The Numerous Deaths of King Saul

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1. Saul and the Deuteronomistic History

When it comes to questions concerning the Deuteronomistic History, the figure of and the stories about King Saul seem to be anything but a good test case for any overarching hypotheses. Even Martin Noth—who provided the basis for distinguishing between texts that his single Deuteronomistic author had penned himself and the sources that he had at hand—could not find many traces of this author's work in the material dealing with Saul. In fact, he ascribed to this Deuteronomist only the two short notes in 1 Sam 13:1 and 2 Sam 2:10a, 11 that deal with the length of Saul's and Ishbaal's reign and with David's rule in Hebron. "Moreover there is no single clear sign that the Deuteronomist edited the Saul story 1 Sam 13:1-2 Sam 2:7."[1] Thus, Noth himself found no trace of Deuteronomistic language or Deuteronomistic theology neither in 1 Sam 13, nor in chapters 14, 15, or 28. Instead, he postulated a process of a longer pre-Deuteronomistic tradition during which elements of an old Saul tradition (1 Sam 9:1-10:16; 10:27b-11:15; 13; 14; 15; [on a secondary level] 16:1-13)[2]

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1. Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (trans. David J. A. Clines; JSOT-Sup 15; Sheffield: Sheffield University Press 1981), 54. The original reads: "Im übrigen haben wir keine einzige sichere Spur einer Bearbeitung der Sauls-Geschichte 1. Sam. 13,1-2.Sam.2,7 durch Dtr" (idem, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien: Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* [3rd ed.; Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967], 63).

2. See Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, 124 (*Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 62).

merged together[3] with the history of David's rise and the story of David's succession to the throne.

Since the time of Noth, his model has been modified to emphasize the role of one or several Deuteronomistic scribes in writing the early history of the Israelite kingdom. As a result, non-Deuteronomistic redactional activity has moved into the background of scholarly interest, and sometimes there appeared to be a tendency to equate "redactional" with "Deuteronomistic."[4]

The recent discussions about the Deuteronomistic History in general[5] affect the book of Samuel only tangentially.[6] Nevertheless, these debates about its original beginning, ending, range, dating, and theology have led to a new awareness of the problems that are entwined with the ascriptive term "Deuteronomistic." This situation provides an opportunity to re-examine Noth's position with regard to the stories about Saul.

An examination of the stories about Saul then raises the following three questions: (1) How can the process which Noth described rather

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3. "Compiled long before Dtr" (Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, 54); the original reads "zusammengewachsen" (*Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 63).

4. For example, Steven McKenzie limits traces of an old tradition to fragments in chapter 1* and chapters 9–11* that portray Saul in a positive fashion, whereas the major strand was written by the Deuteronomistic Historian and focuses on highlighting the contrast between Saul and the rising star David. See Steven L. McKenzie, "Saul in the Deuteronomistic History," in *Saul in Story and Tradition* (ed. Carl Ehrlich and Marsha White; FAT 47; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 59–70.

5. For an overview of the recent discussion, see Hermann-Josef Stipp, "Ende bei Joschija: Zur Frage nach dem ursprünglichen Ende der Königsbücher bzw. des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks," in *Das deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk* (ed. Hermann-Josef Stipp; ÖBS 39; Frankfurt: Lang, 2011), 225–67; Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical, and Literary Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 13–43.

6. Of course, one of the main matters that are discussed is the original beginning of a work of history that could be called Deuteronomistic. Reinhard Kratz finds it in 1 Sam 1:1. See Reinhard G. Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments: Grundwissen der Bibelkritik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 174–75. Christoph Levin has recently argued against this position. See Christoph Levin, "On the Cohesion and Separation of Books within the Enneateuch," in *Pentateuch, Hexateuch or Enneateuch: Identifying Literary works in Genesis through Kings* (ed. Tomas B. Dozeman et al.; SBLAIL 8; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 127–54 (136–37, 153); see also Reinhard Müller's contribution in this volume (207–23).

vaguely as "compilation"[7] of the texts be understood in redaction-critical terms? (2) Which of the redactional stages may be called "Deuteronomistic," and in what sense? (3) To what extent do these several redactional stages relate to any larger work of historical writing? This last question, however, lies outside the scope of this paper.

The texts, which I term perhaps a bit sensationally as the "numerous deaths" of King Saul, provide a good basis to deal with the first two questions. I think that in these texts it is possible to grasp how the figure of Saul and the textual corpora dealing with him developed in different stages.

2. The Relation of the Different "Deaths" of King Saul to Each Other

Ignoring David's dirge in 2 Sam 1:17–27, there are two different versions of how Saul died at Gilboa reported in 1 Sam 31–2 Sam 1. On the one hand, there is the story told by the narrator in 1 Sam 31 (with a parallel account in 1 Chr 10),[8] and on the other hand, there is the report given to David by the Amalekite soldier in 2 Sam 1. These versions differ in a few fairly remarkable ways: Is Saul threatened and mortally wounded by the enemy archers (1 Sam 31:3) or by their chariot drivers (2 Sam 1:6)? Does he commit suicide (1 Sam 31:4), or is he killed—not to say murdered—by some other person (2 Sam 1:10)? And, finally, how many of his sons died in battle together with him—three (1 Sam 31:6) or only Jonathan (2 Sam 1:4)? In terms of literary history, there are four possible explanations for these seemingly contradictory narrative details. Perhaps not surprisingly, all of the possibilities have indeed been proposed in different variations.

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7. Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, 54; the original reads: "zusammengewachsen" (*Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 63). See above, n. 3.

