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Samuel's Political Career

1 Samuel, the Aristocrat

In the debate among the intellectuals of the métropole on what the best way of governing might possibly be, Samuel takes a clear position. In the first years of the emperor Domitian, who had started his reign by taking measures supposed to minimize the influence of the senate (Pfeiffer 2009, 55–57; Gering 2012, 306–348), Samuel upholds the banner of virtues represented by the social class of the Roman senators. In the shape given to him by Flavius Josephus, he warns Israel against the risks and side effects of the concept of monarchy. Josephus' Samuel does not do so primarily because a monarchy would mean falling off God, but rather because any one-man-rule would tend to provoke the worst qualities in any human being. No less a figure than king Saul will serve as an example for this lesson. Saul, the young and hopeful nobleman who, once having taken over, changes into a ferocious maniac – as can be seen in his massacre of the priests of Nob.¹ Samuel, to the contrary, appears as an exponent of an aristocratic system of government: “For he delighted intensely in aristocracy as something divine that renders blessed those who use it as their constitution”.² We may assume that Samuel's viewpoint in that matter as given by Josephus came quite close to ideas shared by the latter's Roman aristocratic audience. Be this as it may – what can be asserted is that what Flavius Josephus pushes into the limelight with respect to the character of Samuel is his role as a political leader and theorist.

A few years before Josephus, Ben Sira draws a slightly different picture of Samuel in his praise of the ancestors. Similar to modern readers of the Books of Samuel³, Ben Sira recognizes the different facets of their eponymous character and attributes to him a kind of *munus triplex*: He, Samuel, is praiseworthy as

1 On Josephus' interpretation of Saul, see Feldman 1982; 2006; Bezzel 2015, 58–78; on the Nob massacre in particular see Feldman 2005; Bezzel 2015, 60–61, 68–69.

2 ἤττητο γὰρ δεινῶς τῆς ἀριστοκρατίας ὡς θείας καὶ μακαρίου ποιούσης τοὺς χρωμένους αὐτῆς τῇ πολιτείᾳ. (*Antiquitates Judaicae* 6:36, English translation according to Begg 2005, 106; cf. *Antiquitates Judaicae* 5:135; 4:223).

3 See, for example, with respect to the “historical” Samuel, Elat 1987, 367; with respect to the literary character in the context of a synchronic approach, Fokkelman 1993, 298; as a result of late deuteronomistic reworking, Eynikel 2004, 97.

prophet, judge and priest (Sir 46:13) – at least in the Hebrew version of the book as given by MS B.⁴

This raises the question of how these three sides of Samuel are related to each other. Was he a multifaceted character from the beginning (Elat 1987, 367) or did he accumulate some of these functions during the course of the book's literary growth like other prominent biblical figures? If the latter is the case, what might this development tell us about "concepts of leadership"?

2 Samuel, the Political Leader

This question addresses the problem of the quest for the, or for an, oldest Samuel tradition. According to Peter Mommer, the oldest Samuel we can get hold of is the "political" one: As is well known, Mommer finds the oldest material in 1Sam 7:15–17a; 25:1. He claims that these verses once were the final part of a list of "minor judges" (Mommer 1991, 44–46), and Walter Dietrich follows this opinion in his commentary (Dietrich 2011, 311–312). Ensuing from Samuel, the judge, arose Samuel, the prophet, and, finally, Samuel, the priest; or vice versa: Mommer and Dietrich, for example, regard the episode in 7:2–14*, in which Samuel clearly acts as a priest and as such enables Israel to defeat the Philistines, as a pre-deuteronomistic story as well (Dietrich 2011, 312–313), and this opinion is rather widespread.⁵ Similarly, Sweeney (2011, 166) regards the pieces about Samuel, the judge, to be the oldest material. According to him, however, these texts contain memories of an ancient Northern Israelite concept of priestly rule: "we must observe that his judgeship has priestly dimensions" (Sweeney 2011, 168). Thus, Samuel was a priest-judge first and later made a prophet by some deuteronomists.

