

JACOB'S ESCAPE FROM LABAN IN JOSEPHUS AND JUBILEES

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RESUMO

Gen 30 narra a dificuldade da separação de Jacó e e sua família do seu sogro Labão. Este artigo se centraliza na narrativa de acordo com Josefo, *Ant.* 1.309-324(325a) e *Jub.* 28.25-29.12. Primeiro comparando com a narrativa bíblica e depois comparando um com o outro. Tanto Josefo e Jubileu tratam com certa liberdade o texto bíblico omitindo longas porções, ou introduzindo outras, ou modificando o que eles encontraram. Ao mesmo tempo as duas versões diferem entre si: Josefo entatiza a relação entre Labão, Jacó e Raquel, enquanto Jubileu introduz elementos calendóricos e antiquários ausentes em Josefo.

ABSTRACT

Gen 30:25-32:1(2a) tells of the definitive, difficult separation of Jacob and his household from his father-in-law Laban. This essay focusses on the rewritings of the Genesis story found in Josephus, *Ant.* 1.309-324(325a) and *Jub.* 28.25-29.12. It begins with a detailed comparison of each rewriting with the biblical source text and then proceeds to compare the two rewritings with each other. Both Josephus and *Jubilees* treat, the study finds, their *Vorlage* with a good deal of freedom, omitting large portions of this, introducing longish insertions, rearranging the source sequence, and otherwise modifying what they found there. At the same time, the two versions differ notably: in Josephus, e.g., the emphasis is on the rhetorical contest between Laban and Jacob and Rachel's theft of her

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father's gods receives enhanced attention, while *Jubilees*, for its part, completely passes over the latter element and minimalizes the former, even as it interjects calendrical and "antiquarian" notices that lack any parallel in Josephus.

INTRODUCTION

The long, tension-filled relationship between Jacob and his uncle/father in law Laban as told in Gen 29:1-32:1(2a) [Eng. 32:1a], reaches its finale in 30:25-32:1(2a) as the pair definitively separate from each other. In this essay, I shall investigate two ancient retellings of the Genesis story of Jacob's flight from Laban, i.e. Josephus' *Antiquitates judaicae* (hereafter *Ant.*) 1.309-324(325a)² and *Jubilees* (hereafter *Jub.*) 28.25-29.12.³ My study will proceed via a detailed comparison of each of these renditions with its biblical source (as represented by MT, LXX, and the targums) that takes into account also other ancient Jewish (and Christian) traditions about Jacob's escape from Laban.⁴ By way of conclusion, I shall

² For the text and translation of *Ant.* 1.309-324(325a), I use H.St.John Thackeray, *Josephus IV*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1930), 148-57. I have likewise consulted the more recent critical text of the passage in E. Nodet, *Flavius Josèphe I: Les Antiquités Juives Livres I à III. Introduction et Texte* (Paris: Cerf, 1990), 41-53 and the translation of and notes on this in *idem*, *Flavius Josèphe I: Les Antiquités Juives Livres I à III. Traduction et notes* (Paris: Cerf, 1990), 64-67, as well as the annotated translation of L.H. Feldman, *Flavius Josephus Judean Antiquities 1-4* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 116-19. On *Ant.* 1.309-324 see further the summary discussion in T.W. Franxman, *Genesis and the 'Jewish Antiquities' of Flavius Josephus*, BeO 35 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 196-201.

³ For the translation of *Jub.* 28.25-29.12, I use: O.S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," in J.C. Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha 2* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 111-12. I have likewise consulted the translation of the passage by C.H. Charles (revised by C. Rabin) in H.F.D. Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 90-91. On the passage, see further the remarks of J.C. Endres, *Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees*, CBQMS 18 (Washington, D.C.: CBA, 1987), 107-14.

⁴ On this material, see L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews III* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968), 369-76; V, 300-303. Among the more expansive treatments of Gen 30:25-32:1 in this corpus are those in *Gen. Rab.* 73.7-74.16; *Midrash Tanhuma* (S. Buber Recension) Genesis, *Wayyetsè* 7.21-24; *P.R.El.* 36.4-7 and various tractates of Philo.

then compare Josephus' and *Jubilees*' respective retellings with each other.

JOSEPHUS

In Genesis, Jacob broaches the subject of his leaving Laban following the birth of his penultimate son, Joseph, in 30:25-26.⁵ In fact, however, it is not until 31:17 that Jacob actually sets out. The long intervening segment, 30:27-31:16 tells of what happened in the interlude: the continuation of the exchange between the two men about what Laban is to do for Jacob (30:27-34), the respective measures taken by them to increase their flocks at the expense of the other (30:35-43), the animosity of Laban and his sons provoked by Jacob's success in this regard (31:1-2), the divine command that Jacob return to his native land (31:3) and the extended conversation that Jacob initiates with his two wives concerning their situation (31:4-16). Josephus (*Ant.* 1.309) leaves aside (or reserves for later use; see below) most of this intervening segment's content.⁶

⁵ MT Gen 30:25 provides no indication as to why the birth of Joseph in particular would have prompted Jacob to raise the subject with Laban. *Tg. Ps.-J.* (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 73.7) suggests a motivation for his doing so, i.e. via the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he has learned that the house of the newly-born Joseph will some day destroy the house of Esau. This realization, in turn, causes Jacob to lose the fear of Esau that had hitherto kept him from returning to his homeland.

⁶ In addition to his general tendency to eliminate or compress what seems superfluous in the biblical story line, several further factors may help account for Josephus' procedure in this instance. The breeding procedure utilized by Jacob in Gen 31:37-42 is obscure; moreover, it is often understood as involving deception/manipulation on Jacob's part and as such to stand in tension with the patriarch's claims about the divine causality operative in the growth of his flock (31:5-11). Josephus obviates the difficulties posed by these features of the material by simply leaving it aside. In addition, whereas the entire segment 31:3-16 features multiple references to God's initiatives in Jacob's life, Josephus tends to "detheologize" both the Jacob story and biblical history in general; see L.H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 205-14, 326-28. In the same line, note too that Jacob in his words to his wives in 31:11-12 reports an angelic communication to him in a dream. Josephus, who often – though not invariably – dispenses with biblical accounts concerning angels, could readily have done so here as well. On Josephus' angelology, see C.T. Begg, "Angels in the Work of Flavius Josephus," in F.V. Reiterer *et al.* eds., *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings- Origins, Development and Reception*, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2007 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2007), 525-36.

The historian begins (1.309a) his thus abbreviated version of Gen 30:25-31:16 with a summary chronological notice, inspired by Jacob's subsequent words to Laban about the length of his service in Gen 31:38,41: "Throughout all this period of twenty years Jacob was tending the flocks of his father-in-law." Whereas Gen 30:25-26 reports Jacob's request that Laban release him and his household in direct address, Josephus (1.309b) recasts the patriarch's discourse as a notice on his state of mind at this juncture⁷: "*But at the close of it*⁸ he desired leave to take his wives⁹ and depart to his own home,¹⁰ and, *when his father-in-law refused,*¹¹ *he planned to do this thing secretly.*"¹²

⁷ On Josephus' penchant for turning biblical direct into indirect address, see C.T. Begg, *Josephus' Account of the Early Divided Monarchy*, BETL 108 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 12-13, n. 38.

⁸ In Gen 30:25, Jacob's request of Laban is associated with a more particular happening, i.e. Rachel's bearing Joseph to him. Josephus mentions this event at the end of 1.308 (// Gen 30:22-24), but opts to connect Jacob's urge to depart rather with his completion of 20 years of service to Laban. (In this essay, I italicize elements of the presentation of both Josephus and *Jubilees* that lack a direct counterpart in the Genesis account.)

⁹ In his word to Laban in Gen 30:26a, Jacob asks for the release of his "children" as well.

¹⁰ In Gen 30:25 Josephus asks to be allowed to go "to my own home and country (LXX εἰς τὴν γῆν μου)." Feldman (*Flavius Josephus 1-4*, 116, n. 903) suggests that the historian's "abbreviation" of this formulation reflects his conscious avoidance of biblical "land theology" in view of contemporary Roman sensibilities about Jewish aspirations for a land of their own. From Jacob's word in 30:26, Josephus omits as well the double invocation of his "service" to Laban.

¹¹ The biblical presentation of the exchange between Jacob and Laban in Gen 30:25-34 does not record an explicit "refusal" of the former's request by the latter. Rather, Laban is portrayed there, in his obvious desire to retain Jacob's services, as replying evasively, twice asking about what he might "give" Jacob (30:28,31a) in order that Jacob would agree to stay with him. In any event, the above notice presupposes that Jacob's "desire," as cited by Josephus in what precedes, did – as is the case in Gen 30:25-26 – become known to Laban.

¹² Like the preceding one (see n. ¹⁰), this element of Josephus' presentation lacks a direct biblical counterpart – although see Gen 31:20 where Jacob, at the moment of his flight, is said to have "outwitted Laban . . . in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee."

Having synthesized the Jacob-Laban exchange of Gen 30:25-34 in general terms in *Ant.* 1.309, Josephus, in 1.310a offers an equally compressed rendering of the conversation between Jacob and his wives cited in 31:4-16.¹³ This reads: “He accordingly tested his wives’ feelings about this migration,¹⁴ and they being well content”¹⁵

The extended preliminaries completed in Gen 31:16, 31:17-21 tells of the actual flight of Jacob and his household. The Josephan version re-arranges the biblical data, likewise highlighting the role of Rachel in the family’s move. Specifically, whereas Gen 31:17-18 speaks of Jacob as the “subject” of the move, and only then appends (31:19) mention of Laban’s having gone to shear his sheep (v. 19a) and Rachel’s “theft” of her father’s “household gods” (v. 19b), Josephus (1.310b) speaks in first place of Rachel and her initiatives: “Rachel taking with her (συνανελομένη)¹⁶ even the images of the gods *which the religion of her fathers made it customary to*

¹³ In Gen 31:4 their conversation follows on Jacob’s summoning Leah and Rachel to “the field where his flock was.” *Tg. Ps.J. (ad loc.)* specifies that Jacob sent his son “Naphtali, who was a swift messenger,” to call his wives, while *Gen.Rab.* 74.2 suggests that the conversation took place in a field in order to ensure privacy. Philo (*Det.* 1-5) invests the “field” of Gen 31:4 with allegorical significance as a “battle-field” where Jacob will strive to overcome the ignorance of “the soul’s irrational impulses” that his wives represent. Josephus himself leaves the locale of the spouses’ exchange indeterminate.

¹⁴ In Gen 31:5-13, Jacob delivers a long *apologia* to his wives in which he highlights his own impeccable dealings with Laban, the latter’s duplicity, and the divine favor towards himself, the whole concluding with his informing them (31:13b) of God’s injunction (see 31:3) that he return to his homeland. Josephus’ rendering turns the patriarch’s “self-centered” discourse into an inquiry by him concerning his wives’ views on his proposed departure.