8. How 1 Sam 31 and 1 Chr 10 are related to each other and how the latter goes together with 1 Chr 8:33–40 and 9:39–44 are important questions but cannot pursued within the framework of this paper. For a redaction-critical evaluation of the differences between 1 Sam 31 and 1 Chr 10, see Craig Ho, "Conjectures and Refutations: Is 1 Samuel xxxi 1–13 Really the Source of 1 Chronicles x 1–21?" *VT* 45 (1995): 82–106. For an interpretation of the different motifs here and there and the respective view on Saul which they imply, see Regine Hunziker-Rodewald, "Wo nur ist Sauls Kopf geblieben? Überlegungen zu ISam 31," in *David und Saul im Widerstreit: Diachronie und Synchronie im Wettstreit: Beiträge zur Auslegung des ersten Samuelbuches* (ed. Walter Dietrich; OBO 206; Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2004), 280–300.

One proposal suggests that both versions stem from different ancient traditions or memories of the same historical events that happened at Gilboa, sometime during the tenth century B.C.E. This opinion is, for example, held by Walter Dietrich and Georg Hentschel.[9] Alternately, a second theory holds that the apparent contradictions stem, in fact, from the different genres of the texts in question. This approach holds that both chapters comprise a single literary unit (either in their final form or already in their earliest compositional layer). Referring to the work of David Gunn, the commentaries of Peter Kyle McCarter[10] and Arnold A. Anderson,[11] and the parallel in 1 Sam 4:16–17, Alexander Fischer claims, on form-critical grounds, that the genre of the battle narrative demands a messenger report.[12] Therefore, he finds an original continuation of 1 Sam 31:1–7 in 2 Sam 1:1aα, 2aα$_2$βγ, 3–4, 11, 12*, 17, 18aα (ויאמר), 19–27.[13] Two of the three differences listed above are thus credited to the work of a

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9. Walter Dietrich, *Die frühe Königszeit in Israel: 10. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (BE 3; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1997), 218 speaks of an author (viz. of the history of David's rise) who could include more than one tradition of the same event. But later he labels 1 Sam 29 and 2 Sam 1 as "construed stories" ("konstruierte Erzählungen," 249) with the tradition-historical priority on the side of 1 Sam 31 versus 2 Sam 1 (235). In his older study, he finds 1 Sam 31 rendering a (northern) Israelite tradition whereas 2 Sam 1 would take a Judean perspective. See idem, *David, Saul und die Propheten: Das Verhältnis von Religion und Politik nach den prophetischen Überlieferungen vom frühesten Königtum in Israel* (2d ed.; BWANT 122; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), 24.

See Georg Hentschel, *Saul: Schuld, Reue und Tragik eines Gesalbten* (Biblische Gestalten 7; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2003), 200; idem, "Saul und das deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk," in *Das deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk* (ed. Hermann-Joseph Stipp; ÖBS 39; Frankfurt: Lang, 2011), 207–224 (220).

10. See Peter Kyle McCarter, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* (AB 9; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 58.

11. See Arnold A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (WBC 11; Dallas: Word, 1989), 7.

12. See Alexander Achilles Fischer, *Von Hebron nach Jerusalem: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie zur Erzählung von König David in II Sam 1–5* (BZAW 335; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 18 n. 22–23.

13. See Fischer, *Von Hebron nach Jerusalem*, 18–23. This would have been: "And after the death of Saul, a man came from Saul's camp. His clothes were torn and earth lay upon his head. David asked him: Where have you come from? He answered him: I have escaped from the camp of Israel. David asked him: How did things go? Tell me! He said: The people flew from the battle, but also many of the people fell and are dead. Even Saul and his son Jonathan died. Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, as well as all men who were with him. They mourned and wept for Saul and for his son Jonathan, because they had fallen by the sword. And David intoned this

redactor. The third inconsistency is still open, namely, why the messenger only reports the death of Jonathan and completely disregards the fate of the two other sons of Saul.

Of course, this last point may be due to narrative strategy: a report delivered by the narrator would naturally highlight different features than would an eyewitness like the Amalekite, who has a personal interest in the version he relates. This hardly refutable argument is advanced by those who wish to read both chapters as a literary whole. As to the way in which Saul met his death, the easiest and perhaps oldest explanation is that the Amalekite was simply a liar.[14] This explanation, however, is not adopted by Shimon Bar-Efrat in his recent study.[15] According to Bar-Efrat, the presence of the archers in the first telling of the story does not contradict the role of the chariot warriors in the second version, since some of the archers undoubtedly numbered among the chariot crew. Furthermore, it is not surprising that the Amalekite only mentions Jonathan's death since his fate was of special interest to David, his addressee. Finally, as can already be read in Josephus and Pseudo-Philo,[16] it would have been possible that

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lament over Saul and his son Jonathan and sang" (following the bow song) (see loc. cit., 334–35).

14. See, for example, Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *Die Samuelbücher* (4th ed.; ATD 10; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), 194; Jan P. Fokkelman, *The Crossing Fates (I Sam. 13–31 and II Sam. 1)* (vol. 2 of *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel*; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1986), 640; critically on this interpretation: Hans Joachim Stoebe, *Das zweite Buch Samuelis* (KAT 8/2, Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1994), 88.

15. Shimon Bar-Efrat, "The Death of King Saul: Suicide or Murder?" in *David und Saul im Widerstreit: Diachronie und Synchronie im Wettstreit: Beiträge zur Auslegung des ersten Samuelbuches* (ed. Walter Dietrich; OBO 206; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2004), 272–79; idem, *Das Zweite Buch Samuel: Ein narratologisch-philologischer Kommentar* (trans. Johannes Klein; BWANT 181; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2009), 9–10.