I would like to challenge both the hypotheses that a) there is some old and once independent tradition about Samuel to be found in 1Sam 7, and b) that the oldest image of a literary character bearing this name was drawn with priestly colors.

4 MS B reads here "נויר יי בנבואה שמואל שופט ומכהן" (Beentjes 1997, 83). In contrast, the Greek calls him only *ἡγοραστής* *κρίσιος*, most probably due to a redactional operation by the translator (Skehan & Di Lella 1987, 517; Corley 2009, 34).

5 Cf., for example, Schäfer-Lichtenberger 2016, 201, with a pre-dtr. Samuel story adopting older memories of Samuel as a local ruler in Benjamin in 7:16a,17abd; 7:5–6,7,11–12,15 ("Die vordtr. Samuellerzählung nimmt ältere Notizen über Samuels Wirksamkeit als regionaler Herrscher in Benjamin [V. 16a.17abd] bzw. Erinnerungen an diese [5–6.7.11–12.15] auf"); see also recently, without a clear distinction of the respective verses, Tobolowsky 2017, 386–388.

Let us tackle the second assertion first: Samuel's priestly role. The motif of Samuel acting as a priest clearly is fundamentally anchored in the extended story of his birth and childhood in 1Sam 1–3. Regarding these chapters, two aspects are of importance:

1) The story of how the seemingly infertile Hannah miraculously gave birth to a boy called Samuel has its ending already in 1:20. The boy was born, he was named, and Hannah's problem – childlessness – solved. The following verses, which make her return him to the sanctuary and end with the boy's second naming, restore the initial situation: Hannah is childless again – and the problem needs to (and will) be solved anew (2:20–22). This double climax or double goal of the story has often been recognized (Mommer 1991, 19); less often it has been evaluated redaction-critically. However, I would say that there is good reason to follow Kratz and Porzig in regarding 1:21–28* as secondary compared to 1:1–20* (Kratz 2000, 176; Porzig 2009, 114; Bezzel 2015, 185–186). The idea of the grown-up Samuel acting as a priest (by the way: without stemming from a priestly family) clearly presupposes this (literary secondary) education at the sanctuary in Shilo.

2) The second aspect is the structure of 1Sam 2–3. Time and again there is a recurring phrase which briefly informs the reader about the further fate of Hannah's firstborn. It can be found no less than six times, in 2:11b, 18b, 21b, 26; 3:1a, 19abα. Mommer (1991, 16) and Wonneberger (1992, 227–240) have given themselves to thorough investigations of the phenomenon, and both have recognized the redactional character as a *Wiederaufnahme*. Each of these little phrases rounds off a little passage by adding a peculiar aspect to the story of Samuel's birth. At a close look, however, these sentences do not state exactly the same thing six times: Some of them see the young Samuel explicitly in a priestly role (2:11b; 2:18; 3:1) and some do not necessarily do so. 2:21b has the boy growing up “with YHWH” (עם יהוה), and imagines him, as I would say, at the sanctuary as well. 3:19abα more conventionally states YHWH's presence with the boy: “And Samuel grew up and YHWH was with him” (ויגדל שמואל ויהוה היה עמו). As to the remaining phrase, 2:26, I would claim that it is younger than at least both 2:21b and 3:19, since it depends on the very young speech by the man of God that was inserted into the story of Eli and his sons in 2:27–36.⁶

Let me draw a preliminary conclusion: The oldest version of the story of Samuel's birth neither knows anything of his priestly character or office, nor does it explicitly announce him as a political leader or a prophet to come. What it does tell is the birth of a boy whose story already appears to point to the story of another character: His name shall be שמואל, “because I have asked him of

⁶ On this passage cf. Hentschel 2014, 88.

YHWH” (כי מיהוה שאלתיו) – it is anything but a new discovery that this strange etymology by means of the root שאל already makes Saul loom behind the boy Samuel.⁷

3) A third aspect considering the priestly character of Samuel is that not only in 1Sam 1–3 but also in the other instances where he acts in such a manner the verses in question most probably do not belong to the basic layer of the story. This holds true for the sacrificial feast in the context of the donkey story 1Sam 9:1–10:16 (Bezzel 2015, 173–179), and this is even more obvious in 1Sam 13:7b–15a (Veijola 1975, 55).

