. Josephus took over this episodic structure. He smoothed the style and added some reflections. The result was a biographical history very close related to the Hellenistic biographical history<sup>2</sup>. The condemned sinner Saul was transformed to a lucid model of a ruler and king. Saul was quoted by Josephus only in *A. J.* 6: 149x; 7: 40x; 10: 1x; 11: 1x.

How did Josephus make this excellent change and adaptation for the Hellenistic culture? How did he deal with the Saul-model in the later books of the *Antiquities*?

Three points will be dealt with in this essay:

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<sup>1</sup> H.W. Hertzberg, *Die Samuelbücher*, (7th edn ATD, 10; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 103-106.197-200; Hertzberg starts with 1 Sam 7:2 (48-51); K. Baltzer, *Die Biographie der Propheten* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1975), 71-83, begins with 9,1 and names the whole story „biography of the prophet“ = Prophetenbiographie.

The biographical pattern has normally three parts:

1. ancestry, childhood and youth, 2. public life with fame, 3. old age and death (D. Dormeyer, *Evangelium als literarische und theologische Gattung* (EdF, 263; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989), 59f., 160-194; R.H. Burridge, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco – Roman Biography* (SNTS MS, 70; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 145-147; D. Frickenschmidt, *Evangelium als Biographie. Die vier Evangelien im Rahmen antiker Erzählkunst* (TANZ, 22; Tübingen/Basel: Francke Verlag, 1997), 192-210; D. Dormeyer, *Das Markusevangelium als Idealbiographie von Jesus Christus, dem Nazarener* (2nd edn SBB, 43; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2002), 8f., 268-286; for Jos.Vita s. S.J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome: his Vita and Development as a Historian* (CSCT, 8; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 102f.; P. Bilde, *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome. His Life, his Works and their Importance* (JSPE. S.2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 107; S. Mason, *Life of Josephus. Translation and Commentary* (Flavius Josephus Translation and Commentary, ed. By S. Mason, 9, Leiden: Brill 2001) XXII f.; D. Dormeyer, 'Die Vita des Josephus als Autobiographie eines gescheiterten Herrschers', in: J.U. Kalms/ F. Siegert (eds.), *Internationales Josephus – Kolloquium Dortmund 2002* (MJSt, 14; Münster: LIT – Verlag, 2003, 15-34), 20f. Saul's biographical history has only part 2 and 3. The omitting of Part 1 (childhood and youth) is usual for the most antique biographies (Frickenschmidt, *Evangelium*, 253ff; J. Kügler, *Pharao und Christus?* (BBB, 113; Bodenheim: Philo, 1997), 133-185; Dormeyer, *Markusevangelium*, 268-286). The ancestry of Saul was told (*A. J.* 6:45-46).

<sup>2</sup> biographical history s. T. J. Luce, *Die griechischen Historiker* (Düsseldorf/Zürich: Artemis & Winkler Verlag, 1998; engl. London/New York: Routledge 1997), 160-162.

1. Josephus' retelling of 1 Samuel 9:1-31:13
2. Saul in *A. J.* 7; 10; and 11;
3. The role of Saul and the self-definition of Josephus.

1. Josephus' Revision of 1 Samuel 9:1-31:13

Josephus concludes the Saul-story with the encomium:

To such an end did Saul come, as Samuel had predicted, because he had disobeyed God's commandments touching the Amalekites, and because he had destroyed the family of Abimelech the high priest and Abimelech himself and the city of the high priests. He reigned eighteen years during the lifetime of Samuel and for twenty-two years more after the latter's death. Thus then did Saul depart this life" (*A. J.* . 6.378).<sup>3</sup>

Book 6 closes with the term "*bios*=life." In the time of Josephus, *bios* means at first the description of a life; the term "biography" was created in late antiquity<sup>4</sup>. In this final sentence of book 6, *bios* signifies at first the story of Saul's death in *A. J.* 6.368-377 par. 1 Sam 31:1-13. At second *bios* comprises the whole Saul-story. But this story does not belong to the genre of peripatetic biography<sup>5</sup>. Therefore Baltzer determines rightly the Saul-story as "prophetic biography"<sup>6</sup>. Josephus changes the genre to a section of the Hellenistic biographical history. This form of history started with Herodotus and Xenophon. In Book 1 Herodotus gave a wonderful biographical picture of the Persian king Cyrus (*Hdt* 1. 71-214, esp.108-214). Xenophon wrote the long wisdom-novel "Cyropaedia". Without great difficulties Josephus could interpret the Jewish prophetic biography as Hellenistic biographical history.