16. See Josephus, *Ant.* 6.370, where Saul is too weak to kill himself (ἀποκτεῖναι μὲν αὐτὸν ἠσθένει) and begs his armor bearer to kill him, who refuses to do his bidding. The king throws himself into his weapon but fails to succeed, whereupon he calls a second man, the very Amalekite of 2 Sam 1, who grants his request. Bar-Efrat's reconstruction of the historical events at Gilboa comes very close to this antique harmonization (see Bar-Efrat, *Zweite Buch Samuel*, 10). The scenario is quite similar as it is depicted by the contemporary Pseudo-Philo, *L.A.B.* 65. According to him, Saul makes himself fall on his sword as in 1 Sam 31, but his attempt at suicide is not successful ("*et non potuit mori*"), and therefore he begs the Amalekite to finish him off. Although the method of harmonizing both accounts is quite similar and both first-century authors depict Saul as a tragic figure, Josephus depicts Saul more as a brave

Saul was yet alive after falling on his sword, and it was the Amalekite who administered the *coup de grâce*. Bar-Efrat emphasizes the difference between מוּת *hiphil* ("to cause someone to die") and מוּת *polel* ("to finish someone off") in 2 Sam 1:9–10.[17]

Finally, the third and fourth explanations are simply that either the second version was the first one or vice versa. That is, 2 Sam 1 was written as an addition to 1 Sam 31—or, to be more precise, *some layer of* 2 Sam 1 was meant to be an addition to *some stage of* 1 Sam 31, since neither chapter gives the impression of literary unity—or the other way around.

The third explanation is held by Klaus-Peter Adam and Jacques Vermeylen. Both claim that "a basic narrative in [1 Sam 31] *1–6 arose from the knowledge of 2 Sam 1 as a variant and was expanded upon later."[18]

How should we evaluate the merits of these four different explanations? An argument against the first solution (two independent traditions) is the observation that both versions of the story are closely linked. In both, Saul is overtaken (root דבק) by his enemies (1 Sam 31:2; 2 Sam 1:6)

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warrior, while Pseudo-Philo views Saul more as a rueful sinner who commissions the Amalekite with his last breath to beg David's forgiveness. But Pseudo-Philo's main interest lies in the connection to 1 Sam 15: Saul's killer is none other than "Edabus," the son of king Agag, whom he begot on God's command on the night before his death so he could eventually become the tool of God's vengeance (see *L.A.B.* 58.3). Thus Saul's end at Gilboa becomes the result of his sin, an idea wholly lacking in both 1 Sam 31 and 2 Sam 1, but suggested in 1 Chr 10:13–14.

17. See Bar-Efrat, *Zweite Buch Samuel*, 13. He refers to the death of Abimelech according to Judg 9:54, which indeed provides an interesting parallel both to 1 Sam 31:4 and 2 Sam 1:9. Abimelech begs his armor bearer as does Saul to "draw your sword" (שְׁלֹף חַרְבְּךָ, Judg 9:54; 1 Sam 31:4) and begs him to kill him in order to avoid a shameful consequence, "that ... not" (פֶּן). But in the case of Abimelech, the servant obeys his bidding, rather as the Amalekite of 2 Sam 1 claims to have done, and Judg 9:54 echoes Saul's words according to 2 Sam 1:9, "kill me / finish me off" (מֹתְתֵנִי), not those in 1 Sam 31:4, where Saul demands "thrust me through" (דָּקְרֵנִי). However, it is this very root (דקר) that is used when the execution of Abimelech's command is told: "and he thrust him through" (וַיִּדְקְרֵהוּ).

18. Klaus-Peter Adam: "Eine Grunderzählung in *1–6 entstand unter Kenntnis von 2Sam 1 als Variante und wurde erweitert" (Klaus-Peter Adam, *Saul und David in der judäischen Geschichtsschreibung: Studien zu 1 Samuel 16–2 Samuel 5* [FAT 51; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007], 83); see also Vermeylen: "l'auteur de 1 S 31 (dans sa forme actuelle) connaît le récit de 2 S 1" (Jacques Vermeylen, *La loi du plus Fort: Histoire de la rédaction des récits davidiques de 1 Samuel 8 à 1 Rois 2* [BETL 154; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000], 182).

and falls (root נפל, 1 Sam 31:4; 2 Sam 1:10). One could also add the motif of the fear (root ירא): The nameless armor bearer of 1 Sam 31:4 fears to do as the king has told him,[19] and this is exactly the word David uses to reproach the unfortunate messenger: "How could you have *not* feared" (איך לא יראת).[20] Furthermore, I suggest that the שבץ that Saul declares has seized him (2 Sam 1:9) refers back to the text-critically interesting notion in 1 Sam 31:3 that the king was heavily wounded[21] (a translation following LXX[22] and Josephus,[23] which would require a *niphal* from חלל or חלה, like וַיִּחַל) or was trembling heavily (וַיָּחֶל, a *qal* from חיל, according to the Masoretic Text).[24] This שבץ in 2 Sam 1:9 possibly provides the oldest interpretation of the crucial word ויחל and may even harmonize both interpretations. This creates another *crux*, though, since שבץ itself is a *hapax legomenon*.[25] Therefore it is not surprising that the assumed link by means of שבץ works both with the Masoretic reading of 1 Sam 31:3[26] and the LXX version.[27]

Both versions of the story are linked to each other, and, as synchronic readings like Bar-Efrat's demonstrate, even their contradictions make some sense in their present form. The thesis that two separate traditions underlie the present text would be corroborated if two viable and independent stories could be read without these connecting links. But if one takes away

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19. Vermeylen speaks of the "caractére 'intouchable'" (Vermeylen, *La loi du plus fort*, 182) and sees a connection between 1 Sam 31:4 and 1 Sam 26:9, 11, 15–16, which he ascribes to a "rédacteur salomonien" (158).