But if the priestly aspects of Samuel are not part of his oldest literary self, how can this self then be determined?

I just stated that the probably oldest notice about the growing up of the boy, a topic that should not be missing from a birth narrative⁸, was to be found in 3:19abα. But what about the following quarter verse: ולא הפיל מכל דבריו ארצה (“and did let none of his words fall to the ground”)? As measured by the further occurrences of “falling” or rather “not falling” words, the case of 1Sam 3:19 is unique insofar as here most probably Samuel’s words are meant (Dietrich 2011, 175).⁹ And in this respect, it converges well with 1Sam 9:6 (Dietrich 2011, 187): searching for the lost donkeys, Saul’s servant mentions a certain man of God of whom is known that all he says certainly will come (בוא יבוא).

Of course, there is a big difference between an anonymous “man of God” whose predictions will not fail and a certain individual called Samuel whose divinatory reliability is grounded on YHWH’s special support.¹⁰

This difference, however, mirrors exactly the development that comes along with the, perhaps first, literary expansion of the donkey story: There may be different views on how to separate the different layers in 1Sam 9:1–10:16 in detail. However, there is a broad consensus that a first version did not know Samuel,

⁷ This observation led Hylander (1932, 30–31) to the thesis that 1Sam 1 originally was the birth narrative of Saul. To come to this conclusion, some operations are necessary on the basis of a rather liberally use of the tradition-historical method. Nevertheless, the close connection between Saul and Samuel is obvious (cf. Dietrich 2011, 29–30).

⁸ Cf. Gen 21:20 (Ishmael); Gen 25:27 (Jacob and Esau); Judg 13:24 (Samson).

⁹ Cf. “not falling words” in Josh 21:45; 23:14; 1Kgs 8:56; 2Kgs 10:10 – each time of the words of YHWH, commonly attributed to a deuteronomistic hand – and in Esth 6:10 of the words of Haman.

¹⁰ And, then again, there is another big difference between such kind of person and someone who is “confirmed as prophet for YHWH” (נאמן שמואל לנביא) as Samuel is recognized by “all Israel” in 3:20.

but only spoke of the “man of God” or the “seer”.¹¹ In 9:1–10:16, Samuel comes in secondarily; and he does not come in as a judge or as a political leader, but as a religious specialist whose job profile includes divination as well as – most probably – the holding of or at least presiding over a sacrificial feast¹², which means: at least subtle priestly aspects.

To sum up preliminarily:

1) On the one hand, 1Sam 9:1–10:16* originally has an anonymous “man of God” with divinatory skills who, in an early reworking of the story, is “samuelized”.

2) On the other hand, there is the birth narrative of this Samuel character, a story which is closely connected to the donkey story in general and with the name “Saul” in particular. If this story in its oldest version¹³ points to any particular function of Samuel, this would be exactly that which can be found in the first reworking of 1Sam 9:1–10:16: Samuel acts as a religious specialist with divinatory skills (3:19; 9:6). This does not preclude him from at least participating in priestly duties like presiding over a sacrificial meal.

3) Neither 1Sam 1 nor 1Sam 9:1–10:16 mirror any old independent Samuel-tradition (Bezzel 2015, 191–192). Samuel’s starting point is the nameless “man of God” and “seer”. Thus, in a way he starts his career as a “prophet” with “priestly” aspects.