¹⁵ This summary indication concerning the wives’ state of mind reflects the very end of their response to Jacob in Gen 31:16b (“now then, whatever God has said to you, do”) that itself picks up on the latter’s informing them of God’s command that he return home in 31:13b. Josephus’ rendering of the words of both parties leaves the divine role in Jacob’s upcoming flight unmentioned.

¹⁶ In MT, LXX and *Tg. Neof.*, *Tg. Onq.* and *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 31:19b use a more “drastic” expression for Rachel’s action, i.e. “she stole.”

venerate (τοὺς τύπους τῶν θεῶν, οὓς σέβειν πατρίους ὄντας νόμιμιον ἦν),¹⁷ escaped along with (συναπεδίδρασκε)¹⁸ her sister and the children of both wives *and the handmaids with their sons and all their possessions.*¹⁹ Only thereafter, does he adduce (1.311a) Jacob and the initiative taken by him: “Jacob, moreover, took with him *one half of the cattle*²⁰ without the knowledge of Laban.”²¹

¹⁷ MT calls the objects in her question “her father’s household gods (עֲלֻמֵי אֲבִיהָ); LXX uses a more explicitly derogatory designation (“the idols [τὰ εἰδωλά] of her father”), while the targums speak of “the images (צַלְמֵי אֲבִיהָ) of her father.” Josephus replaces the Bible’s simple qualification of the items as ones belonging to Laban (“her father”) with an allusion to them as customary objects of devotion within Rachel’s family. On the term ΠΑΤΡΙΟΥΣ of the above formulation as key Josephus as a positive term to designate all sorts of phenomena that are invested with the authority and prestige of what is “ancestral,” see B. Schröder, *Die ‘väterlichen Gesetze’. Flavius Josephus als Vermittler von Halachah an Griechen und Römer*, TSAJ 53 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996).

¹⁸ Josephus’ one remaining use of the verb συναποδιδράσκω is in *BJ* 1.310.

¹⁹ The catalogue of those whom Jacob leads away with him in Gen 31:17 does not mention his two “concubines” and their offspring explicitly, just as it does not cite the property of those associated with Jacob (in 31:21a Jacob is said to flee “with all he had”). Josephus fills these gaps. Conversely, he does not reproduce the source verse’s reference to the family members’ being set “on camels,” and holds over the notice (31:18) on the livestock that Jacob also takes with him.

²⁰ Gen 31:18 is more elaborate: “he [Jacob] drove away all his cattle, all his livestock which he had gained, the cattle in his possession which he had acquired in Paddan-aram” Josephus’ specification about Jacob’s carrying off (only) “half of the cattle” makes clear that he did not leave Laban completely bereft of livestock. From the conclusion of 31:18 Josephus leaves aside the indication concerning the goal of his flight, i.e. “to go the land of Canaan to his father Isaac.”

²¹ MT, LXX, *Tgs. Ps.-J.* and *Neof.* Gen 31:20 speak literally of Jacob’s “stealing (the heart) of Laban” by not telling him what he was doing. Josephus’ attenuated formulation of this reference to the patriarch’s “theft” has a counterpart in *Tg. Onq.* where Jacob’s “conceals (כָּסַת) from Laban.” Josephus passes over Laban’s own action of going to shear his sheep cited in 31:19a. From the biblical account of the family’s departure, Josephus omits the concluding notice (Gen 31:21) on Jacob’s “fleeing” with all he had, crossing the Euphrates, and heading towards the “hill country of Gilead.” The omission, *inter alia*, eliminates the Bible’s reference to an ignominious “flight” by Jacob. (*Tg. Ps.-J.* 31:21

Following the Jacob-centered interlude of 1.311a, the historian returns in 1.311b to Rachel's initiative as cited initially in 1.310b, now supplying a motivation for her deed:

Rachel who had carried the images of the gods [see 1.310a// Gen 31:19] *had indeed been taught by Jacob to despise such worship,*²² *but her motive was that in case they were pursued and overtaken by her father, she might have recourse to them to obtain pardon.*²³

In Gen 31:22-23a Laban responds to Jacob's flight, once he hears of this, by pursuing him into the Gileadite hill country. Josephus' account of this development comes in 1.312a: "Laban having, a day

appends to the MT content of the verse a "motivation" for Jacob's heading specifically to Gilead, i.e. "for he saw in the Holy Spirit that his children would experience liberation there in the days of Jephthah, who was from Gilead," the allusion being to the Gileadite Jephthah's victory over the Ammonites in Gilead as described in Judges 11).

²² This indication concerning Rachel's current stance towards the images she is carrying with her has no biblical counterpart. It serves to preclude the supposition that her taking of the images was due to her personal devotion to the objects – a supposition that would not reflect well on the matriarch (or her husband who, in that case, would be guilty of failure to properly instruct Rachel concerning true religion).

²³ Like Josephus, other ancient Jewish writings go beyond the Bible's notice (Gen 31:19b) on the fact of Rachel's "theft" to supply a motivation(s) for her act. Thus, according to *Pirqe R. El.* 36.4, Rachel took the objects both to keep them from informing Laban of the family's flight (this indication presupposes that Rachel, according to "Eliezer," did credit the "teraphim" with special knowledge; compare Josephus' preceding notice on her contempt for their cult) and to deliver her father's house from such items. The latter suggestion has a counterpart also in *Gen. Rab.* 74.5 and Theodore, *Quaest. in Gen.* 90 (PG 80, 197). *Tg.Ps.-J.* Gen 31.19b (and similarly *Pirqe R. El.* 36.4) provides an extended account concerning the making, nature and use of the "images" stolen by Rachel: "For they would slay a man a first-born, cut off his head and sprinkle it with salt and spices. Then they set it upon the wall, and it would speak to them. And it was to these . . . that her father bent down."

later, discovered the escape of Jacob *and his daughters*,²⁴ *indignant* (δεινοπαθῶν)²⁵ *at such treatment*,²⁶ set out after him with a band of men (μετὰ δυνάμεως)²⁷ in hot pursuit”

The sequels to Laban’s initiative are related in Gen 31:23b-25: he pursues Jacob for seven days into the Gileadite hill country (v. 23b)²⁸; in a dream God warns him not to do anything to the fugitive (v. 24); and Laban “overtakes” Jacob (v. 25a), with both parties ending up “encamped” in the hill country (v. 25b). Josephus (1.312b-313) re-arranges this sequence. Specifically, he begins by synthesizing elements drawn, in this order, from Gen 31:23b, 25a, 24a, 25b: “. . . and on the seventh day²⁹ he overtook them³⁰ on a hill where they were encamped (προκαθιδρυμένουσ³¹).”³² It being

²⁴ Gen 31:22 has Laban informed “on the third day,” and does not mention the daughters. Like MT and LXX, Josephus gives no indication as to who informed Laban and how the matter came to light. *Tg. Ps.-J.* (cf. *Tg. Neof.*) Gen 31:22 fills this gap, elaborating the conclusion of the MT verse with mention of “the shepherds,” who noticing that “the well” fails to flow for three days in Jacob’s absence, inform Laban. He in turn realizes that Jacob has fled “because it was through his merits that it [the well] had flowed for twenty years.”

²⁵ Josephus’ one remaining use of the verb δεινοπαθεῶ is in *Ant.* 11.306.

²⁶ Josephus inserts the above reference to Laban’s emotional response to his “discovery” in light with his general tendency to “psychologize” the biblical narrative, on which see Feldman, *Josephus’s Interpretation*, 197-204.

²⁷ In Gen 31:23, Laban takes his “kinsmen” (literally “brothers”) with him. Josephus’ more “military” designation for Laban’s entourage has a counterpart in *Pirge R. El.* 36.4, where Laban is said to gather “all the men of his city, strong warriors,” and to pursue Jacob “in order to kill him.”

²⁸ In *Tg. Ps.-J.*’s rendering of Gen 31:23b, Laban catches up with Jacob encamped on the mountain of Gilead where he is “giving thanks and praying before his God.”

²⁹ Gen 31:23b speaks of a seven-day pursuit by Laban. Josephus turns this into an allusion to what happened on the last day of this period.

³⁰ In Gen 31:25a Laban overtakes Jacob alone. Josephus’ plural (“them”) has in view his previous reference (1.312a) to Laban’s hearing of the escape of Jacob “and his daughters.”

³¹ Compare Gen 31:25aβ: “Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country.” Once again, Josephus widens the perspective to include those accompanying Jacob.

³² Elsewhere in Josephus’ corpus, the above verb προκαθιρύομαι does not occur as such; it has been proposed as an emendation in *Ant.* 10.224 and *C.Ap.* 1.139.

then evening,³³ he [Laban] took his rest.”³⁴ Only thereafter, as a climax to the whole series of preceding events, does Josephus relate the divine intervention by way of a dream as told in Gen 31:24, likewise elaborating on the content of God’s communication to Laban there:

God appeared to him in a dream³⁵ and warned him, *now that he had overtaken his son-in-law and his daughters*,³⁶ *to act gently and take no rash measures against them in wrath* (ὑπὸ θυμοῦ³⁷),³⁸ *but to make a covenant*

³³ Josephus draws this chronological indication from the reference to God’s coming to Laban in “a dream by night” in Gen 31:24a. (*Gen. Rab.* 74.7 cites the time reference in Gen 31:24 as showing that, in contrast to his dealings with Israelite prophets, God only approaches pagan “prophets” – like Laban – at night.)

³⁴ In Gen 31:25b “Laban with his kinsmen [brothers] encamped in the hill country of Gilead.” Here too (see previous note), Josephus’ formulation has the reference to Laban’s dream of 31:24 in view.

³⁵ Compare Gen 31:24a (MT LXX). “God came to Laban . . . in a dream by night.” The targums attenuate MT’s statement about God himself “coming” to the pagan Laban: in *Tg. Onq.* it is “a word from before the Lord” that comes to Laban; in *Tg. Neof.* “the Lord was revealed to” him, while *Tg. Ps-J.* reads: “an angel came by decree from before the Lord and drew the sword against Laban” (compare *Pirqe R. El.* 36.4, where the angel Michael comes down beside Laban, draws his sword, and threatens to kill him). On dreams in Josephus’ corpus overall, see R.K. Gnuse, *Dreams & Dream Reports in the Writings of Josephus: A Traditio-Historical Analysis*, AGJU 36 (Leiden: Brill, 1996). On Laban’s dream in *Ant.* 1.313-314, see *ibid.*, pp. 150-51.

³⁶ This “unbiblical” allusion harks back to 1.311a where Laban discovers the escape of “Jacob and his daughters.”

³⁷ This element of God’s admonition alludes back to the (interjected) mention of Laban’s “indignation” over the flight of Jacob’s household in 1.311a.

³⁸ This portion of the Deity’s word to Laban has an approximate (negative) parallel in Gen 31:24, where the latter is told “Take heed that you say not a word to Jacob, either good or bad.” (so MT; LXX: “Watch yourself, that you do not speak evil with Jacob”). Rabbinic tradition asks why Laban should have been forbidden also to speak “good” to Jacob. *B. Yom.* 103a-103b (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 74.7) comments: “all the favors of the wicked are evil for the righteous.”