20. For these three points, see Bar-Efrat, *Death of King Saul*, 277.

21. See Fischer, *Von Hebron nach Jerusalem*, 27.

22. "He was wounded in the belly" (καὶ ἐτραυματίσθη εἰς τὰ ὑποχόνδρια).

23. According to Josephus, Saul dies "receiving many wounds" (πολλὰ τραύματα λαβών; *Ant.* 6.370).

24. For an interpretation of this variant, see Hannes Bezzel, "Kleine, feine Unterschiede: Textvarianten in der Saulüberlieferung als Zeugnisse theologisch orientierten Sprachbewusstseins?" in *Sprachbewusstsein und Sprachkonzepte im Alten Orient, Alten Testament und Rabbinischen Judentum* (ed. Johannes Thon; Orientwissenschaftliche Hefte 30; Halle: Martin-Luther-Universität, 2012), 121–42 (135–36).

25. LXX speaks of "terrible darkness" (σκότος δεινόν), Aquila of "the cramp" (ὁ σφιγκτήρ, see Alan E. Brooke, *I and II Samuel* [vol. 2.1 of *The Old Testament in Greek: According to the Text of Codex Vaticanus*; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927], 107), and Targum Jonathan of "the trembling" (רתיתא). See Stoebe, *Zweite Buch Samuelis*, 85.

26. See Fischer, *Von Hebron nach Jerusalem*, 28.

27. See Bezzel, "Kleine, feine Unterschiede," 136.

these and other features[28] that connect 2 Sam 1 to 1 Sam 31 along with
the redactional link that binds 2 Sam 1 to 1 Sam 30,[29] the assumed kernel
of 2 Sam 1 can hardly stand on its own as an independent story. Thus we
are left with two options. According to the first option, there existed an
independent *oral* tradition behind the written text of 2 Sam 1 that shared
common facts and ideas with the version represented by 1 Sam 31. Alter-
nately, one must explain both the relationship between the two stories as
well as their differences in terms of literary dependence.

Personal taste and exegetical interest may determine whether one pre-
fers a synchronic approach that explains the differences by means of nar-
ratological terminology or a diachronic approach. In the end, both means
of interpretation must deal with some final form that should make some
sense, either as a coherent whole from its earliest version or as the prod-
uct of some deliberate literary activity in several steps. As this paper is
interested in the redaction history of the Samuel scroll, the latter method
is chosen. However, given this scroll's character as a *literary piece of art*,
both methods of interpretation recommend caution when it comes to con-
structing a *history of the events* that perhaps took place at Gilboa, be it *via
subtractionis*[30] or *via additionis*.[31]

From a diachronic perspective, the second explanation outlined
above seems improbable, namely, that a first version of 2 Sam 1 served as
the original continuation of 1 Sam 31. Even Fischer's basic layer cannot
explain why in 1 Sam 31:2 the story reports the death of three sons of Saul
whereas in 2 Sam 1 the messenger only speaks of Jonathan. Furthermore,
it is striking that 1 Sam 31 does not express any interest in a person named
David. This is also true of the "witch of Endor" story in 1 Sam 28, which
might once directly preceded the account of Saul's death.[32]

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28. E.g., the information that the men of Israel fled (root נוס) from the battlefield
and many of them fell (root נפל) (2 Sam 1:4; see also 1 Sam 31:1).

29. Both times David is located at Ziklag (see 1 Sam 30:1; 2 Sam 1:1), and both
times the story starts at the third day (ביום השלישי, see 1 Sam 30:1; 2 Sam 1:2).

30. See, for example, Siegfried Kreuzer, "Saul," *BBKL* 8 (1994):1423–29; Hentschel,
Saul und das deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk, 193–94; Dietrich, *Frühe Königszeit in
Israel*, 150–59.

31. See Bar-Efrat, *Zweite Buch Samuel*, 10, adding the additional information
from 2 Sam 1 to the story of 1 Sam 31 in order to reconstruct the "course" ("Verlauf")
of the events.

32. See Hentschel, "Saul und das deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk," 216.
Christophe Nihan, on the contrary, considers 1 Sam 28:3–25 to be a post-Deuteron-

According to Fischer, the "battle narrative" genre would demand the entrance of the disarranged messenger on the scene, and accordingly, after the battle the "man" "comes," and David interrogates him. However, the reader is not provided with any information regarding the location of this scene.[33] David seems to appear suddenly out of thin air. Finally, it seems that Fischer's analysis of the battle narrative genre is based on 1 Sam 4. The parallels between both stories in 1 Sam 4 and 2 Sam 1 are indeed striking, but they could be due more to literary dependence rather than to a common genre: "2Sam 1,1–4 used … the scene from 1Sam 4,12.16f."[34]

What remains are the third and fourth explanations listed above: namely, that one version is a *Fortschreibung* of the other. Assuming that the older story did not stand on its own but was part of a greater narrative context, the primary question is, which of the two texts—at its supposed primary stage—can be read and understood without the other. In answer to this basic question, I think that 1 Sam 31 clearly can be read without its parallel whereas this cannot easily be said of 2 Sam 1 in any form.[35] In addition, it is possible to understand the peculiarities discussed above in 2 Sam 1 as arising from its dependence on 1 Sam 31, but not the other way around. Why would someone make an unspecific armor bearer out of the Amalekite? And, more importantly: Why would someone emphasize that three sons of Saul had died in battle if his *Vorlage* spoke only of one? Instead, 2 Sam 1 must be regarded as an addition to the story about Saul's death in 1 Sam 31*. Its purpose will become clearer when the respective literary arcs of both texts are viewed.