What about Samuel, the judge, then? How does 1Sam 7 come into the picture? Here, we clearly find Samuel pictured as a “political” leader: No less than four times it is said that he acted as judge over Israel (7:6,15,16,17) – each time with a different accent, though. Within the context of the “final shape” of the chapter, in 7:6, “judging” seems to imply preaching (7:4) as well as acting as an intercessor (7:5) and leading of a penitential ceremony (7:6). With the account of the battle between Israel and the Philistines in 7:7–14 preceding, “judging” in 7:15 appears to be of a

¹¹ Cf. Schmidt 1970, 101, carving out a basic layer consisting of 9:1–2a,3–8,10–13aαβb,14a,18,19,22a,24b–27; 10:2–4,7,9. This result has become nearly consensual – give or take certain verses. However, if one regards that Schmidt’s main criterion is the difference between the anonymous “man of God” and the character “Samuel”, it is amazing how often the name Samuel can be found in this story. Schmidt (1970, 101) had to conjecture it into a claimed original “man of God” in every instance. Such an operation reduces his main criterion to absurdity. To my mind, the criterion should be used consequently instead. As a result, one gains a coherent story of 9:1,2a,3,4bβ,5aβb–8,10–12a,13aα,14a,25b; 10:2–5aαb,6aαb,7,9b,10aα (cf. Bezzel 2015, 169–170).
¹² I find this second layer of the story in 9:12b,18–21,23,24 (without *לְאִמֵּר הָעַם קְרָאתִי*),25a,26,27; 10:5aβ,9a,14–16 (cf. Bezzel 2015, 177–178).

¹³ Slightly different to my analysis in Bezzel 2015, 182–191, I would define the basic layer of the birth narrative of Samuel in 1:1–2,5bβ,7b,8–9,10a(?)b,13b,14–15,17ab(?),18a(?)b,19–20; 3:19aα (cf. Bezzel forthcoming).

more military kind, whereas the picture of the rotating judge Samuel of 7:16 evokes rather jurisdictional aspects of the word “judge”. Finally, 7:17, if it is not to be understood in the same way as 7:16, seems to resume potentially different associations and to understand “to judge” as a kind of hypernym in the sense of “to rule”.

Mutatis mutandis the situation can be compared with the statements about Samuel's growing up: Several redactors give their interpretation what “judging over Israel” was supposed to mean. But unlike in chapters 1–3, the respective phrases cannot so easily be identified as clear *Wiederaufnahmen* in a classical sense. But at least the last three references work like this: V. 16 repeats the formula and adds a new interpretation of “judging”, using 1-qatal instead of the narrative tense. V. 17 functions in a similar way, using the perfect tense qatal and bringing Samuel back to Rama where he is supposed to be in chapter 8 (cf. 8:4). Clearly, three different hands can be identified here (Müller 2004, 76).¹⁴ With the remaining two instances, 7:6 and 7:15, the decision which of them might be the older one is more difficult.¹⁵ Müller has alleged some reasons to give 7:15 preference over 7:6: He sees the latter closely connected to the preceding verses 2–4, which are doubtless “redactional through and through”.¹⁶ Above that, he notes the differing objects: While, more commonly, in 7:15, Samuel judges “Israel” (אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל), in 7:6 the “Israelites” (אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) are his clientele (Müller 2004, 76).

With respect to the remaining verses 7:3–14, the literary-critical situation is quite clear at least in broad outline: 7:3–4 present Samuel giving a sermon strongly resembling Gen 35:2,4 and Josh 24:20,23 with its appeal to abandon the “foreign gods” (אֱלֹהֵי הַנּוֹכַר)¹⁷ and “set your heart” (וְהִכִּינוּ לְבַבְכֶם) to YHWH. This last expression, though it sounds fairly deuteronomistic, is, except for Ps 10:17; 78:8; Job 11:13, “known elsewhere only in Chronicles (1Chr 29:18; 2Chr 12:14; 19:3; 20:33; 30:19)” (Auld 2011, 84).¹⁸ Thus, there is a broad consensus, that 7:3–4 belong to the youngest additions within 1Sam 7–12 (Kratz 2000, 177).

What remains is the battle account in 7:5–14. In its present shape, it clearly fulfils a bridging function. On the one hand, the story serves as a counterpart

¹⁴ Mommer (1991, 45–47) adduces all the observations named above but nevertheless regards 7:15–17a as a literary unity.

¹⁵ Schäfer-Lichtenberger (2016, 201, cf. above, fn. 5), however, seems to integrate both verses into her pre-dtr. battle account.