(σπονδᾶς . . . ποιῆσθαι)³⁹ *with Jacob*⁴⁰; *He would Himself, He said, come to Jacob's aid* (συμμαχήσειν)⁴¹ *if, in contempt of his inferiority of numbers, he should proceed to attack him.*⁴²

In Genesis 31, God's word to Laban of v. 24 is followed by the notice on Jacob and Laban's taking their positions in v. 25. Josephus has already anticipated the content of the latter verse in 1.312. Accordingly, he moves directly from the divine injunction (31:24) to the opening of Laban's address to Jacob (31:26). Whereas, however, 31:26 simply and abruptly begins with Laban speaking to Jacob (whose camp, according to 31:25, was separate from that of Laban), Josephus (1.314a) smooths the transition between what precedes and this new development: "*Thus forewarned, Laban at the break of day,*⁴³ *summoned Jacob to a parley,*⁴⁴

³⁹ Literally: "make libations." The reference is to the widely diffused practice of pouring libations in connection with the establishment of solemn agreements; see Homer *Il.* 3.292-302; Hesiod, *Theog.* 782-804 and cf. E. Simon, "Libation," in *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum I* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), 237-53, 237-38. Elsewhere in Josephus, the above phrase occurs also in *Ant.* 12.154,381.

⁴⁰ This element of the Josephan Deity's discourse has no counterpart in Gen 31:24. The addition seems inspired by Laban's proposition as cited in 31:44 that he and Jacob "make a covenant," a proposition to which it gives prior divine approval.

⁴¹ Whereas the LXX does not use "ally language" in reference to God, Josephus does so with some frequency, often in connection with reference to God as "helper" (βοηθός); see H.W. Attridge, *The Interpretation of Biblical History in the Antiquitates Judaicae of Flavius Josephus*, HDR 7 (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1976), 78-92.

⁴² This appended threat gives a heightened urgency to the Deity's injunction to Laban.

⁴³ Gen 31:26 does not specify the moment at which Laban, following his nocturnal dream (31:24), began addressing Jacob. Josephus makes clear that he did so only after night had ended.

⁴⁴ Josephus' inserted mention of this "summons" accounts for Jacob's presence with Laban – a matter that is simply presupposed in Gen 31:26.

telling him of his dream,⁴⁵ *and when Jacob confidently approached him . . .*⁴⁶

Laban's initial word to Jacob in Gen 31:26-28 consists of a series of direct-address, reproachful questions (vv. 26-28a), culminating with the assertion "now you have done foolishly." Josephus precedes his version of this material with an extended review (1.314b) by Laban of the benefits he had conferred on the destitute visitor Jacob.⁴⁷ The segment reads:

(Laban) began to accuse (κατηγορεῖν) him, *protesting that, on his arrival at his house in poverty and utter destitution, he (Laban) had entertained him and supplied him with ample abundance of his possessions. "Aye," said he, "I⁴⁸ even gave thee my daughters in wedlock, reckoning thereby to increase thy affection (ἐὔνοιαν) towards us."*

⁴⁵ Josephus anticipates Laban's disclosure from Gen 31:29b, where it is only after addressing a series of reproachful questions to Jacob (vv. 26-28), that he informs him of the Deity's injunction as cited in 31:24. In so doing, Josephus has Laban's telling of the dream with its reassuring content provide a motivation for Jacob's acting on Laban's "summons" to him. From his version of Laban's telling of his dream (31:29a), he leaves aside the prefatory declaration of 31:29a ("it is my power to do you harm") which would conflict with his own representation of Laban throughout his speech as one who claims to have always treated Jacob with kindness, only to be requited with egregious ingratitude by the latter. (According to *Zohar* 1.167a it was the divine admonition of 31:29b with its warning that he not say a "bad word" to Jacob that brought Laban to the realization that he, in fact, had the capacity to "harm" Jacob – through the [magical] words he might utter against him in particular.)

⁴⁶ Such a "approach" by Jacob is simply presupposed in the sequence of Genesis 31. That Jacob comes before Laban "confidently" makes sense in Josephus' presentation, in that he has just previously been informed by Laban of his dream, which featured God's injunction about treating the fugitive kindly.

⁴⁷ The intent/effect of this element of the Josephan Laban's address is to accentuate the ungratefulness operative in the actions of which he will proceed to accuse Jacob. Of course, Laban's recital of his benefits to Jacob here is highly tendentious in that it omits any mention of the burdens and deceptions the latter experienced from his side.

⁴⁸ Note the switch at this point from indirect to direct discourse within Laban's speech. Such shifts are not infrequent in the longer speeches Josephus attributes to his characters; see Begg, *Josephus' Account*, 123-24, n. 772.

Following the above *apologia* for his treatment of Jacob, Josephus has Laban continue with accusations inspired by those of Gen 31:26-28, recasting the “why-questions” used there as assertions. In so doing, he makes explicit the claims about the contrast between Laban’s own beneficence and the ingratitude manifested by Jacob’s actions implicit in his opening words to the fugitive. His thus elaborated rendition (1.315-316) of 31:26-28 – into which he incorporates an anticipation of Laban’s further claim of 31:30b about Jacob’s having stolen his gods – runs as follows:

(1.315b) “But thou *without regard either for thine own mother or for the kinship that unites thee to me*⁴⁹ *or for the wives whom thou has wed, without a thought for the children of whom I am the grandsire*, has dealt with me by the laws of warfare, *plundering my property*, instigating my daughters to flee from their sire,⁵⁰ (1.316) and making off with the sacred objects of my family (ἱερά . . . πάτρια) *which my forefathers venerated and I have deemed worthy*

⁴⁹ With the above words, Laban alludes to the fact of his being the brother of Jacob’s mother Rebecca and thus Jacob’s own uncle; see Gen 24:29.

⁵⁰ The above charge draws on Laban’s initial question to Jacob in Gen 32:26: “What have you done, that you have cheated me [literally: stolen my heart], and carried away my daughters like captives of the sword?” Josephus’ version adds explicit mention of the “property” of which Jacob has despoiled Laban, rewords the source’s allusion to the “sword” with which Jacob led the daughters into captivity into mention of “the laws of warfare” according to which Jacob has acted, and represents the daughters as having a more active role in the process (they themselves “flee” rather than being simply “carried away” by Jacob). Josephus passes over Laban’s appended questions of 31:27-28a which, shifting attention from Jacob to himself, underscore how Jacob’s secretive flight has deprived him of the possibility of taking proper leave of the entire household.

*of the same worship as they.*⁵¹ *And these actions which, even in war one would not have practised on a foe (ἐχθρούς),⁵² thou, a kinsman, the son of my own sister; the husband of my daughters, the guest and sharer of my hearth and home, hast done to me.*⁵³

The source segment Gen 31:31-42 comprises the following elements: initial response by Jacob attributing his flight to fear that Laban would take his wives from him and pronouncing a death sentence on the one with whom Laban should find his gods (vv. 31-32a), parenthetical notice that Laban did not know that Rachel had stolen her father's gods (v. 32b), Laban's unsuccessful search for his gods (vv. 33-35), and denunciation of Laban by Jacob (vv. 36-42). Josephus markedly modifies this sequence. Specifically, he has Jacob respond, utilizing elements of his second speech (31:36-42), to Laban's charges against him with accusations of his own (1.317-319); thereafter, following an interjected editorial commentary (1.320-321), he relates Jacob's "invitation" and Laban's acting on this (1.322-323a// 31:23a,33-36). The speech that he attributes to

⁵¹ In Genesis 31, Laban's accusatory question of v. 30b ("but why did you steal my gods?") is a kind of after-thought appended to Laban's disclosure of God's recent communication to him (v. 29; cf. v. 24) and is itself prefaced by the "admission" of v. 30a ("but now you [Jacob] have longed greatly for your father's house"). Josephus has had Laban relate his dream at the very start of his address to Jacob (see 3.114a). Leaving aside the "admission" of v. 30a (in which Laban seems to supply his own answer to the "why-questions" he has been asking Jacob in what precedes), he joins the charge of v. 30b with those of vv. 26-28 into a continuous listing of all the items of which Jacob has deprived Laban. In addition, he expatiates on the summary wording of Laban's charge in v. 30b itself, thereby harking back to his (seemingly non-polemic) reference in 1.310 to Rachel's taking with her "the images of the gods which the religion of her fathers (πατρῖους) had made it customary to venerate."

⁵² Having accused Jacob of acting "by the laws of warfare" in his handling of his property, daughters, and grandchildren in 1.315b, Laban here intensifies the charge: Jacob has acted in a way that not even enemies in war would use upon each other.

⁵³ Here at the end of his accusatory discourse, Laban returns to the multiple and intimate bonds between Jacob and himself previously cited by him in 1.315 that make all the more reprehensible Jacob's (alleged) acting in a way that not even opponents in war would employ; see previous note.

Jacob in 1.317-319 opens (1.317) with an implicit motivation (God-given love for his ancestral land) for his leaving Laban that replaces the fugitive's (ignominious) admission of "fear" as the ground for his action in Gen 31:32: "To this speech of Laban Jacob replied in self-defense *that he was not the only one in whose heart God had implanted a love of native country* (πατρίδος),⁵⁴ *that it was innate in all, and that after so long a time it was right that he should return to his own.*"⁵⁵ Having provided this explanation for his action, the Josephan Jacob proceeds to address the various charges Laban has just made against him. In that response of his, Jacob (1.318a), basing himself loosely on his biblical counterpart's declaration of innocence vis-à-vis Laban in 31:36b-37 ("What is my offense? What is my sin? Although you have felt through all my goods, what have you found of all your household goods? Set it before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they decide between us"), first affirms: "As for the charge of spoiling thee,"⁵⁶ he proceeded, "it is thou thyself who wouldst be found the wrongdoer (ἀδικῶν) before any ther judge."⁵⁷ This affirmation, in turn, leads into a summary allusion (1.318b) to the catalogue of benefits Jacob avers he has conferred on Laban's livestock in 31:38-41a, that is itself "framed" by references to how Laban should (not) respond to Jacob's initiatives: "*For whereas thou oughtest to be grateful to me* for having kept and multiplied

⁵⁴ This term echoes the designation of Laban's gods as "ancestral" (πατρίους / πάτρια) in *Ant.* 1.310,316. Whereas Laban's attachment is to his ancestral gods, God had given Jacob (and all people) a love for his ancestral country.

⁵⁵ Jacob's above declaration may be inspired by Laban's word to him in Gen 31:30a ("and now you have gone away because you greatly longed for your father's house . . .") for which, as we have noted, there is no equivalent in Josephus' version of Laban's speech, but which, I suggest, he has "transferred" to Jacob, making him the one to aver love of homeland as the motive for his leaving Laban.

⁵⁶ With this formulation, Jacob alludes back to Laban's claim in 1.315 that Jacob "plundered his property." Note as well the shift – seen already in Laban's previous speech – from initial indirect to direct discourse at this juncture in Jacob's speech. See n. ⁴⁷.