In order to achieve this genre he made some alterations. He recounted only two instances of the disobedience of Saul in the final encomium: 1. the sparing of the Amalekites, 2. the destruction of Abimelech and his family. But 1 Samuel contains accounts of additional

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<sup>3</sup> The translation of books 5-7 is throughout this article taken over from H. St. Thackeray and R. Marcus, *Josephus. Jewish Antiquities, Books V-VIII* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann 1988).

<sup>4</sup> D. Wördemann, *Der bios nach Plutarch und das Evangelium nach Markus. Eine Untersuchung zur literarischen Analogie des Charakterbildes des Helden und des Christusbildes im Evangelium Jesu Christi* (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums. NF ,1,19; Paderborn: Schöningh 2002), 32-42.

<sup>5</sup> F. Leo, *Die griechisch – römische Biographie nach ihrer literarischen Form* (Leipzig: Teubner 1901); A. Diehle, *Studien zur griechischen Biographie* (AAWG. PH, 3, 37; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1956); D. Dormeyer, *Evangelium*, 168-190; R.H. Burridge, *Gospels*; D. Dormeyer, *Das Neue Testament im Rahmen der antiken Literaturgeschichte. Eine Einführung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1993), 205-228; translated by R. Kossow, *The new Testament among the Writings of Antiquity* (Biblical Seminar,55; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1998), 220-243; W. Eckey, *Das Markus – Evangelium. Orientierung am Weg Jesu. Ein Kommentar* (Neukirchen – Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1998), 24-27.

<sup>6</sup> K. Baltzer, *Die Biographie der Propheten* (Neukirchen – Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1975), 71-83.

instances of Saul's disobedience, and Josephus recounted them earlier. The first disobedience was the unauthorised sacrifice by Saul. The act of sacrifice belonged to the office of the prophet Samuel (1 Sam 13). For this disobedience, God revoked his promise of an eternal rule of the house of Saul and announced a new king according the heart of God ( 1 Sam 13: 13f.). Josephus changed slightly the retelling of this chapter. "Forever" becomes "exceedingly long (pleiston an basileusai xronon)ple~iston an basile~usai chrónon" (*A. J.* 6.104), and the promise of the new king is omitted. The punishment of Saul is minimised. The promised "exceedingly long" time of rule becomes only a minor matter of length of time. The reason could be that the Greek and Roman leader always had the right of sacrifice and that the rivalry between king and prophet should be a human matter and not a divine privilege.

Josephus has also modified the last great sin: the visit of the witch of Endor (*A. J.* 6.327-342). The banishment of witches becomes an arbitrary act, not an act of obeying the first commandment (Ex 20:3-6; Dtn 5:7-10 esp.18:11-14). In an analogous fashion, Tiberius expelled all astrologers except his own astrologer fearing the bad press that was made by their art (Suet.Tib 36). So the witch of Endor became an honourable example of her profession. Josephus dedicated an impressive encomion to her:

Here it is but right to commend the generosity of this woman who, though she had been prevented by the king from practising an art which would have made it easier and more comfortable for her at home, and though she had never seen Saul before, yet bore him no resentment for having condemned her profession nor turned him away as a stranger and as one with whom she had never been acquainted ; but instead she gave him sympathy and consolation, exhorted him to do that which he regarded with great unwillingness, and offered him with open friendliness the one thing which in her poverty she possessed. And this she did, not in return for any benefit received, nor in quest of any favour to come--for she knew that he was about to die--, whereas men are by nature wont either to emulate those who have bestowed some kindness upon them or to be beforehand in flattering those from whom they may possibly receive some benefit. It is well, then, to take this woman for an example and show kindness to all who are in need, and to regard nothing as nobler than this or more befitting the human race or more likely to make God gracious and ready to bestow upon us His blessings. Concerning this woman, then, let these words suffice." (*A. J.* 6. 340-342).

Magic incited only Saul's "unwillingness." The prohibition of magic by God is totally forgotten. Josephus writes pathetic or mimetic history, which is interested in signs,

predictions, invocations of deeds and miracles<sup>7</sup>. He cannot accept a deuteronomistic comprehensive prohibition of predictions and invocations. So he merely gave unclear hints to the “unwillingness“ of Saul.