¹⁶ A “durch und durch redaktionelles Stück[...]” (Müller 2004, 76, referring to Wellhausen, Noth, Veijola and Smend). Veijola (1977, 34–35), however, found some old tradition in 7:16 – and only there.

¹⁷ Further references of this expressions can be found in Judg 10:16; 2Chr 14:3; 33:15.

¹⁸ To this list might be added Ezra 7:10 without any consequences for the argumentation.

to the battle against the Philistines in chapter 4 as well as to the priestly misbehavior by the sons of Eli in chapter 2 (Veijola 1977, 37–38; Eynikel 2004). While in chapter 4 Israel suffers a defeat and the ark gets lost, this time, the return match if you will, at Ebenezer (7:13, cf. 4:1) works out successfully, thanks to the “new trainer” Samuel. And this is mainly because his acting as a priest is in direct contrast to the behavior of Eli’s wicked sons according to 2:11–17 (Eynikel 2004, 94–95). Whereas Eli’s sons separate the fat (חלב) from the meat before the offering (2:15–16), Samuel correctly offers a sucking lamb (טלה חלב) as a whole burnt offering. “Here in chapter 7 Israel finally gets things right” (Eynikel 2004, 94).

At the same time, there are numerous links to the following chapters: The localization of Israel’s gathering, Mizpa, makes the reader think of the election ceremony in 1Sam 10:17–26. However, there is a different phrasing in each case. In 7:5 Samuel wants “all Israel” to gather at Mizpa (קבצו את־כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמְּצַפָּה) while in 10:17 he calls “the people unto YHWH to Mizpa” (את־הָעָם אֶל־יְהוָה הַמְּצַפָּה).¹⁹ The effect of this connection resembles the reference to Ebenezer: At the same place where in chapter 10 the monarchy will be established, Israel gets a demonstration of how successful leadership without a king could and should look like.

At the end of the battle account one finds the expression that “YHWH’s hand was on the Philistines” (וְתַהֲיִי יַד־יְהוָה בְּפִלְשְׁתִּים). This sounds rather common, but effectively, it has its parallel within the Books of Samuel only in 1Sam 5:9,11; 12:15. Again, this nexus illustrates well what happens if God acts in favor of Israel (without a king in charge) – and what will happen when the opposite is the case.

This example directs the attention to the numerous connections of chapter 7 to chapter 12: Samuel’s intercessory prayer, phrased in 7:5 with the typical combination of פָּלַל בְּעַד can be found in the Books of Samuel only here and in 12:19,23.²⁰ Second, there is the collective confession of sins (חַטָּאוּ) in 7:6 and 12:10 (with a 1st person communis plural to be found in Sam in these two instances only). Third, it is said that Samuel “cried unto YHWH” in 7:8–9 with the expression זָעַק אֶל־יְהוָה – as in 12:8,²¹ and – without success, in 1Sam 15:11.

If one accepts the analysis of 1Sam 12 by Uwe Becker (2014), then some of the connections listed above belong to the youngest layers of an altogether young

¹⁹ “All Israel” in Sam can be found in 1Sam 3:20; 4:5; 7:5; 11:2; 12:1; 13:20; 14:40; 25:1; 28:3,4; 2Sam 3:12,21; 5:5; 8:15; 10:17; 11:1; 12:12; 16:21–22; 17:10–11; 17:13; 19:12.

²⁰ Aurelius (1988, 145–146) stresses this point and notices the affinity to the image of Moses in Num 11:1–3.

²¹ Cf. Judg 3:9,15; 6:6,7; 10:10. The last instance is interesting not least because of the parallel between Judg 10:16 and 1Sam 7:3–4.

chapter whose oldest parts already presuppose an enneateuchic point of view (Becker 2014, 140; Aurelius 2003, 181–184).