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omistic insertion between 1 Sam 28:1–2 and chapter 29. Christophe Nihan, "1 Samuel 28 and the Condemnation of Necromancy in Persian Yehud," in *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon* (ed. Todd E. Klutz, JSNTSup 245; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 23–54 (32–43).

33. See Fischer, *Von Hebron nach Jerusalem*, 334–35; see also above, n. 14.

34. "Verwendete 2Sam 1,1–4 … die Szene aus 1Sam 4,12.16f." Peter Porzig, *Die Lade im Alten Testament und in den Texten vom Toten Meer* (BZAW 397; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 138 n. 168.

35. *Pace* Bernhard Lehnart, who argues in favor of two independent traditions, claiming that 2 Sam 1 would be fully understandable without the knowledge of 1 Sam 31. Bernhard Lehnart, *Prophet und König im Nordreich Israel: Studien zur sogenannten vorklassischen Prophetie im Nordreich Israel anhand der Samuel-, Elija- und Elischa-Überlieferungen* (VTSup 96; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 104.

3. Saul's Deaths as Literary Historical Markers

Working under the premise that 1 Sam 31* is the *Vorlage* for 2 Sam 1*, the two questions posed above need to be inverted and answered in a plausible way. The first question is the easiest: Why would someone make an Amale-kite of the unknown soldier of 1 Sam 31? The intention behind this infor-mation has already been noted by the ancient commentators: the notion that Saul was killed by an Amalekite creates a link with his battle against the Amalekites in 1 Sam 15 and his rejection. Pseudo-Philo makes this very explicit and provides more details than one could draw either from 1 Sam 15 or from 2 Sam 1. He knows that this man was Edabus, the son of Agag, whom the Amalekite king begot at God's command the night before Samuel slew him so that his offspring would eventually execute the divine verdict against Saul (*L.A.B.* 58.3.). The connection between 2 Sam 1 and 1 Sam 15 is elaborated into a veritable Midrash on nemesis and divine ret-ribution. The latter is a favorite topic with Pseudo-Philo in general, partic-ularly when it comes to Saul. He in person *is* God's punishment for Israel's premature desire to have a king (*L.A.B.* 56.3). The general gist of this line of thought is laid out in the biblical text itself.[36]

The more difficult matter deals with Saul's sons. The silence in 2 Sam 1 regarding the fate of the two other princes opens the door for future con-tinuity of the house of Saul—at least for a few chapters—whereas 1 Sam 31:6 makes it absolutely clear that no one of the Saulide inner circle sur-vived the catastrophe: "And so died Saul and his three sons and his armor bearer (as well as all his men)[37] together on that same day" (וימת שאול ושלשת בניו ונשא כליו גם כל־אנשיו ביום ההוא יחדו).[38] According to 1 Sam

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36. One could argue that the figure of the Amalekite involved in Saul's death is intended to refer to David's victory over the Amalekites in 1 Sam 30 rather than to 1 Sam 15. This link is made evident in 2 Sam 1:1, but even this secondary introduction (see Fischer, *Von Hebron nach Jerusalem*, 18–23) contributes to the association with 1 Sam 15, since, within Samuel, only in these two instances and in the summary of Saul's reign is the verb נכה is applied to Amalek (see 1 Sam 14:48, 15:3, 7; 2 Sam 1:1; see also outside of Samuel, 1 Chr 4:43).

37. According to a Masoretic plus compared to LXX.

38. First Chronicles 10:6 enforces the idea that the Saulide dynasty came to a definite end at Gilboa by declaring that "all his house" died together with Saul: וימת שאול ושלשת בניו וכל־ביתו יחדו מתו. This, however, is at odds with the details in the Benjaminite genealogy of 1 Chr 8:29–40 (and 9:35–44), where Saul's line is pursued for thirteen generations after him. Thomas Willi explains this with the idea of a *trans-*

14:49, Saul had three sons. Three minus three is zero, and 1 Sam 31 puts some emphasis on this calculation, since it is recounted two times (31:2, 6). By contrast, 2 Sam 1 paves the way for developments in the following chapters where Ishboshet/Ishbaal attempts to claim his father's position. This is achieved by interpreting שלשת בניו not as "his three sons" but as "three *of* his sons,"[39] even though this normally is conveyed by a construction with מן.[40] Of course, 1 Sam 31 is in line with 2 Sam 1 as far as the three sons named in 1 Sam 31:2 (Jonathan, Malchishua and some Abinadab) are not identical to those named in 1 Sam 14:49 (Jonathan, Ishvi and Malchishua).[41] I suggest that the only function of this fourth son, Abinadab, is to make the story in 1 Sam 31 fit the following chapters and thus give Ishboshet/Ishbaal—alias Ishvi[42]—the chance to survive and play the role of David's counterpart. Thus, the short list of names given in 1 Sam 31:2 can be regarded as literary feedback from the younger version in 2 Sam 1 into its older source: וידבקו פלשתים את־שאול ואת־בניו ויכו את־יהונתן ואת־אבינדב ואת־מלכי־שוע בני שאול—פלשתים"and the Phi-

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latio imperii: the death of the "house" of Saul symbolizes the transfer of the kingship from his "virtual dynasty" ("von der *virtuell vorhandenen Dynastie* Sauls," emphasis by Willi) to the real Davidic dynasty, even if some Saulides still survived. See Thomas Willi, *1. Chronik 1,1–10, 14* (vol. 1 of *Chronik*; BKAT 24; Neukirchen-Vlyn: Neukirchener, 2009), 328.