Josephus adds an encomium to Saul which is much longer than the final encomium. For Saul has only done two sins: one against God and one against humankind. Therefore he is worthy of a long encomium (*A. J.* 6.343-351). The first sin against God – the sparing of the Amalekites - is slightly changed. 1 Sam 15:9: “But Saul and the army spared Agag (the Amalekite king) with the best of the sheep...“ . Josephus divided this action. Saul spared the King, while the crowd spared the animals for the sacrifice: “But he also took prisoner the enemy’s king, Agag, whom out of admiration for his beauty (*καλλοσκαλός*) and his stature (*μεγεθος μέgethos*) he accounted worthy to be saved“ (*A.J.* 6.137). Saul preferred the Hellenistic ideal of *kalokagathia* against the will of God (6.137-138). “For God so hated (*εμισησεμισε*) the race of the Amalaketes...“(6.138). But a pious Jew does not have the right to oppose the explicit will of God, even when God is a racist. Therefore Saul is rejected by God and will soon lose his kingship (*A. J.* 6.150),

The emphasising of the male beauty and stature of Agag could be an allusion to the antique friendship-cult involving homosexuality. Allegedly the young Caesar had a scandalous relationship with the king Nicomedes (*Suet.Caes.2*). It is quiet unclear why Josephus was released after being captured (*B. J.* 3.400f.). The permitted sexual desire of a Roman emperor is forbidden for a Jewish king and leader. Josephus claims in his *Vita*: “Vespasian supplying me with all marks of honour. In fact, when he so directed, I even took a certain virgin for myself, a native from among the prisoners who were seized at Caesarea. This one did not stay with me for a long time...“ (*Vita* 414-415).<sup>8</sup> Why did he narrate this short marriage that does not speak of children and other events? Titus had many lovers and eunuchs (*Suet.Tit. 7*). His passion was directed to the princess Berenike (*Suet.Tit 7*). She was 10 years older than Titus. She had no child from Titus. What happened between Titus and Josephus? Josephus always praised Titus as his benefactor (*Vita* 422-428). Titus could feel like Saul. However Josephus reacted, he kept it secret. Fortunately there was not a punctilious prophet present, killing the leader caught in sin and fulfilling the will of a hating god. In the

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<sup>7</sup> E. Plümacher, *Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller. Studien zur Apostelgeschichte* (SUNT, 9; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1972), 9-32; K. Meister, *Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des Hellenismus* (Stuttgart a.o.: Kohlhammer 1990), 95-102; O. Lendle, *Einführung in die griechische Geschichtsschreibung. Von Hekataios bis Zosimos* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1992), 180-206; W. Eckey, *Markus – Evangelium*, 24-27.

<sup>8</sup> The Translation of *Vita* is taken over from S. Mason (s. F. 1).

Hellenistic view Saul's sin becomes very special and strange. Like Oedipus he violated an incomprehensible commandment of an archaic time.<sup>9</sup>

The second sin carries weight. Because of revenge Saul murdered a clan of priests and destroyed their city (*A. J.* 6.259-261). About this atrocity a long author-reflection talks of the changes in character which were caused by accession to power (*A. J.* 6.262-269). There is no reflection on the favour to king Agag.

Saul's Portrait is ambiguous. The final encomium recalls the two sins: 1. the disobedience of an archaic divine commandment, 2. the inhuman revenge that also violates the present Hellenistic king-ideal. But the long encomium standing immediately before the account of Saul's death should not be forgotten.<sup>10</sup> Saul is connected, although in an unspoken fashion, to the archaic Greco-Roman kings such as Romulus and Theseus.

D. Mendels asks, "Did any kind of adoption of a dual identity such as Heracles – Melquart, Hermes – Toth and Anath – Athena also happen to Moses or David? It appears, that throughout the whole period we are discussing there is no example of any connection, even a hidden one, which was made by Jews living in Palestine between a Jewish hero of the past

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<sup>9</sup> "Nach den zuletzt untersuchten Texten ist Saul nur auf einem Teilgebiet, als Anführer des Heerbanns, Nachfolger Samuels. Durch diese Teilung der Funktion ist es möglich, dass Samuel auch den Nachfolger Sauls noch einsetzt und damit legitimiert. Da Samuel nicht wirklich zurücktritt, konnte das Bild eines kontinuierlichen Amtes unabhängig vom Königtum entstehen. Samuel wird zum Träger und Garant der Legitimation des Königtums" (K. Baltzer, 1975, 82f.). Josephus strengthened this sharp distinction between the king and the prophet as archaic institution.