Whether an enneateuchic perspective can be made out in 1Sam 7 apart from 7:3–4, verses which clearly have it, is another question.²² But at any rate, the battle account knows how to tell a story about a war led by a judge (cf., for example, the formula that the Philistines “were subdued” [וַיִּתְכַנְעוּ])²³ – and it knows how to tell a story about a divine war as in Josh 10.²⁴

All these observations make one rather hesitate to date the battle account too early; at least when it comes to its final form. Likewise, Schäfer-Lichtenberger’s “vor-dtr. Samuellerzählung” in 7:5–6,7,11–12,15 (Schäfer-Lichtenberger 2016, 201)²⁵ comprises some of the closest connections to 1Sam 12, and hence might be doubted with respect to its characterization as pre-deuteronomistic.

But given these phenomena, one indeed might try to chisel out an older, less theologically charged version of the story. In addition, this endeavor may be supported by the observation that in some instances in 1Sam 7 we find “the Israelites” (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, v. 6b,7aαb,8) as subject, while in v. 9 Samuel cries unto YHWH on behalf of “Israel” (without בְּנֵי) – and in v. 5 he intercedes for “all Israel” (כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל). In v. 7aβ the Philistine rulers lead the attack “toward Israel” (אֶל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, cf. v. 10), and, finally, in v. 11 we find the “men of Israel” (אֲנָשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל) leading the counterstrike. Certainly, these different designations should not be pressed too hard as an argument, but nevertheless they can help with the attempt of establishing a literary critical hypothesis. Consequently, a kernel of the battle account might comprise 7:7aβ(?),9a,10a,11,12: The Philistines advance for battle, Samuel offers the sacrifice, the Israelites start their counterstrike, vanquish their enemies, and Samuel erects the stone Ebenezer. V. 9a,10a display Samuel in a priestly role, but 10aβ, the second mention of the Philistines drawing nearer, might again be interpreted as a *Wiederaufnahme*. If one attributes these two half verses to the basic layer, they are the starting point for the clearly perceptible development of an increasing sacralization of warfare in the passage – in the other case, they are themselves part of this development.

Unfortunately, this version of the story bears some problems, too.

²² The answer on this question depends a great deal on how one interprets the above mentioned parallel with Num 11:1–3.

²³ Cf. Judg 3:30; 4:23; 8:28; 11:33.

²⁴ Cf. 1Sam 7:10 with Josh 10:10; Judg 4:15. Due to this connection, Weimar (1976, 66) finds his basic layer of the story in the respective pieces, viz. in 7:7,8,9b,10b,11 and attributes it to a collection of pre-deuteronomistic YHWH-war-stories (“Jahwekriegserzählungen”), comprising Exod 14*; Judg 4; Josh 10; 1Sam 7* (cf. Weimar 1976, 73).

²⁵ Cf. above, fn. 5.

1) Action takes place starting from Mizpa (v. 11); and we know only from v. 5–7 that the Israelites would be there. And within these verses the Israelites' gathering cannot easily be separated literary-critically from the penitential ceremony and Samuel's role as an intercessor.

2) The leaders of the Philistines are called their "lords" (סרני) – a term that is probably related to the Greek *τύραννος* and that in Samuel appears in 1Sam 5; 6; 29 and in no instance in the oldest strata of the respective stories (Porzig 2009, 157).

The second objection might hint at an absolute dating of the story with a *terminus a quo* in the 7th century (Porzig 2009, 157)²⁶ – the first might be countered by adding v. 5a,6* (with v. 6 as a minimum comprehending "and they gathered at Mizpa" [וַיִּקְבְּצוּ הַמִּצְפָּתָה]).

Hence, a basic layer of the battle account in 1Sam 7 might be found in 7:5a,6*, 7aβ(?),9a,10a,11,12. This implies that even this assumed oldest version would not be free from various intertextual connections with the closer and farther context, more precisely: There is no battle account in 1Sam 7 that would ever have existed without the strong bonds connecting it to chapter 4 on the one side and 10:17–27 on the other. This intermediary result gets more profiled when we once again look at the end of the chapter.