39. See Ho, "Conjectures and Refutations," 86.

40. "The partitive notion is expressed: a) either by means of a construct phrase... or b) through a prepositional phrase, e.g., Num 31:47 אֶחָד מִן הַחֲמִשִׁים" (Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* [SubBi 27; Rome: Editrice Pontifico Istituto Biblico, 2006], §142 ma, 495). It is true, Muraoka mentions the construct phrase *expressis verbis* as one of two possibilities for expressing a partial sum too, but his example clearly shows that for this case the relevant quantity must be defined more explicitly: שְׁלֹשֶׁת בְּנֵי־יִשַׁי הַגְּדֹלִים ("*three of the* elder *sons of Jesse*"; italics by Muraoka; emphasis added). However, both examples illustrate that it was not a far-fetched idea of the author of 2 Sam 1 to interpret 1 Sam 31:2, 6 in his sense.

41. The book of Chronicles combines both accounts and names Saul's sons as being Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Ishbaal (1 Chr 8:33; 9:39), obviously identifying the latter with Ishvi.

42. The identification of Ishvi with Ishboshet/Ishbaal is as old as 1 Chr 8:33; 9:39 (see the preceding footnote). It is accepted by a number of modern scholars, presuming that ישוי would be the Yahweh-ized form of אשבעל, of which איש בשת would be a polemical corruption. Dietrich, however, assumes that Ishvi is a different person, and not identical with Ishbaal of 2 Sam 2–4. See Walter Dietrich, *1 Samuel 13:1–14:46* (BKAT 8.2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2011), 119–20, 124–25.

listines overtook Saul and his sons, and the Philistines slew *Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons of Saul.*"[43]

If this observation is correct, then the special emphasis placed in 2 Sam 1 on one "particular" son of the three, namely Jonathan, works in two different ways. On the one hand, 2 Sam 1 seemingly reduces details regarding Saul's sons as found in 1 Sam 31 in its *final form*, but on the other hand, it goes beyond the information in the *basic layer* of 1 Sam 31. Compared to that basic layer, it introduces a new issue, and that issue presupposes the reader's knowledge of the special relationship between David and Jonathan in some form, whether it derives from the dirge on Saul and Jonathan in 2 Sam 1:19–27 or—more likely—from parts of the "History of David's Rise."[44]

Apart from the Amalekite connection and the emphasis on the David-Jonathan relationship, there is another peculiarity in the version told by 2 Sam 1 that deserves attention. While 1 Sam 31 does not provide any details about Saul's posture when he uttered his last wish, the Amalekite soldier reports that he found him leaning on his spear (נִשְׁעָן עַל־חֲנִיתוֹ, 2 Sam 1:6). This חֲנִית is a kind of *leitmotiv* in a certain strand of the story concerning David's rise.[45] While David fights Goliath without a spear and

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43. Bar-Efrat follows the intended logic of this assumed little *Einschreibung*, when he states (for the historical events at mount Gilboa): "Eshbaal, also named Ish-boshet, was not killed"—"Eschbaal, auch Ischboschet genannt, wurde nicht getötet." Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Das Erste Buch Samuel: Ein narratologisch-philologischer Kommentar* (BWANT 176; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1996), 376. Diana Edelman considers the historical possibility that the list of 1 Sam 14:49 reflected an earlier stage of Saul's family status before Abinadab's birth or the literary possibility that in 1 Sam 31:2 he was inserted later from Chronicles. See Diana Vikander Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah* (JSOTSup 121; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1991), 98. The first option ignores the genre of 1 Sam 14:47–51 as a concluding remark about the *entire* reign of Saul; the second option is more easily understood the other way round, since the Saulide genealogy in 1 Chronicles solves the problem of the two differing pieces of information by conflating both.

44. According to André Heinrich, the friendship between David and Jonathan is not part of the basic layer of the respective chapters but was introduced later in order to highlight David's noble character and his guilelessness toward Saul and his family. See André Heinrich, *David und Klio: Historiographische Elemente in der Aufstiegsgeschichte Davids und im Alten Testament* (BZAW 401; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 264–71.

45. It appears at 1 Sam 17:45, 47; 18:10, 11; 19:10 (bis); 20:33; 21:9; 26:8, 11, 12. It shall not be claimed here that all these references belong to the same literary stratum.

does not have one when he flees (21:9), the חנית appears to be *the* weapon of Saul. Even more, it can be seen as a symbol of his tragic fate.[46] He tries to kill both David and Jonathan with it—and in chapter 26 falls in serious danger of being killed by it at the hands of Abishai. And now, at the end, he leans on it again—with no more success than he had before. Thus, Saul's spear serves as a symbol that his reign has already passed over to David, who never employed a spear, neither against foreign enemies nor against Saul, even when presented with the opportunity. Thus, David's hands remain clean.