⁵⁷ Josephus here generalizes Jacob's proposal that the "kinsmen" of himself and Laban decide between them (31:37 *in fine*), thereby accentuating Jacob's assurance concerning Laban's guilt and his own innocence.

thy cattle,⁵⁸ *is it not unreasonable to be wroth with me for the small of them that we have taken with us?*⁵⁹ The property charge thus disposed of, Jacob next turns (1.318c) to Laban's complaint about his having been deprived of his daughters by Jacob (see 1.316 "instigating my daughters to flee from their sire"), with this introducing an element without counterpart in the biblical Jacob's words to his pursuer: "*As concerning thy daughters, I would have thee know that it was no malice on my part that has forced them to accompany my flight, but that just affection (εὐνοίαν)*⁶⁰ which wedded wives are wont to have for their husbands; in truth it was so much me whom they follow as their children."⁶¹

In 1.318, as we have seen, Josephus draws, with much freedom, on Jacob's self-*apologia* to Laban as cited in Gen 31:36-41a. Having done so, he pauses to interject an editorial note (1.319a) that sums up on the previous portion of Jacob's speech and prepares his subsequent denunciation of Laban that he will give in 1.319b: "*Such was his defense to prove that he had done no wrong (μηδεν ἄδικεῖν),⁶² from which he proceeded to complaint and accusation (κατηγορίαν)⁶³ against Laban.*" Jacob's reproaches to Laban in Gen 31:41b-42 are rather brief: Laban

⁵⁸ Compare Jacob's negative assertions about how Laban's livestock fared with him in Gen 31:38: "These twenty years I have been with you; your eyes and your she-goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flocks."

⁵⁹ This question lacks a counterpart in Jacob's words to Laban of Gen 31:32-33a,36-42. With the question, Jacob both acknowledges (while also attenuating) and justifies the fact of his having taken "one half of the [Laban's] cattle" as cited in *Ant.* 1.311a.

⁶⁰ This term echoes Laban's use of the same word in 1.314 (*in fine*) where he speaks of his having given his daughters to Jacob, "reckoning thereby to increase thy affection (εὐνοίαν) towards us."

⁶¹ With the above statement, Jacob responds to Laban's charge (1.315 *in fine*) that his wives' accompanying him was due to his compulsion of them: on the contrary, his wives had a double reason of their own to go with him.

⁶² This term both echoes and reverses Jacob's claim about Laban's "being found the wrongdoer (ἄδικῶν) before any other judge" in 1.318a.

⁶³ This is the nominal form of the verb κατηγορεῖν used in 1.314 to introduce Laban's "accusation" of Jacob. Jacob is now about to make his own accusations against Laban.

changed his wages ten times (v. 41b) and would have sent him away empty-handed, unless God had been with him (v. 42a); Laban, moreover, has been “rebuked” by God who saw Jacob’s parlous state (v. 42b). Josephus (1.319b) elaborates Jacob’s charges, likewise interjecting reminiscences of those made against him by Laban:

*he, though he was his mother’s brother and had given him his daughters in wedlock,*⁶⁴ had worn him out by imposing grievous tasks and by detaining him there for the space of twenty years.⁶⁵ What Laban had made him suffer, he added, on the pretext of the marriages, *was indeed comparatively light, but what had followed those marriages was worse and a fate such as might have befallen an enemy* (καὶ ἅ τις ἄν’ ἐπαθεν ἐχθρός⁶⁶).⁶⁷

Jacob concludes his address to Laban in Gen 31:42 with affirmations about God’s dealings with the two of them, given Laban’s treatment of himself. Josephus’ version (1.320-321) of this element takes the form of an editorial comment concerning the triangular interplay among the Deity and the two men that also makes delayed use of the account of Gen 31:7-9⁶⁸ concerning

⁶⁴ In 1.315 Laban cites his having given his daughters in wedlock to Jacob as something that makes Jacob’s actions all the more reprehensible, while in 1.316 he adduces the fact of Jacob’s being “the son of my own sister” for the same purpose. Jacob now turns the tables on Laban, making the facts in question the ground for his own charges against him.

⁶⁵ Josephus made anticipated use of this chronological datum at the beginning of his version of the story of Jacob’s flight in 1.309.

⁶⁶ This is the emendation adopted by Thackeray and Feldman. Nodet follows the codices SPL(M) in reading καὶ ἅ τις ἐχθρός ἐφυγεν ἄν (which he translates “to flee as one flees an enemy”). On either reading, there is a reminiscence (and reversal) of Laban’s use of war and enemy language in reference to Jacob’s departure; see 1.316b where he declares that Jacob’s actions are ones “which even in war one would not have practiced upon a foe (ἐχθρούς).”

⁶⁷ The above charges represents a amplified and intensified version of Jacob’s word to Laban of Gen 31:41 (“These twenty years that I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times”).

⁶⁸ This account is part of Jacob’s address (Gen 31:4-13) to his wives prior to the family’s departure. In Josephus’ version, the addressee becomes Laban himself.

God's multiplication of Jacob's flocks, notwithstanding Laban's machinations. It reads:

(1.320) *And indeed Laban had used Jacob exceedingly ill (κακουργως)⁶⁹; for when he saw that God assisted him in whatever he desired,⁷⁰ he promised to grant him from the young of the flock at one time what should be born white, at another all the black progeny.⁷¹ (1.321) But when the offspring that should have been credited to Jacob proved numerous,⁷² he did not keep his word at the moment, but promised to deliver them a year later, since he looked askance at his becoming possessed of so much. He made these promises because such numbers were not to be expected, but when they came to be, he proved faithless.⁷³*

⁶⁹ This adverb echoes the cognate noun that Jacob uses in 1.318 in stating that it was “no malice (κακουργίαν) on my part” that compelled Laban’s daughters to accompany him. Whereas such “malice” was absent in Jacob’s conduct, it was, Josephus now avers, indeed operative in that of Laban.

⁷⁰ This transitional phrase calls to mind Laban’s initial response to Jacob’s request that he be released by Laban in Gen 30:27 (“ . . . I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me because of you”) which Josephus earlier passed over (and from which he here removes the reference to the (prohibited) practice of “divination,” likewise replacing, in accord with his regular practice, the source’s reference to “the Lord” with “God”).

⁷¹ According to Jacob’s report to his wives in Gen 31:8, Laban alternatively promised him the “spotted” and the “striped” among the offspring of the flocks.

⁷² In Jacob’s word to his wives of Gen 31:8, Laban’s awarding him either the spotted or striped offspring of the flock (see previous note) has the same result: “all the flock” produces offspring of the kind that Laban had assigned to Jacob.

⁷³ In the above conclusion to his editorial commentary, Josephus couples references to Laban’s perfidy, inspired by Jacob’s declaration to his wives in Gen 31:7 (cf. 31:41b) “you father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times,” with interjected remarks on Laban’s motivation in both making the promises he did and then reneging on those promises. Conversely, he leaves aside Jacob’s evocations of God’s role in his prospering of 31:7b (“but God did not permit him [Laban] to harm me”) and 9 (“Thus God has taken away the cattle of your father and given them to me”). In Josephus’ commentary, the only mention of God’s role in the proceedings is in his rendering of Gen 30:27 in 1.320b; see n. ⁶⁹.

Thackeray, Nodet, and Feldman all take the above segment as an editorial comment by Josephus appended by him to Jacob’s preceding speech. Franxman (*Genesis and the Jewish Antiquities*, 200) takes it – erroneously as it seems – as the continuation of Jacob’s words (“Jacob now says that Laban has treated him

It is only at this juncture, following his version of Jacob's second address to Laban (Gen 31:36-42) and his appended commentary on this, that Josephus has Jacob address a matter which, in the biblical sequence, he speaks (31:32a) of in his initial word (31:31-32a) to his father-in-law, i.e. the (purported) theft of the latter's gods. Whereas, moreover, the biblical Jacob dramatically declares "any one with whom you will find your gods shall not live,"⁷⁴ Josephus' indirect address rendering (1.322a) is more jejune: "As for the sacred objects (ἱερῶμάτων), Jacob bade him institute a search."⁷⁵

Gen 31:33-35 tells in some detail of Laban's search for his gods that is thwarted by Rachel's stratagem. Josephus compresses this sequence, omitting many of its particulars:

*This offer Laban accepted,*⁷⁶ whereupon Rachel, *hearing of it*, deposited the images (τύπους; see 1.310) in the pack saddle of the camel *which carried her*, and sat upon it,⁷⁷ professing to be incommoded by the functions

exceedingly ill . . .").

⁷⁴ In rabbinic tradition (see, e.g., *Pesiq. Rab.* 3.4; *Gen. Rab.* 74.4), Jacob's word here is represented as an unwitting curse upon his beloved Rachel – who has in fact stolen her father's gods – with fatal consequences for her, leading to her death in childbirth as described in Gen 35:16-20. Perhaps mindful of the problem, *Tg. Onq.* Gen 31:32 rewords, having Jacob declare: "The place where you will find the gods whom you fear shall not remain in existence," thereby shifting the "curse" from the person with whom Laban's images will be found to the site of their finding.

⁷⁵ In the above formulation, Josephus seems to conflate the two distinct components of Jacob's proposal to Laban in Gen 31:32a ("any one with whom you find your gods shall not live. In the presence of our kinsmen point out what I have that is yours"), focussing the (open-ended) search Jacob invites Laban to make on the latter's *sacra*. As Feldman (*Judean Antiquities 1-4*, 119, n. 916) points out, it is "surprising" that Josephus refrains from utilizing the exculpatory parenthetical notice of 31:32b ("Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them"). Perhaps he supposed Jacob's ignorance of the matter (and hence his *bona fides* in inviting Laban to conduct a search) was clear enough from the context.

⁷⁶ This brief phrase replaces the circumstantial indications concerning Laban's initial moves in response to Jacob's "invitation" of Gen 31:33 ("So Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent and into the tent of the two maid-servants, but he did not find them. And he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's").

⁷⁷ For this portion of his presentation, Josephus follows the wording of Gen 31:34a ("Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them in the

natural to women.⁷⁸ Laban desisted from further search,⁷⁹ *never supposing that his daughter in that condition would approach the images. . . .*⁸⁰

As noted above, in the Bible Jacob responds to Laban's failed search for his gods (Gen 31:33-35) with an indignant speech of both self-defense and accusation in 31:36-42. Josephus, for his part, has given his version of the latter segment (1.317-319 [320-321]) prior to his rendering of the former (1.322-323a). Accordingly, he moves directly (1.323b-324) from the cessation of Laban's search to the finale of the entire episode of Jacob's flight, i.e. the pact concluded between the two men and their subsequent separation as related in Gen 31:43-32:2a, drastically shortening this as well. Laban sets the story's denouement in motion in Gen 31:43, where, having claimed all that Jacob has taken with him to be "mine,"⁸¹ he

camel's saddle, and sat upon them") rather closely. He omits the attached notice of 31:34b ("Laban felt all about the tent, but did not find them").