As to the remark referring to the rest of Samuel's life, v. 13 clearly competes with v. 15. The observation mentioned above that the formula that "YHWH's hand lay upon" the Philistines can be found only in 1Sam 5:9 and 12:15, two verses that consensually belong to very late layers of the chapters, makes it probable that the priority is to be assigned to v. 15.

With that verse, we finally have come back to the threefold reference to Samuel's judging at the end of the chapter: 7:15 in itself indeed sounds like a note about a minor judge (McCarter 1980, 147) – but, different to those to be found in Judg 10 and 12, it does not give the years of his activity.²⁷

To make a long story short: The oldest reference to Samuel acting as a political leader is still 1Sam 7:15. But has this verse ever been part of an independent Samuel-tradition or a list of minor judges? I do not think so. I simply cannot imagine how a Samuel character, pictured as a שפט, should have been the right person to slip into the cloak of the "man of God" from 1Sam 9:1–10:16*. Otherwise, a development the other way around seems very well possible: With his birth narrative, Samuel is a preliminary character from the very beginning: He points to Saul and

²⁶ However, one might also consider the option of v. 7aβ being a very late insertion into v. 7* with the intention to clarify which side was to blame for the outbreak of hostilities. The argumentation concerning the idea of the basic layer is not affected by this decision.

²⁷ Cf. Judg 10:2,3,5; 12:9,11,13–14.

his kingship. From this image, it is a small step to the idea that he was a predecessor of the king – at least from the perspective that Saul was not only a king over Israel but her first king after a preceding non-monarchic period. Accordingly, Reinhard Müller has shown how 7:15 works as an introduction to chapter 8 (Müller 2004, 123). This note of Samuel's judgeship, however, if it was not part of an old independent tradition (or its only element), needs a literary point of contact with the older narrative. It is difficult to imagine that 7:15 would have directly followed 3:19, and likewise it would not make much sense to attach the note to the ark narrative in any version. Instead, the note about Samuel judging Israel presupposes some information that there is a situation which demands a judge. This piece of information is provided by the battle account in its assumed basic layer in 7:5a,6*, 7aβ(?),9a,10a,11,12. Hence, v. 15 has to be regarded as a constituent part of this story. This assumption has some implications and consequences:

1) The theory that the criterion of the *Wiederaufnahme* is decisive for the literary-critical analysis of 1Sam holds true not only for 1Sam 1–3 but can be corroborated in 1Sam 7, too.

2) Müller's observation that 1Sam 7:15 serves as an introduction to the oldest version of a narrative telling the story of how monarchy was established as a new system of government in Israel is substantiated and complemented by the idea that this respective verse is an original part of the story about Samuel's successful warfare, which already in its basic layer appears to be closely connected with the coronation in Mizpa as well as with the ark narrative.

3) Therewith, with this basic layer we find ourselves on a literary level that can hardly be called pre-deuteronomistic.²⁸

3 Samuel, the Transitory Figure

Let me conclude: Regarding the literary-historical quest for an independent old Samuel tradition, the result of our investigation has been negative. No such old and independent tradition about Samuel can be detected, neither in 1Sam 1 nor in 1Sam 9 nor in 1Sam 7. As to the political career of the literary character Samuel in its narrower sense it came about relatively late. In this context, the blurred term "late" shall mean: not before a deuteronomistic reworking of the later Samuel scroll took place which presupposed or established the historico-theological construct of an era of judges preceding kingship in Israel. Nevertheless, "concepts of

²⁸ See, with slightly different argumentation, Veijola 1977, 38.

leadership” are connected to Samuel from the very beginning of his character’s literary career:

1) In the first place, in 1Sam 1 and 9:1–10:16, he mirrors the unquestioned concept of a monarchy; a monarchy, however, of divine right. At the same time, his introduction into the narrative serves as a means for incorporating the ark narrative and with it the Philistinian threat into the Saul story (Bezzel 2015, 228–233).