This last point is stressed in 2 Sam 1:13–16 by the further course of events that culminates with the unfortunate messenger's death at the hands of one of David's men and not by David himself (2 Sam 1:15). The reader might be surprised to find in verse 13 that David's dialogue with the Amalekite continues—or rather begins anew. The story appears to end in verse 12 with David and his men mourning and fasting until evening. At this point, one might expect to hear David's lament, but this is delayed until verses 17–27. Instead, the narrative in verses 13–16 jumps back in time and resumes the dialogue between the king-to-be and the messenger. Here, David's opening question is superfluous.[47] He demands to know who the messenger is, even though the question had already been asked and replied (v. 8). The purpose of his question is simply to introduce a new idea to the story, belonging to another literary layer reflecting on Saul's death.

This new layer is concerned with David's righteousness and innocence. These traits of his character are emphasized by means of David's reluctance to lay a hand on the anointed of Israel that stands in contrast to the foreigner's lack of fear to commit the act. What David refrained from doing when he had the opportunity and what the nameless armor bearer

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However, a detailed diachronic analysis of the respective passages—though probably a worthwhile endeavor—would exceed the scope of this essay.

46. This observation was made by Norbert Baumgart in his paper, "Wenn Männer schlagen und Frauen singen: Annäherungen an Vers 1 Sam 18,7 in dessen Kontexten" (paper presented at the meeting of the "Alttestamentliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft" (ATAG); Neudietendorf, September 23, 2011). See as well Bar-Efrat, *Zweite Buch Samuel*, 12–13; Samuel A. Meier, "The Sword: From Saul to David," in *Saul in Story and Tradition* (ed. Carl Ehrlich and Marsha White; FAT 47; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 156–74.

47. See Stoebe, *Zweite Buch Samuelis*, 89.

of 1 Sam 31:4 refuses to do out of "fear" (ירא), the Amalekite did not fear
to do (see איך לא יראת, 2 Sam 1:14)[48] and even took pride in the act.[49]
The catchword "anointed of YHWH" (משיח יהוה) evokes an association
with David's twofold sparing of Saul in 1 Sam 24 and 26.[50] It is thereby
clearly established that David had no hand in the death of the first king.
Quite the opposite—David had always been true to Saul. The emphasis on
the title "anointed of YHWH" clarifies that this loyalty was not primarily
due to Saul as a person, but to his calling as expressed by his anointment.
Thus, David's respect or piety is directed, above all, towards the one who
bestowed this special status, as is made clear even on a grammatical level
where YHWH takes the place of the *nomen rectum* in the construct con-
junction משיח יהוה that recurs in the three connected chapters 1 Sam 24,
26, and 2 Sam 1.

How does the first account of Saul's death serve as a starting point for
literary arcs bridging across the book of Samuel? There are remarkably
fewer links between 1 Sam 31 in its basic form and the preceding chapters
than we find in the different layers of 2 Sam 1. The way in which these
connections can touch upon the question of the diachronic architecture
of 1 Samuel depends of course upon one's literary-critical evaluation of
1 Sam 31 itself.

I argued above that the names of Saul's sons are a secondary insertion
into 1 Sam 31:2. There is widespread consensus that this holds true for

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48. See above, §2, p. 331.

49. With respect to שלך יד על, see 2 Sam 1:14 with 1 Sam 24:7, 11; 26:9, 11, 23.

50. On these two chapters, see Walter Dietrich, "Die zweifache Verschonung
Sauls (I Sam 24 und 26): Zur 'diachronen Synchronisierung' zweier Erzählungen,"
in *David und Saul im Widerstreit: Diachronie und Synchronie im Wettstreit: Beiträge
zur Auslegung des ersten Samuelbuches* (ed. Walter Dietrich; OBO 206; Fribourg: Aca-
demic Press Fribourg, 2004), 232–53. According to his analysis, the references to the
משיח יהוה belong to a pro-Davidic reworking (236) which he attributes to his "Court
History" ("Höfisches Erzählwerk") and dates to the late eighth or early seventh cen-
tury (247). To my mind, David's sparing of YHWH's anointed is less interested in
the sacrosanctity of the king in general (236) than in exemplifying David's piety and
righteousness towards YHWH himself. Cynthia Edenburg observes that in 1 Sam 24:7
David's protest against the suggestion that he should kill Saul is rather odd here, while
it is well integrated in the narrative flow of 1 Sam 26:11. Accordingly, the verse appears
to be taken over from chapter 26. See Cynthia Edenburg, "How (Not) to Murder a
King: Variations on a Theme in 1 Sam 24; 26," *SJOT* 12 (1998): 64–85 (76). The second
mention of "YHWH's anointed" in this chapter, 24:11bβ gives the impression of being
an addition, too.

verse 7 as well, which states that the Israelites from beyond the valley and beyond the Jordan fled after their defeat and that their settlements were inhabited by the Philistines.[51] The more interesting question, however, is whether the story at one time ended with the remark in 31:6 that Saul, his sons, and his armor bearer died at Gilboa[52] or whether the epilogue dealing with the fate of Saul's body (31:8–13) originally belonged to the story as well.

In the latter case, the first version already established a close connection between Saul's final failure and his days of success by means of the motif of the grateful Jabeshites who have not forgotten that Saul once rescued them from the Ammonites (1 Sam 11).[53] This story can possibly be seen as an addition itself—though not a very late one—to the older or oldest Saul tradition.[54]

In the former case, this arc belongs to an already reworked version of 1 Sam 31. One then must ask whether the assumed basic layer in 1 Sam 31:1–6* provides any hints for literary connections on its own. These are

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51. See, for example, Hans-Joachim Stoebe, *Das erste Buch Samuelis* (KAT 8.1; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1973), 528; Heinrich, *David und Klio*, 355.