⁷⁸ Compare Rachel's direct address word to her father in Gen 31:35a ("Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the way of women is upon me"). Philo (*Ebr.* 55) comments on Rachel's declaration as follows: "So we see that obedience to custom is the special property of women. Indeed, custom is the rule of the weaker and more effeminate soul. For nature is of men, and to follow nature is the mark of a strong and truly masculine reason."

⁷⁹ Compare the concluding, generalizing summary on the failure of Laban's search in Gen 31:35b ("So he searched, but did not find the household gods").

⁸⁰ Laban's "presupposition" here is Josephus' ironic addition to the account of the scene in Rachel's tent of Gen 31:34-45. Contrary to what Laban thinks impossible in the case of Rachel and his gods, readers know from 1.311 that she had been "taught to despise such worship" by Jacob and so would be quite capable of doing what her father finds inconceivable.

⁸¹ Philo (*Cher.* 68-71) invests each of the entities claimed as "mine" by Laban in Gen 31:43a with an epistemological allegorical significance (e.g., the "cattle" cited in his catalogue are the senses) and denounces him for his assertion of ownership over what, in fact, belongs to God. Elsewhere as well, Philo offers a highly negative (allegorical) portrayal of Laban whom, e.g., he calls the "representative of the passions" (*Leg.* I.16), "the friend of bodies and tints" (*Leg.* III.22), "the foolish one which considers nothing good but sensible objects that meet the eye and which is deceived and enslaved by colours and shadows" (*Agr.* 42), the "head and chief" of bodily existence in its varied aspects" (*Migr.* 28), the "virtue-hater" (*Her.* 43), from whom Jacob, accordingly, in his striving for virtue, flees "out of hatred" (*Fug.* 4-23), "because "association with men devoid of sense is hurtful" (*Fug.* 14).

poses the rhetorical question “But what can I do this day to these my daughters or their children whom they have borne?,” and then (31:44) proposes that the two of them “make a covenant”⁸² that will function as a “witness” between them. Josephus completely dispenses with this preparatory discourse by Laban. Instead, he has him proceed (1.323b) immediately from his unavailing search (1.323a// 31:33-35) to the pledge ascribed to him in Gen 31:52 (“. . . I[Laban] will not pass over this heap to you [Jacob] . . . for harm”),⁸³ giving this a more general content as well: “. . . he moreover made an oath⁸⁴ that he would bear no grudge for the past . . .” According to Gen 31:53b, Jacob simply swears “by the fear of his father Isaac,” that to which he swears being left unspecified. The historian (1.323 *in fine*) fills this gap, turning the negative admonitions Laban addresses to Jacob in 31:50 (“If you ill-treat my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us, God is witness between you and me”) into a positive pledge by the latter “. . . while Jacob on his side swore to love his daughters.”

Gen 31:54 speaks of “the mountain” on which Jacob offers a sacrifice and where his “kinsmen” join him in “eating bread” and spending the night. Josephus does not mention these happenings on the mountain. Instead, he turns (1.324) the Bible’s elevated site into the location on which a memorial object (in Gen 31:45-51, two such objects, the “stone heap” and the “pillar” are cited) is set up: “To these engagements they pledged themselves

⁸² Josephus consistently avoids the LXX’s use of the term *διαθήκη* as a rendering for Hebrew *בְּרִית*, “covenant.” On his procedure in this regard, see Begg, *Josephus’ Account*, 100-101, n. 609.

⁸³ In Gen 31:52 Laban’s pledge is amplified with references to the “heap” and the “pillar” which are to serve as “witnesses” both of his above pledge to Jacob (see above) and the corresponding pledge (“and you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me”) that he enjoins upon Jacob. Josephus (see above) leaves it to Jacob to determine what he is agreeing to for himself.

⁸⁴ Compare Gen 31:53 where Laban appends an evocation of the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor as “judge” between himself and Jacob to his previous (31:52) specification of the terms of their agreement.

on some hills (ὑπὲρ ὄρων τινων),⁸⁵ whereupon they erected κοδλγκνέθεσαν)⁸⁶ jsfkdlfa monument (στήλην)⁸⁷ in the form of an altar⁸⁸; hence comes the name Galad(es) (Γαλαδης)⁸⁹ given

⁸⁵ LXX Gen 31:54 twice uses the phrase ἐν τῷ ὄρει. This phrase, in turn, is prepared by the previous mentions (31:21,23,25) of “the hill country (LXX τὸ ὄρος) of Gilead.” Josephus’ has an (indefinite) equivalent only to the last of these previous references; see 1.312, where he speaks of “a hill” (ἐπὶ τινος λόφου) on which the two parties encamp. Given the difference of terminology used, it is unclear how the “elevations” alluded to in 1.312 and 324 relate to each other.

⁸⁶ The implied subject of this verb would be Laban and Jacob, the two parties whose pledges are cited just previously in 1.323b. In Gen 31:46 it is Jacob’s “kinsmen” who, at his direction, erect the “stone-heap” to which he then (31:47-48) gives the name “Galeed.”

⁸⁷ This is the term used in LXX Gen 31:44 (see also 31:51,52) to render MT’s עֲמֻדָּה (RSV: “pillar”), this consisting of a “stone” which Jacob (alone) is said to erect. In limiting himself to a single commemorative object set up on this occasion, Josephus leaves aside the second such object cited in Gen 31:44-51, i.e. the “stone heap,” just as he passes over the “witness function” ascribed to both objects in this segment.

Rabbinic tradition records that the witness function conferred by Laban the Aramaean on the stone heap and pillar in Gen 31:52 raised difficulties long afterwards in the time of David. According to *Mid. Teh.* 60.1 (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 74.15) the Arameans appealed to these “witnesses” when Joab came against them at David’s behest (see Ps 60:2). David referred the matter to the Sanhedrin and was informed that Aram had itself already twice crossed the boundary marked by the two objects (i.e. in the persons of the Arameans Balaam [Num 23:7] and Cushan-rishathaim, king of Aram-naharaim [Judg 3:8]), thereby voiding the agreement between Laban and Jacob and so giving Joab the right to act against Aram. *Pirqe R. El.* 36.6 tells a somewhat different version of the incident: David could only enter Aram’s territory after he broke down the “pillar” which Laban calls a “witness” between him and Jacob.

⁸⁸ This indication concerning the appearance of the “monument” lacks a direct biblical equivalent. It may, however, be inspired by the reference – not reproduced by Josephus – to Jacob’s “sacrificing” on the mountain, as Franxman, *Genesis and the ‘Jewish Antiquities’*, 201 suggests.

⁸⁹ This is the reading, based on the Hebrew name (“Galeed” [heap of witness], translated by LXX as βουνὸς μάρτυς) given by Jacob to the “stone heap” in MT Gen 31:47-48, which Thackeray and Feldman adopt. Nodet reads Γαλαδηγή with the codices ROSPL. Whichever reading is adopted, Josephus seems to be drawing on the specifically Hebrew form of the name as opposed to the LXX translation of this.

to the hill (βουνός),⁹⁰ and hence to this day they call the district Galadene (Γαλαδηνήν).⁹¹

The interaction between Jacob and Laban related in Genesis 31 concludes in 31:54-32:2a with a series of final happenings: Jacob sacrifices on the mountain, summons his kinsmen to eat bread; he and they do eat and spent the night on the mountain (31:54), whereupon Laban on the mountain takes leaves of his daughters and grandchildren, kissing and blessing them and then returns home (32:1= Eng. 31:55), while Jacob himself “goes on his way” (32:2a= Eng. 32:1a).

From this catalogue, Josephus takes over (1.324b-325a) only three elements: “A feast⁹² *having followed the oath-taking*,⁹³ Laban withdrew.⁹⁴ Jacob now pursuing his journey to Canaan”⁹⁵

⁹⁰ This is the same word that in LXX Gen 31:47-48 designates both the stone-heap that Jacob’s kinsmen set up and the first component of the name (βουνός μάρτυς = Hebrew “Galeed”) that Jacob gives to this construction. Given this fact, Thackeray’s above translation (compare Nodet, “monticule”; Feldman, “mound”) appears ambiguous regarding what it is that got the name “Galades” according to Josephus: was it the (pre-existent) “hills/mountains” or the just-erected “monument in the form of an altar,” both of which are mentioned in what precedes? In any case, Josephus’ indefinite passive formulation (“the name . . . given to the hill”) stands in contrast to Gen 31:47-48 where Laban and Jacob name the stone-heap, the former with an Aramaic (“Jegar-sahadutha”), the latter with a Hebrew (“Gilead”) designation.

⁹¹ Josephus’ appended etiological notice has no equivalent in the concluding segment of Genesis 31. On the other hand, it does recall the references to “the hill country of Gilead” (LXX Γαλαάδ) – a place name reminiscent of the “Galeed” of (MT) 31:47-48 – in 31:21,22,25. See further n. ⁸⁴.

⁹² Josephus’ formulation leaves unspecified who participated in this “feast” and where it took place. In Gen 31:54 Jacob and his kinsmen “eat bread together” on the mountain. This notice, in turn, recapitulates the mention (31:46b) of an earlier eating by Jacob and his kinsmen – to which Josephus has no equivalent – that occurs beside the stone-heap the latter have erected at Jacob’s orders.

⁹³ This chronological indication, harking back to the parties’ oaths as cited in 1.323b-324a, lacks a counterpart in Gen 31:54.

⁹⁴ Josephus draws this item from the very end of Gen 32:1 (“[Laban] returned home”), passing over the preceding, emotionally charged mentions of his kissing and blessing his daughters and grandchildren in that verse.

⁹⁵ As in the parallel of Gen 32:2a (“Jacob went on his way”), this phrase serves more as an introduction to the following account of Jacob’s adventures once he leaves Laban than to the foregoing story of the two men’s final interaction.

By way of conclusion to the foregoing, detailed comparison of *Ant.* 1.309-324[325a] and its biblical *Vorlage*, I shall now briefly recall some of the salient features of Josephus' rewriting that have emerged from that comparison. Most conspicuous in this regard is, of course, his abridgement of the source material. Specifically, of the four longer episodes into which the Genesis story may be divided (preparations for flight; flight and pursuit; Laban-Jacob confrontation; concluding agreement and separation), it is only the third of these that he does not significantly abbreviate. Conversely, it is only by way of exception that he interjects a longer amplification of the source's content; see *Ant.* 1.311b (Rachel's motivations in stealing her father's gods) and 1.320-321 (the appended editorial comment concerning Laban's treatment of Jacob). Also noteworthy are Josephus' re-arrangements of the story's sequence: his parallel, e.g., to the notices on the multiplication of Jacob's flock at Laban's expense (Gen 31:8) is repositioned to the just-mentioned editorial comment of 1.320-321 that itself follows his rendering of Jacob's reply to Laban (1.317-319 // Gen 31:31-42), while Laban's unavailing search for his gods is recounted by him (1.322-323a) only after Jacob has concluded his reply, rather than (so Gen 31:33-35) in between the two parts of that reply. Moreover, Josephus modifies the Scriptural data that he does utilize. The speeches, e.g., he ascribes to Laban and Jacob exhibit a largely distinctive content vis-à-vis those cited in Gen 31:26-42.