2) Later on, with the basic layer of 1Sam 7, in 7:5a,6*,7aβ(?),9a,10a,11,12,15, he becomes the last representative of a non-monarchic era, the period of the judges. Samuel demonstrates to the reader how Israel should be ruled and how Israel’s wars should be fought properly. “It is a story about how a leader of Israel should act and be” (van der Zee 2014, 61). On the threshold of monarchy, he acts as an antithesis both to the lost battle of chapter 4 and, his priestly acting of v. 9a,10a included, to the wicked behavior of Eli’s sons as well as to the king to come, Saul, and his unfruitful Philistine campaign. With or without v.9a,10a, this concept of leadership has become a good deal more hierocratic: The judge’s job is first and foremost to let YHWH do his job; and (with v.9a,10a) to invoke YHWH’s favor by offering sacrifices. Military success is not the consequence of the leader’s strategic skills but of YHWH’s help alone. This view has been amplified in a number of additions in v. 7aαb,8,9b,10b,13(,14) which stylize the Israelite-Philistine conflict more and more according to a concept of holy war.

3) Finally, the beginning verses of the chapter, v. 3,4(,5b,6[without ויקבצו והמזפתה]) spiritualize the idea of Samuel as an ideal judge: Judging Israel now means a) giving sermons and leading the people back to the Torah and b) acting as a cultic intercessor and stimulating the people’s confession of sins. By this, in a manner of speaking, the wheel turns full cycle: Samuel, the prophet and priest – and political leader – has become the priest and prophet once again. However, what has changed is not only the conception of who and what a leader of Israel should be but also what a true prophet of YHWH is supposed to do. His job is to intercede before YHWH on behalf of Israel like Jeremiah and Moses (Aurelius 1988, 145–146; cf. Jer 15:1). Samuel, the leader, has become Samuel, the prophet and teacher of the Torah like Moses; he has become, what Graeme Auld, mentioning him together with Moses, fittingly calls “*veteris testamenti propheta compositissimus*” (Auld 2009, 4).

In whatever guise, he stays what he had been from the beginning: a transitory figure. Thus, when Josephus made him a representative of the aristocratic idea, all he did was continuing inner-biblical reflections.

1Sam 7 – Tentative Diachronic Stratification

3 And Samuel said to all the house of Israel: If you are returning to YHWH with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods from your midst – and the Ashtarot – and direct your heart to YHWH and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistines.

4 And the Israelites put away the Baalim and the Ashtarot and served YHWH only.

5 And Samuel said: Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to YHWH for you.

6 And they gathered at Mizpah

and drew water and poured it out before YHWH. And they fasted that day and said there: We have sinned against YHWH. And Samuel judged the Israelites at Mizpah.

7 And the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah.

And the lords of the Philistines went up to Israel,

and the Israelites heard and were afraid of the Philistines.

8 And the Israelites said to Samuel: Do not cease to cry to YHWH, our God, for us (or: do not be silent from him, from crying to YHWH, our God [Noll 2016, 404]), so he will save us from the hand of the Philistines.

9 And Samuel took one sucking lamb and offered it as a burnt offering wholly for YHWH; and Samuel cried to YHWH on behalf of Israel, and YHWH answered him.

10 And as Samuel was offering the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel, and YHWH thundered with a great voice on that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were smitten before Israel.

11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them down as far as beyond Beth-Car.

12 And Samuel took one stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name eben-haeser, and said: Thus far YHWH has helped us.

13 And the Philistines were subdued and did not continue entering the border of Israel; and the hand of YHWH was on the Philistines all days of Samuel.

14 And the towns which the Philistines had taken from Israel came back to Israel from Ekron to Gath; and Israel rescued their borders from the hand of the Philistines, and there was peace between Israel and the Amorite.

15 And Samuel judged Israel all days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpa. And he judged Israel in all these places.

17 And his return was to Rama, because there was his house, and there he judged Israel, and he built an altar there for YHWH.

7:5a,6*,7aβ(?),9a,10a,11,12,15: Basic layer, connected with chapter 4 and 10:17–27

7aab,8,9b,10b,13(,14): Additions in the spirit of a holy war idea

3,4(,5b,6[without ויקבצו המצפתה],16,17?) Multi-layered additions: Samuel as teacher of the Torah and priestly-prophetic intercessor

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