<sup>10</sup> „But now I shall touch an a subject profitable to states, peoples and nations, and of interest to all good men- one whereby all should be induced to pursue virtue and to aspire to those things which may procure them glory and eternal renown, one, moreover, that should instil into the hearts of kings of nations and rulers of cities a great desire and zeal for noble deeds, should stimulate them to face dangers and death for their country's sake, and teach them to despise all terrors. The occasion for this discourse I find in the Person of Saul, king of the Hebrews. For he, although he knew of what was to come and his impending death, which the Prophet had foretold, yet determined not to flee from it or, by clinging to life, to betray his people to the enemy and dishonour the dignity of kingship ; instead, he thought it noble to expose himself, his house and his children to these perils and, along with them, to fall fighting for his subjects. He preferred to have his sons meet death as brave men rather than leave them behind, while still uncertain what kind of men they might prove to be ; for thus, as successors and posterity, he would obtain glory and an ageless name. Such a man alone, in my opinion, is just, valiant and wise, and he, if any has been or shall be such, deserves to have all men acknowledge his virtue. For men who have gone forth to war with high hopes, thinking to conquer and return in safety, and have accomplished some brilliant feat are, to my mind, mistakenly described as valiant by the historians and other writers who have spoken of such persons. Certainly it is just that these too receive approbation ; but the terms " stout-hearted," " greatly daring," " contemptuous of danger " can justly be applied only to such as have emulated Saul. That men, not knowing what is to happen to them in war, should not flinch from it, but should commit themselves to an uncertain future and ride the stormy seas of chance-all this still falls short of magnanimity, however many the exploits they may accomplish. On the other hand, to harbour in one's heart no hope of success, but to know beforehand that one must die and die fighting, and then not to fear nor be appalled at this terrible fate, but to meet it with full knowledge of what is coming-that, in my judgement, is proof of true valour. And this Saul did, thereby showing that it behoves all men who aspire to fame after death so to act as to leave such a name after them ; especially should kings do so, since the greatness of their power forbids them not merely to be bad to their subjects, but even to be less than wholly good. I might say still more than this about Saul and his courage, for they are subjects which afford us ample material ; but, lest we should appear to lack good taste in delivering this panegyric, I will return again to the point from which I made this digression.“ (*A. J.* 6.343-351)

and some seemingly pagan counterpart.”<sup>11</sup> Maybe the early founder-kings Saul and David modelled by Josephus on the Greco-Roman founder-examples, not on the heroes, could constitute the common basic for the “dual identity,” which D. Mendels explored in a convincing way.<sup>12</sup>

2. Saul in *A. J.* 7, 10, and 11.

Book 7 describes the rule of King David and the decline of the house of Saul. All male members were killed, only one survived. The rival king Jebosthos, Saul’s son, was murdered (*A. J.* 7.46). The other descendants were sacrificed except Jebosthos, the son of Jonathan (*A. J.* 7.294-296). This second Jebosthos was lame<sup>13</sup>. But for the sake of the house of Saul he guaranteed continuity through Jebosthos.

Therefore book 10 put a kings-list in the centre of *Antiquities*. The blinded king Sacchias was brought to Babylon; then Josephus reflects on the inevitability of divine prophecy and adds to the list: “Thus, then, did the kings of David’s line end their lives; there were twenty-one of them including the last king, and they reigned altogether for five hundred and fourteen years, six months and ten days; for twenty years of which time their first king Saul held the royal power though he was not of the same tribe“ (*A. J.* 10.143).<sup>14</sup> Saul gets the same rank as David. The long encomium of *A. J.* 6. 343-351 prepared for this excellent position.

In *A. J.* 11 Josephus retells the new creation of Israel. The Persian king Cyrus ended the Babylonian captivity (11.1-12). He sent Zorobabylos as leader back to Jerusalem (11.13): “The leader of the host here enumerated was Zorobabelos, son of Salthielos, who was of the tribe of Judah, being one of the descendants of David...“ (*A. J.* 11.73). Zorobabel recreated for a short time the Davidic kingship. A descendant of the lame Jebosthos from the house of Saul could have been elected by God and Cyrus for this ministry. But for God and Israel David was greater than Saul. Therefore God elected Zorobabel by means of Cyrus.