Whereas the Lord in Gen 31:24 simply tells Laban to say nothing to Jacob, in 1.313 the Deity directs him to covenant with the fugitive and informs him that he will personally assist Jacob, should he attack him. Numerous instances of such modifications occur as well in connection with the closing episode of the story, where, e.g., Laban's reminder that God will be a witness to Jacob's mistreatment of his daughters (31:50) is turned into an oath by Jacob to "love" them (1.324a).

Josephus' application of the foregoing rewriting techniques to the story of Jacob's flight generates a highly streamlined version of the story in which the focus, even more so than in the Bible, is on the verbal confrontation between the two male protagonists. In recounting their confrontation, Josephus both heightens the intensity of their respective charges against each other and more closely aligns

Jacob's words with those of Laban's previous discourse. Josephus' characterization of the story's various personages likewise evidences distinctive features. As a reliable narrator, Josephus endorses the truth of Jacob's claims about Laban's mistreatment of him in the editorial appendix of 1.320-321. He also highlights Laban's credulity regarding Rachel's respect for his gods via the attached comment of 1.323 *in fine* and denies Laban the tender gestures of kissing and blessing his daughters and grandchildren cited in Gen 32:1. At the same time, he leaves aside many of the activities ascribed to the biblical Jacob, e.g., his initiatives to increase his livestock holdings (Gen 30:37-43), his ordering his kinsmen to gather the stones for the stone-heap (31:46), and his sacrificing on the mountain (31:54), thereby reducing the patriarch's active role (and putting him more on a level with Laban in this regard).⁹⁶ By contrast, he goes beyond the Bible in accentuating the figure of Rachel, the deed she undertakes, and her motivation for this over the course of his presentation.⁹⁷ Finally, whereas, as pointed out above, he does amplify the divine address to Laban (1.313// Gen 31:24), he also jettisons a number of other source mentions of the Deity's role (e.g., 31:3 [God's command to Jacob to return to his homeland]; and 31:4-16 [the recurrent invocation of God's initiatives in the dialogue between Jacob and his wives]),⁹⁸ such that also the divine involvement in the story's unfolding appears diminished in his retelling.

JUBILEES

Our second, ancient rewriting of Gen 30:25-32:1 is *Jub.* 28.25-29:12. This rendering opens in 29.25-30 with an abbreviated parallel to the extended account of the (remote) preliminaries to Jacob's departure related in 30:25-30:3. Following Gen 30:25a, *Jub.* 28.25a dates Jacob's overture to Laban to the time after the

⁹⁶ Josephus' diminution of Jacob's activity here corresponds to his overall treatment of the patriarch about which Feldman (*Josephus's Interpretation*, 305) comments: "Josephus . . . seems to have had less interest in Jacob than does the Bible."

⁹⁷ Josephus' handling of Rachel's role is noteworthy, given his overall tendency to downplay the persons and accomplishments of biblical women, on which see Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, 188-192.

⁹⁸ See n. 72.

birth of Joseph.⁹⁹ The remainder of *Jub.* 28.25 then continues with a somewhat modified and re-arranged version of Jacob's discourse of 30:25b-26: "Give me my wives and children. And let me go to my father, *Isaac*.¹⁰⁰ *And let me make a house for myself*, because I have completed the years which I served you for your two daughters.¹⁰¹ And I will travel to my father's house."¹⁰²

In Gen 30:27-28, Laban makes a two-part reply to Jacob's preceding request: having learned through "divination" that God has blessed him "because of you (Jacob)" (v. 27), he asks Jacob to "name his wages" and promises that he will give these to him (v. 28). *Jub.* 28.26 omits Laban's statement of v. 27 (which represents him as a participant in magical practices), and attenuates the "open-ended" offer he makes Jacob in v. 28: "Remain with me for your wages *and pasture my flock for me again* and accept you wages." Gen 30:29-34 relates the further course of the negotiations between Jacob and Laban, with the former making a proposal concerning which livestock are to be his (v. 32) and the latter assenting to this (v. 33). The *Jubilees* version (28.27) reduces this sequence to the summary notice: "And they agreed with one another that he [Laban] would give him (Jacob) each of the lambs and kids which were born (and) on which there were black or spots or white. It would

⁹⁹ In contrast to Gen 30:25a, *Jub.* 28.25 does not mention the name of Joseph's mother Rachel. Her name is, however, cited in the resumption of the notice on Joseph's birth in 29.1.

¹⁰⁰ In Gen 30:25b-26a α Jacob's request that his family members be given him comes in second place, after he has asked to be "sent away" by Laban. *Jubilees* reverses the Bible's sequence, likewise substituting "Isaac" for "my own home and country" as the goal of Jacob's proposed journey.

¹⁰¹ Gen 30:26 contains a double mention of Jacob's "service" to Laban. *Jubilees* prefaces its reference to that service with a request by Jacob that he now have the opportunity to make his own "house," this inspired by Jacob's subsequent question to Laban in 30:30b ("but now when shall I provide for my own household also?").

¹⁰² This conclusion to Jacob's discourse lacks a parallel at the end of his words as cited in Gen 30:25b-26. Rather, it recalls the start of his speech as cited there: "send me away that I may go to my own home and my country" (30:25b).

be his wages.”¹⁰³ The respective measures taken by Laban and Jacob to ensure that their just-made agreement works to his own advantage are described at length in Gen 30:37-43. In this instance as well, *Jub.* 28.28-29 makes highly selective use of the biblical presentation, e.g., leaving aside the human initiatives of both Laban and Jacob to ensure the increase of their holdings, perhaps under the influence of 31:4-16 where Jacob attributes the multiplication of his flocks to God’s activity:

(28.28) And all of the sheep bore spotted (lambs) and one which had variegated markings and ones which had various shades of black. And the sheep bore again lambs which looked like themselves¹⁰⁴ and all that had markings belonged to Jacob and those that had no markings belonged to Laban.¹⁰⁵ (28.29) And the possessions of Jacob multiplied greatly. And he had acquired *oxen and* sheep and asses and camels and male and female servants.¹⁰⁶

According to Gen 31:1-2, Jacob’s prosperity (30:43) evokes a negative reaction from Laban’s sons and Laban himself, of which Jacob becomes aware. *Jub.* 28.30a makes a general comment about the common state of mind of father and sons: “And Laban and his

¹⁰³ *Jubilees* transposes into the above “agreement notice” Jacob’s proposal in Gen 30:32 (“ . . . if you will do this for me, I will again feed your flock and keep it: let me pass through your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages”), conflating this with Laban’s response in Gen 30:34 (“Good, let it be as you have said”). It leaves aside the preceding dialogue of 30:28-31 in which Jacob (v. 30) recalls the divine blessing he has brought to Laban, and concludes with the question “when shall I provide for my household also?,” to which Laban replies (v. 31) by reiterating his question (see v. 28) about what he is to “give” Jacob.

¹⁰⁴ Compare the notice on the outcome of Jacob’s placing of peeled rods before the breeding flocks (Gen 30:37-39a) in 30:39b (“ . . . so the flocks brought forth striped, speckled and spotted”).

¹⁰⁵ According to Gen 31:42b, it was the “feebler” (?) of the flocks’ offspring that go to Laban, while Jacob gets “the stronger.” *Jubilees*’ rendition aligns the outcome with the agreement made by the parties (28.27).

¹⁰⁶ The above notice closely reproduces the content of Gen 30:43 (“Thus the man [Jacob] grew exceedingly rich, and had large flocks, maidservants, and menservants, and camels and asses”), while rearranging the sequence of its possessions catalogue and adding mention of “oxen.”

sons were jealous of Jacob.”¹⁰⁷ Thereafter, 28.30b focusses on the exterior manifestations of Laban’s jealousy: “*And Laban collected his sheep from him*,¹⁰⁸ and kept watch on him with evil intent.”¹⁰⁹

The sequence Gen 30:25-31:3 culminates with an intervention by the Lord who instructs Jacob “return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you.” *Jubilees* passes over – for the moment, but see below – this divine sanction for Jacob’s departure. Instead, *Jub.* 29.1 continues the previous focus (see 28.30) on Laban’s initiatives, combining for this purpose elements drawn from various contexts in Genesis 30-31: “And it came to pass after Rachel bore Joseph¹¹⁰ that Laban went to shear his sheep¹¹¹ because they were the distance of a three days’ journey away from him.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Gen 31:1-2 does not explicitly attribute “jealousy” to either sons or father. Concerning the former, Gen 31:1 states “Now Jacob heard that the sons of Laban were saying ‘Jacob has taken all that was our father’s and from what was our father’s he has gained all this wealth.’”

¹⁰⁸ This item has no equivalent in Gen 31:1-2. In context, the sheep collected by Laban here would be those “without markings” which are said to be his portion in 28.28. *Jubilees*’ notice about Laban’s initiative at this point is likely inspired by the biblical mention in Gen 30:35-36 of Laban’s removing those elements of the flock which he had just promised (v. 34) would belong to Jacob, given that in 29.1 it does make delayed use of another portion of this sequence; see above.

¹⁰⁹ Compare the notice of Gen 31:2 (reiterated in 31:5) on Jacob’s “seeing that Laban did not regard him with favor as before.” *Jubilees*’ formulation intensifies the negativity of Laban’s stance towards his son-in-law.

¹¹⁰ This dating indication represents a resumption of that given in *Jub.* 28.25 on the basis of Gen 30:25, now with explicit mention of Rachel as Joseph’s mother; see n. ⁹⁸.

¹¹¹ In Genesis 31 this initiative by Laban is mentioned in v. 19a as a kind of afterthought (“Laban had gone to shear his sheep”) to the account of Jacob’s flight in 31:17-18. *Jubilees* here anticipates the item, giving it in its proper chronological order: it is only after Laban goes off in this way that Jacob has the opportunity to flee.

¹¹² *Jubilees*’ inspiration for this item stands at an earlier point in Genesis’ presentation; see 30:35b-36a, where, having removed those animals that he had promised would be Jacob’s (see 30:35b), Laban “put them in charge of his sons; and he set a distance of three days’ journey between himself and Jacob”; see n. ¹⁰⁷. *Jubilees* reproduces the earlier biblical notice, turning it into an explanation (“because”) of why Laban now has to leave Jacob – notwithstanding the jealous surveillance of him he had previously initiated (28.30), i.e. in order to shear his sheep.