In *A. J.* 11 Josephus names Saul in relation to the Hasmoneans, the own ancestors: “For the high priests were at the head of affairs until the descendants of the Hasmonean

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<sup>11</sup> D. Mendels, *Identity, Religion and Historiography. Studies in Hellenistic History* (JSP. S, 24, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1998), 22.

<sup>12</sup> D. Mendels, 1998, 13-35.

<sup>13</sup> „And there also met him (David) Saul’s grandson Memphibostos...‘If, indeed’, he added, ‘I had sound feet and had been able to use them in flight, I should not have been far behind you’:“ (*A. J.* 7.267).

<sup>14</sup> The translation of books 9-11 is taken over from R. Marcus: Josephus. Jewish Antiquities Books IX-XI (Cambridge MA; London: Harvard University Press 1995).

family came to rule as king. Before the captivity and deportation they were ruled by kings, beginning first with Saul and David...“( *A. J.* 11.111-112). From Saul to the Hasmoneans there was a continual line of kingship and rule<sup>15</sup>. For the Hasmoneans Saul could become a better model than David, because most of the Hasmonean leaders died violently like Saul.

The house of Saul is a real parallel to the Hasmonean dynasty. The house of David seems to be the parallel to the Herodian dynasty, because both led Israel to the highpoint of power. But only the house of David resulted in messianic hopes, while the Herodian dynasty excited fear and rebellion. Because of the lost rebellion against the Romans Josephus was not interested in Davidic messianic hopes. Therefore the house of Saul got the same rank as the messianic house of David.

### 3. The role of Saul and the self-definition of Josephus

It is obvious that books 1-10 and 11-20 are parallel in *A. J.*: Part I: First Temple; Part II: Second Temple<sup>16</sup>. Each of these parallel presentations has a threefold outline. Part I: 1. Creation and Establishment of the Constitution (1-4), 2. First Phase: leaders and kings (5-8), 3. Second Phase: decline through corruption of the constitution (9-10). Part II: 1. Re-Creation and Establishment of the Constitution (11), 2. First Phase: high priests, the Hasmonean dynasty, the ascent and splendid temple-restoration of Herod (12-15), 3. Second Phase: decline through corruption of the constitution (16-20).

The Jewish revolt against the Romans repeats the revolt against Babylon and results in the renewed destruction of the second temple (*A. J.* 20. 257-258). Will Israel now be allowed a new beginning by God, a third part of historical time and history? Josephus skilfully guided the reader to this unstated major question. When the reader answers positively, the next problem arises. Who will refound the constitution?

Josephus adds two appendices to *Antiquities: Vita* and *C. Ap. Vita* advertises Josephus himself as descending and ascending ruler,<sup>17</sup> *C. Ap.* promotes him as lawrestorer<sup>18</sup>. Now the reader can complete the puzzle.

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<sup>15</sup> For the line from the Asamoneans to Josephus s.d. and D.Dormeyer, *Vita*, 18-19.

<sup>16</sup> S.Mason, *Life*, XXIV; besides he determines the parallelism as chiasmus (*Life*, XXIII-XXVII); but the chiasmus presses the books to strong in an artificial structure.

<sup>17</sup> D.Dormeyer, *Vita*, 16-26.

<sup>18</sup> D.Dormeyer, *Des Josephus zwei Suasoriae (Übungsreden) Über das Volk der Juden. Die beiden Vorworte (Proömien) Contra Apionem 1:1-5; 2:1,1-7 und die beiden Vorworte Lk 1,1-4; Acta 1,1-4, in: J.U. Kalms (ed.): Internationales Josephus-Kolloquium Amsterdam 2000 (MJSt, 10, Münster: LIT-Verlag 2001, 241-262).*



The house of Saul survived with the lame Jebosthos; the house of the Hasmoneans survived with the hunch-backed (Kurtos kyrtós) Matthias (*Vita* 4)<sup>19</sup>. In the time of the first Temple the dynasty of David was more honourable than the dynasty of Saul. Therefore Zerubbabel became the founder after the Exile. In the time of the second Temple the dynasty of the Hasmoneans did not produce as much evil as the dynasty of Herod.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed Nicolas continues to write in this manner about other things. For since he lived in Herod's realm and was one of his associates, he wrote to please him and to be of service to him, dwelling only on those things that redounded to his glory, and transforming his obviously unjust acts into the opposite or concealing them with the greatest care. For example, in his desire to give a colour of respectability to the putting to death of Mariamne and her sons, which had been so cruelly ordered by the king, Nicolas makes false charges of licentiousness against her and of treachery against the youths. And throughout his work he has been consistent in excessively praising the king for his just acts, and zealously apologising for his unlawful ones. But, as I said, one may fully forgive him since what he produced was not a history for others but a work meant to help the king. We, however, being of a family closely related to the kings descended from Asamoniios and therefore having the priesthood together with (other) honours, have considered it unfitting to tell any falsehoods about them, and for this reason we relate their deeds with sincerity and fairness. And although we have respect for many of his descendants who are still reigning, we have honoured the truth more than them, and on some occasions, indeed, when this was rightly done, it provoked those very persons to anger. (*A. J.* 16.183-187).<sup>21</sup>