Jacob's flight (Gen 31:17-18) that occurs during Laban's time away from him – as one subsequently learns in 30:19a, is itself preceded by the extensive colloquy between Jacob and his wives recounted in 31:4-16. *Jub.* 29.2 makes the transition to this marital dialogue with an interjected reference to Jacob's perceiving the opportunity afforded him by Laban's absence: "*And Jacob saw that Laban was going to shear his sheep . . .*"¹¹³ It then continues with a parallel to Gen 31:4 (Jacob's summoning of his wives): ". . . and Jacob called Leah and Rachel *and spoke intimately with them so that they might go with him to the land of Canaan.*"¹¹⁴ The wording of Jacob's speech to his wives is cited at length in Gen 31:5-16; *Jubilees'* highly compressed, indirect discourse rendition appears in 29.3¹¹⁵: "*For he told them everything,*"¹¹⁶ as he had seen it in the dream,¹¹⁷ and everything which he [God] had told him, that he would go back

¹¹³ In Genesis 31, the occasion for Jacob's summoning his wives (v. 4) is the Lord's injunction to him of v. 3. *Jubilees*, which, as noted above, does not reproduce the divine order of 31:3, interjects an intra-human occasion for Jacob's initiative, i.e. his awareness of Laban's absence – a point not mentioned in Gen 31:19a (/ / 29.1) itself.

¹¹⁴ This opening indication concerning the manner and purpose of Jacob's address to his wives takes the place of the allusions to the site where their dialogue takes place in Gen 31:4 "(Jacob called Rachel and Leah) into the field where his flock was" which *Jubilees* leaves aside.

¹¹⁵ From biblical Jacob's speech, *Jubilees* omits, e.g., the opening sequence concerning God's frustrating of Laban's schemes to cheat Jacob with regarding to the portion of the livestock he is to receive (31:5-10), perhaps seeing this topic as having been dealt with sufficiently in 28.27-30.

¹¹⁶ This opening summary concerning the content of Jacob's discourse lacks a biblical equivalent. By means of it, *Jubilees* make generalized allusion to all those elements of Jacob's discourse in Gen 31:4ff. that it does not reproduce.

¹¹⁷ This reference to Jacob's "dream" that he relates to his wives is based on Gen 31:11a where Jacob states: "The angel of the Lord appeared to me in a dream." The "angel" as Jacob's (initial) interlocutor disappears in *Jubilees'* version, as does the opening exchange (31:11b) between them, in which the angel pronounces Jacob's name, and the latter responds "Here I am." In eliminating the figure of the angel, *Jubilees* obviates the problem of the shift from the angel as speaker in 31:11-12 to God himself as Jacob's interlocutor in 31:13.

to the house of his father.”¹¹⁸ Having thus abbreviated the content of Jacob’s speech, *Jubilees* (29.3b) does the same with the response of his wives as recorded in Gen 31:14-16, limiting itself to, while also modifying their concluding declaration (“now then, whatever God has said to you, do,” v. 16b): “And they said, ‘We will go with you anywhere you go.’”¹¹⁹ Whereas in Genesis 31 it is the wives who get the last word in the exchange between them and Jacob, *Jubilees* awards this role to Jacob via its appended notice (29.4a) concerning Jacob’s response to his wives declaration: “*And Jacob blessed the God of Isaac, his father and the God of Abraham, his father’s father.*”

Jacob’s actual flight from Laban comes in Gen 31:17-21. *Jubilees’* version (29.4b) abbreviates here too, likewise rearranging the sequence of those source elements it does use: “And he arose and loaded up his wives and children and took all of his possessions and crossed over the river and arrived at the land of Gilead.”¹²⁰ But

¹¹⁸ Compare the concluding words of the angelic / divine (see n. ¹¹⁴) speech as cited by Jacob in Gen 31:13b (“Now then, go forth from this land, and return to the land of your birth”) that themselves reiterate the directive given Jacob by the Lord in 31:3. *Jubilees* passes over the earlier portion of the words addressed to Jacob in 31:12-13a in which he is urged to look upon the appearance of the mating goats (v. 12a); and told that “I have seen all that Laban is doing to you” (v. 12b), whereupon the Deity presents himself as the “God of Bethel” with whom Jacob had had previous dealings (v. 13a; see Gen 28:10-22). Note further that the Deity’s announcement about what Jacob will do in 29.3 (“return to the house of his father”) provides an implicit divine sanction for the Jacob’s statement of intention to Laban in 28.25 (“I will return to my father’s house”).

¹¹⁹ This declaration by the wives echoes, as is pointed out by Endres (*Biblical Interpretation*, 110-11), Ruth’s word to Naomi in Ruth 1:16 (“for where you go, I will go”). With it, the wives’ biblical exhortation that Jacob do as God has instructed him (31:16b), is turned into a statement by them of their Ruth-like devotion to their husband.

¹²⁰ The above notice reads like a conflation of the opening (“So Jacob arose, and sets his sons and his wives on camels, and he drove away all his camels, all his livestock which he had gained, the cattle in his possession . . .” [v. 17-18]) and closing (“he fled with all he had, and arose and crossed the Euphrates [literally: the River], and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead” [v. 21]) elements of 31:17-21.

Jacob concealed his intention from Laban and did not tell him.¹²¹ In accord with its usual practice, *Jubilees* supplies (29.5a) an interjected, precise dating for Jacob's just-cited move: "And in the seventh year of the fourth week, Jacob returned to Gilead, in the first month of the twenty-first day of the month."

Jacob's flight, in its turn, provokes a pursuit by Laban described in Gen 31:22-25. *Jub.* 29.5b-6 compresses this sequence as well: "And Laban pursued him.¹²² And he found Jacob in the mountain of Gilead¹²³ in the third month on the thirteenth day.¹²⁴ But the Lord did not permit him to do cruelly with Jacob because he appeared to him in a dream at night."¹²⁵

The centerpiece of the story told in Genesis 31 is the lengthy exchange between its two principals (vv. 26-32,36-42) with the episode of Laban's failed search for his gods supervening in vv. 33-35. In *Jubilees* (29.6b) this entire segment is reduced to the

¹²¹ The biblical counterpart to this remark is Gen 31:20 ("and Jacob outwitted [literally stole the heart of] Laban . . . in that he did not tell him he intended to flee"), which stands in between the notices on Jacob's movements of 31:17-18,²¹ that *Jubilees* combines into a continuous sequence and places prior to its rendering of 31:20; see previous note. *Jubilees* does not utilize, at this juncture, either component of 31:19, i.e. Laban's having gone to shear his sheep (anticipated in 29.1) and Rachel's theft of Laban's household gods (an element of the Genesis 31 story that is completely absent from *Jubilees*, which likely found such an action on the part of the matriarch an embarrassment; see Endres, *Biblical Interpretation*, 110).

¹²² Gen 31:22a is more detailed: Laban initiates the pursuit when he is informed of Jacob's flight "after three days," and takes his "kinsmen with him." Notwithstanding its non-reproduction of the latter reference here, *Jubilees* does subsequently presuppose that Laban did, in fact, have others with him when pursuing Jacob; see on 29.7a.

¹²³ This notice seems to conflate Gen 31:25aα (Laban overtakes Jacob) and 22b (Laban follows close after Jacob into the hill country of Gilead).

¹²⁴ This chronological indication, when taken together with that of 29.5a, envisages a much longer (i.e. 52 day) pursuit of Jacob by Laban than does Gen 31:22b (Laban tracks Jacob for seven days). Endres (*Biblical Interpretation*, 111) comments: "Apparently the author of *Jubilees* could not imagine all of Jacob's retinue moving so quickly."

¹²⁵ The above is *Jubilees*' repositioned, indirect discourse rendering of the prohibition the Lord issues Laban in a dream according to Gen 31:24 ("Take heed that you say not a word to Jacob, either good or bad."). Its rendering gives the prohibition a more limited character: Laban is forbidden to use "cruelty" against Jacob; nothing is said of his not being allowed to "say a good word" to him.

notice “And Laban spoke to Jacob.”¹²⁶ So doing, *Jubilees* proceeds immediately to the story’s denouement as related in Gen 31:43-32:1, the content of which it notably rearranges. Thus, whereas the mention of Jacob’s kinsmen “eating bread” on the mountain at his invitation comes towards the end of the proceedings in Gen 31:43ff., i.e. in v. 54, *Jubilees*’ rendition (29.7a) of this item appears immediately the reference to Laban’s speaking to Jacob at the end of 29.6. It reads: “*And on the fifteenth of those days*¹²⁷ Jacob prepared a banquet for Laban and all who came with him.”¹²⁸ Thereafter, 29.7b relates, in highly compressed form, the two parties’ oath-taking (and the object commemorating this) featured in Gen 31:43-53¹²⁹: “And Jacob swore to Laban on that day.¹³⁰ And Laban also

¹²⁶ Given *Jubilees*’ reformulation of the Deity’s forbidding Laban to say a word to Jacob, “either good or evil” of Gen 31:24 (see n. ¹²⁴), the fact of Laban’s nonetheless speaking at length to Jacob in 31:26-30 is not the problem it appears it to be in the Bible itself.

¹²⁷ This is the third of *Jubilees*’ dating of happenings to a given day in 29.5-7. Genesis gives no indication concerning the length of time that elapsed between the verbal confrontation of Laban and Jacob (31:26-42) and their resolving of their differences in 31:43-32:2a. G.L. Davenport (*The Eschatology of the Book of Jubilees*, SBT 20 [Leiden: Brill, 1971], 59, n. 3) points out that *Jubilees* places a whole series of key happenings – from the establishment of the covenant with Noah to Jacob’s observances at the “Well of the Oath” – on the 15th day of the 3rd month, i.e. the date of the feast of Weeks.

¹²⁸ *Jubilees* did not previously mention Laban’s entourage; contrast Gen 31:22 which has Laban taking his “kinsmen” with him in his pursuit of Jacob and cf. n. ¹²¹. The pseudograph’s formulation clarifies the identity of those who eat, called in Gen 31:54 simply Jacob’s “kinsmen”: they consisted of Laban himself and the entourage he had taken with him.

¹²⁹ From the sequence of Gen 31:43-53, *Jubilees* omits, e.g., Laban’s proposal that he and Jacob making a covenant, given his own unwillingness to “do anything” to Jacob’s household (vv. 43-44) as well as the “pillar” spoken of in vv. 45, 48b, 51-52.

¹³⁰ In Gen 31:53b, Jacob’s swearing “by the fear of his father Isaac” is mentioned after Laban’s swearing in 31:51-53a. *Jubilees* reverses the sequence of their respective swearings, accentuating Jacob’s status. It gives no indication concerning the content of Jacob’s oath; compare Gen 31:50 which intimates such a content in having Laban declare that should Jacob, i.e. in violation of the oath he is about to make, take other wives beside his daughters or mistreat them, God will a witness between them. In *Jubilees* then, any suggestion that Jacob might abuse Laban’s daughters is eliminated.

swore to Jacob¹³¹ that one would not cross over on the mountain of Gilead against the other with evil intent.”¹³² Having cited the two men’s oaths, *Jubilees* (29.8) proceeds to mention one of the two commemorative objects¹³³ featured in the narrative and words of the parties in Gen 31:46-52: “And they made there a heap for witness.¹³⁴ *Therefore* that place is called the ‘Heap of Witness’ after this heap.”¹³⁵

Before concluding its rendition of the denouement segment of Genesis 31 in 29.12, *Jubilees* pauses to interject a lengthy, “antiquarian” notice concerning the “pre-history” of the region of Gilead in 29.9-11:

(29.9) *But formerly the land of Gilead was called ‘the land of Raphaim’ because it was the land of the Raphaim. And the Raphaim were born as giants whose height was ten cubits, nine cubits, eight cubits, or down to seven cubits.* (29.10)

¹³¹ Laban’s oath-taking is implied in Gen 31:53a, where having declared that neither party is to “pass over” the commemorative objects cited in v. 51 “for harm” in v. 52, he declares “The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor . . . judge between us.”

¹³² *Jubilees*’ specification of the content of Laban’s oath is inspired by his words as cited in Gen 31:52 where he designates the “heap” and the “pillar” as witnesses that “I will not pass over this heap to you, and you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me for harm.” It substitutes the “mountain of Gilead” (see 29.5) as that which the two parties are not to “cross over on” for the commemorative objects spoken of in the biblical verse. Its phrase “with evil intent” recalls the reference to Laban’s keeping watch over Jacob “with evil intent” in 28.30 – a state of mind towards the latter that Laban now pledges to lay aside.

¹³³ *Jubilees* makes no mention of the stone “pillar” that Jacob erects in Gen 31:35 and that is named “Mizpah” by Laban in 31:49 and cited by him along with the “heap” in 31:51-52.

¹³⁴ The subject of this initiative would seem to be Jacob and Laban. In Gen 31:46 it is Jacob’s “kinsmen” who make the stone-heap at his direction.

¹³⁵ *Jubilees* speaks, in impersonal terms, of the heap’s name as one that it continues to bear. Gen 31:47 cites the Aramaic (“Jegar-Sahadutha”) and Hebrew (“Gilead”) given it by Laban and Jacob, respectively, while 31:48 represents the site as getting the name (“Gilead”) from Laban in virtue of his declaration “This heap is a witness between you and me today.” *Jubilees*’ rendition disposes of the source ambiguity as to whether Jacob or Laban gave the name “Gilead” to the heap.

*And their dwelling was from the land of the Ammonites to Mount Hermon and their royal palaces were in Qarnaim, and Ashtaroh, and Edrei, and Misur, and Beon. (29.11) But the Lord destroyed them because of the evil of their deeds since they were very cruel. And the Amorites dwelt there instead of them, evil and sinful, and there is no people today who have fully equalled all of their sins. And therefore they had no length of life in the land.*¹³⁶

Following this interlude, *Jub.* 29.12 concludes its rendering of the Genesis 31 story with notices on the two parties' going their separate ways, inspired by 32:1-2a: "And Jacob dismissed Laban,¹³⁷ and he traveled to Mesopotamia, the land of the East.¹³⁸ And Jacob returned the land of Gilead."¹³⁹

From the above comparison between them, it emerges that *Jub.* 28.25-29.12 represents a heavily reworked version of Gen 30:25-32:1(2a). That reworking is characterized, above all, by its recurring abbreviation of the biblical narrative; this phenomenon is seen most notably in its reduction of the extended exchange between Laban and Jacob of 31:26-42 to a single phrase ("And Laban spoke to Jacob" in 29.6b), but in fact encompasses all the component episodes of the Genesis sequence. At the same time, *Jubilees'* version is not devoid of its own added elements, i.e. the inserted "day indications" in 29.5,7 and especially the appendix on the prior inhabitants of "Gilead" in 29.9-11. Throughout as well, *Jubilees* re-arranges the order in which Genesis relates events. One, e.g., hears of Laban's going to shear his sheep at an earlier point in *Jubilees'* presentation (29.1) than in that of Genesis (see 31:19a), while the mention of Jacob's "concealing" his intended

¹³⁶ On the question of the contemporary background of the above sequence, its sources and function, see Endres, *Biblical Interpretation*, 113.

¹³⁷ In Gen 32:1 Laban himself initiates his departure from Jacob; as Endres (*Biblical Interpretation*, 113) notes, *Jubilees'* presentation of the matter "... add(s) to Jacob's stature." Conversely, *Jubilees'* non-utilization of the Genesis references to Laban's first "kissing" and "blessing" his daughters and grandchildren makes him appear less sympathetic than his biblical counterpart.

¹³⁸ Gen 32:1 (*in fine*) speaks in more general terms of Laban's "departing" and "returning home."

¹³⁹ Gen 32:1 simply has Jacob "going on his way." In the case of both Laban and Jacob, *Jub.* 29.12 supplies names for their destinations.

departure from Laban (29.4 *in fine*) follows rather than precedes the notice on his heading over the Euphrates to Gilead (compare Gen 31:20-21). *Jubilees'* version exhibits still other modifications of the Genesis story as well: Jacob's wives give him a different reply in 29.3b vis-à-vis the one attributed to them in Gen 31:16b. God forbids Laban "to deal cruelly with Jacob" (29.6), rather than instructing him not to say anything to the fugitive as in Gen 31:24, just as Laban is "dismissed" by Jacob (29.12) instead of departing on his own volition (so 32:1).

Via its application of the above rewriting techniques, *Jubilees* comes up with a streamlined rendering of the story of Jacob's flight in which characters' words do not get the same degree of attention as in Genesis 31, whereas the precise dating of events and the prior history of the site of the Laban-Jacob confrontation become matters of interest. Source gaps (e.g., why does Laban have to leave Jacob to go shear his sheep?; compare 29.1 and 31:19a) and "incoherences" (the duration of Laban's pursuit [see n. ¹²²] and Laban's speaking at length to Jacob after being instructed by the Lord to say nothing at all to him [see n. ¹²⁴]) are implicitly addressed and resolved. As for the portrayal of the story's figures, this too evidences peculiarities in *Jubilees'* rewriting. Most obviously, the whole story line about Rachel's stealing her father's gods and frustrating his search for these (Gen 31:19b,30b-31,33-35) totally disappears in *Jubilees*. In contrast to the multiple mentions of the Deity's role in the proceedings both by the narrator of Genesis and his characters, the *Jubilees* segment limits itself to two such explicit mentions: Jacob's blessing of the God of his ancestors (29.4a, this without a biblical basis) and the Lord's admonition of Laban (29.6// 31:24); cf. also the implicit allusion to "God" in Jacob's reporting "everything which he told him" in 29.3. *Jubilees* likewise awards both Laban and Jacob significantly reduced speaking parts throughout. At the same time, it utilizes various small retouchings to accentuate the positive stature of Jacob: he is allotted the (non-biblical) blessing of his ancestors' God in 29.4a that highlights his piety; Gen 31:54 is reformulated in 29.7 so as to make clear that Jacob's "feeding initiative" is directed to Laban and his retinue who have previously wronged him; his oath-taking is mentioned before that of Laban in 29.7b (compare 31:51-53), and Laban's departure is prompted by

Jacob's "dismissal" of him (compare 29.12 and 32:1).¹⁴⁰ Conversely, Laban's malignity towards Jacob is greater in 29.30 than in 31.2,5 and we are not given the final biblical picture of Laban the tender father and grandfather featured in 32:1 in *Jub.* 29.12's notice on his departure. On the other hand, there are instances where *Jubilees* does seem to elevate Laban's role over that of Jacob: he alone "speaks" once he catches up with the fugitive (29.6b; compare Gen 31:25-42) and it is only his oath that is supplied with a content in (29.7; compare 31:49-53). Thus, one might venture to suggest that in *Jubilees* Jacob and Laban's roles get approximately "equal treatment," whereas in Genesis the former's deeds and words clearly predominate.

CONCLUSION

In concluding this essay, I wish now to briefly compare the two ancient rewritings of the biblical story of Jacob's flight found in *Ant.* 1.309-324(325a) and *Jub.* 28.25-29.12. Overall, both renditions treat their Scriptural source with considerable freedom. More specifically, they both omit much source material, rearrange source items they do utilize, add longer and shorter elements of their own, and otherwise modify Genesis' presentation. Beyond these general, formal commonalities of their respective treatments of their source, the two versions also exhibit more particular similarities, both positive and negative, in their handling of the Genesis data. Both, e.g., significantly compress the Bible's extended, repetitious account of the various happenings leading up to Jacob's actual flight (the interaction between Laban and Jacob, the latter's measures to increase his livestock holdings and his exchange with his wives, Gen 30:25-31:16). Neither reproduces, *inter alia*, the divine word, ordering Jacob to return to his homeland of Gen 31:3 (as well as many other source namings of the Deity), Laban's claim that, though all the members of Jacob's household are his, he can do nothing to them and his attached proposal about making a "covenant" (31:43-44), the references to the "pillar" alongside the stone heap of Gen 31:45-52, the mention of Jacob's sacrifice on the mountain (31:54), and the farewell gestures of Laban as described in 32:1. Both likewise reword (see *Ant.* 1.313; *Jub.* 29.6) God's prohibition

¹⁴⁰ On *Jubilees*' overall accentuation, *in bonam partem*, of the figure of Jacob, see Endres, *Biblical Interpretation*, 214-17.

of Laban's saying anything to Jacob (Gen 31:24) that is, in fact, disregarded by Laban in his subsequent address to Jacob.

On the other hand, the two rewritings evidence significant differences as well. Josephus elaborates particularly on two source items, i.e. Rachel's theft of her father's gods (Gen 31:19b,30b,33-35) and the protracted exchanges between Laban and Jacob (31:26-42). *Jubilees* makes no mention of the former matter, thus minimalizing Rachel's role in the story, and limits its utilization of the latter to the phrase "And Laban spoke to Jacob" at the end of 29.6. For its part, *Jubilees* interjects repeated chronological specifications about the day on which a given event happens (see 29.5-7) and appends a series of notices on the prior inhabitants of "Gilead" in 29.9-11, neither of which is paralleled in Josephus.

Josephus and the anonymous author of *Jubilees* composed their respective versions of the biblical story of Jacob's flight some two and half centuries apart.¹⁴¹ Both writers clearly felt the need to "improve on" what they had before them in Gen 30:25-32:1. In their efforts to do this, they hit (independently) on some of the same modes of handling the source dating. Mostly, however, they go their own, distinct ways in rewriting Genesis's presentation in light of the circumstances of their time and their own particular interests and the messages they wish to convey to their different audiences.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ *Jubilees* is generally dated ca. 150 B.C., Josephus' *Antiquities* in the final decade of the first century A.D.

¹⁴² *Jubilees*, with its halakic and calendrical preoccupations, is clearly written for a Jewish audience, while Josephus seems to have Gentiles as his primary intended readership; see Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation*, 46-50. On the range of similarities between Josephus and *Jubilees* in their respective rewritings of Genesis, see B. Halpern-Amaru, "Flavius Josephus and *The Book of Jubilees*: A Question of Source," *HUCA* 72 (2001) 15-44. (Given the number of these similarities, she posits that Josephus did have knowledge of *Jubilees*.)