Therefore a member of the Hasmonean dynasty should become the new founder of the third, new phase of Israel. Josephus is the only existing member of this house. He gave proof of this in the appendix *Vita*. The only honourable late member of the Herod dynasty, Agrippa II., has just died (*Vita* 359).<sup>22</sup> Josephus gave a negative encomium of the Herod dynasty in *A. J.* 18:

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<sup>19</sup> for the family tree of Josephus s. S.Mason, *Life*, 3-12; F.Siebert/ H.Schreckenberg/M.Vogel, *Flavius Josephus: Aus meinem Leben (Vita), krit. Ausgabe, Üb. u. Komm.*, (Tübingen: Mohr 2001), 23-25.162; D. Dormeyer, *Vita* 14f.

<sup>20</sup> D.Lambers-Petry, „Shelamzion ha-malka. The Hasmonean Queen and her Enigmatic Portrayal by Josephus“, in: J.U. Kalms/ F. Siebert (eds.), *Internationales Josephus – Kolloquium Dortmund 2002* (MJSt, 14; Münster: LIT – Verlag, 2003, 65-78).

<sup>21</sup> translated by R. Marcus and A. Wikgren: *Josephus. Jewish Antiquities*. Books XVI-XVII (Cambridge MA; London: Harvard University Press 1998).

<sup>22</sup>F.Siebert/H.Schreckenberg/M.Vogel, *Vita* 180.

I will now give a fuller account of Herod and the particulars of his line, both because the tale is pertinent to my history and because it affords a proof of Divine Providence, showing how neither numbers nor any other worldly advantage can avail aught without acts of piety toward the Divine Power. For within a century of Herod's decease it came about that all but a few of Herod's issue, and there were many, had perished. It may contribute to the moral instruction of mankind to learn what their misfortunes were.“( *A. J.* 18.127-128).<sup>23</sup>

But Josephus is capable of law-reform, having started this task at the age of fourteen. (*Vita* 9)<sup>24</sup>. He gave evidence of this qualification in the second appendix, usually called *C. Ap.*<sup>25</sup>

Josephus has the right origin and qualification. He does not compare himself with Mose, the founder and Lawgiver. The early Christian community only made this comparison in their christology of Jesus.<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusion

It is unthinkable that the strong warrior Saul would have prophesied the eternal rule over Israel of a Palestinian king and would have begged for his life by any and all means. Josephus seems to be merely a miniature Saul. But Josephus was also an excellent biographical historian. He reduced the sins of Saul to only two, using them to form a new picture of Saul, and adding two wonderful encomia.

The Josephus' portrait of Saul produces an impressive character. Saul opens the gallery of important Israelite kings. Josephus corrected the one-dimensional ideological picture of the deuteronomic author. Saul received the same rank as David. Saul becomes a mixed tragic character according to the poetic of Aristotle. The history of readers response, especially works of artists, must credit this useful revaluation of Saul by Josephus on the whole. But Josephus' hidden identification with Saul has been easily overlooked. Only Saul, not Josephus remained the moral model of the king and fighter for God's law and kingdom.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> „It may also be edifying to tell the story of Agrippa, which is in the highest degree remarkable. For from a position of no distinction at all and to the surprise of all who knew of him, he rose to his high and mighty exaltation.“ (*A.J.* 18.129); translated by L. Feldman: Josephus. *Jewish Antiquities Books XVIII-XIX* (Cambridge MA.; London: Harvard University Press 1996).

<sup>24</sup> D.Dormeyer, *Vita*, 15-23.

<sup>25</sup> D. Dormeyer, *Apion*.

<sup>26</sup> D.Dormeyer, *Markusevangelium*, 140-142.

<sup>27</sup> Did therefore only Luke use and emphasize the unknown Jewish equivalent „Saul“ for „Paul“ in Acts?