52. See Heinrich, *David und Klio*, 355.

53. Bar-Efrat finds a parallel between Saul's decapitated head being sent around in the land of the Philistines in 1 Sam 31:9 and Saul sending the pieces of oxen throughout all the land in 1 Sam 11:7 (see also Judg 19:29). See Bar-Efrat, *Erste Buch Samuel*, 377. However obvious the connection between the Jabeshites in 1 Sam 31 and 1 Sam 11 is, I hesitate to accept Bar Efrat's parallel as intentional, since both texts share only the verb "send" (שלח), while different roots are used for the act of dismemberment (כרת in 1 Sam 31:9; נתח in 1 Sam 11:7).

54. See Reinhard Müller, *Königtum und Gottesherrschaft: Untersuchungen zur alttestamentlichen Monarchiekritik* (FAT 2/3; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2004), 148–52. Dietrich differs in details and reckons with a basic layer in verse 1–11* from the middle era of the Judean kingship (probably based on a historical memory of a battle between Saul and the Ammonites). See Walter Dietrich, *1 Samuel 1–12* (BK 8.1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2011), 492–501. Jeremy Hutton interprets the bravery of the Jabeshites in light of 2 Sam 2:4b–7; 21:12–13a*, 14aα*. See Jeremy M. Hutton, *The Transjordanian Palimpsest: The Overwritten Texts of Personal Exile and Transformation in the Deuteronomistic History* (BZAW 396; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 241. According to him, this link indicates the secondary character of 2 Sam 1. In my opinion, the passage dealing with the Jabeshites in 2 Sam 2 refers back to 1 Sam 31 with or without the Amalekite- and Ishboshet-story and was probably added to its present context and does not stem from the original kernel (see also Kratz, *Komposition der erzählenden Bücher*, 186 n. 94, who speaks of an "apologetic addition based on 1 Sam 31:11–13" ["ein apologetischer Zusatz aufgrund von I Sam 31,11–13"]).

not to be found easily. The first account of Saul's death appears to be much more self-sufficient and less interested in intertextual allusions or connections than the second version. The single possible connecting link in 1 Sam 31 is provided by the names of Saul's sons.[55] Given the case that the text in 1 Sam 31:2 originally spoke only of "his three sons" dying and not of the deaths of "three of his sons, namely Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua," the text clearly presupposes that the reader knows something about Saul's family. It is quite unlikely that an author would have introduced them here for the first time—without either names or additional information—only to relate their untimely demise. But, of course, the reader has already been provided with this information before, since the three sons and their names already appear in 1 Sam 14:49. This is the passage presumed by 1 Sam 31:1–6*.

Both the basic layer[56] as well as the final form of 1 Sam 14:47–51 may be labeled the first of the "numerous deaths of King Saul." It is true that one does not read anything about the king's death in these verses, nor about the circumstances leading to it, but the genre of this small section is best termed an obituary. These verses take a retrospective view of Saul. One reads about his becoming king, his wars, his success wherever he turned,[57] and his family. This type of text usually marks the demise of the person spoken about.[58] Hence, it is not unlikely that the basic layer of 1 Sam 14:47–51 was the original end of the stories about Saul (or the end of some Saul tradition).[59]

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55. Cf. above, §3, pp. 334–36.

56. See, for example, the analysis by Müller, *Königtum und Gottesherrschaft*, 264–65, or Dietrich, with a "Saul-summary" ("Saul-summarium") in verses 47bγ, 48aα, 49–50. See Dietrich, *1 Samuel 13:1–14:46*, 120.

57. Reading with the LXX, L[93], and Vulg. against MT and Targum Jonathan. While according to the LXX, Saul "was saved" (ἐσῴζετο, see L[93]: conserbabatur [sic]; reading ישע in *niphal*), the Vulg. depicts him as a savior (*superabat*; reading ישע in *hiphil*). According to the MT and Targum Jonathan, he always "trespassed," reading יַרְשִׁיעַ, from רשע (see מחייב in the Targum). I would see the Masoretic reading as influenced by the evaluation of Saul in 1 Chr 10:13, which holds that Saul died because of his transgression that he committed against YHWH (במעלו אשר מעל ביהוה). See Bezzel, "Kleine, feine Unterschiede," 136–37.

58. Edelman regards this point as a "deliberate move by the narrator to inform his audience that Saul's active career as king has effectively drawn to a close" (*King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, 96).

59. See Kratz, *Komposition der erzählenden Bücher*, 179.

Given that 1 Sam 31 presumes the older obituary of Saul in 1 Sam 14, I suggest that the story of his death in 1 Sam 31 can be understood as a kind of complementing commentary on the obituary. The mention of the princes' names in the context of the "first death" of Saul in 1 Sam 14 raises expectations for Saul's future dynasty. But this dynastic chapter comes to a close by Saul's "second death" in 1 Sam 31, even before it effectively began. By providing a graceful and honorable exit to the king, 1 Sam 31 can be read as a commentary on 1 Sam 14:47: wherever Saul turned, he was saved or was successful—except this one time at Gilboa. However, the "third death" of Saul in 2 Sam 1 will reopen the question of a renewed Saulide dynasty.

4. Saul's Deaths and the Question of Deuteronomism in Samuel

To summarize the results of the two preceding sections, four (or five) major stages in the history of writing the story of Saul's death can be identified, each of which establish connections to different stories, issues, and motifs that played a role at separate stages in the literary growth of the Samuel scroll.

The first stage is what has been called "Saul's obituary" in 1 Sam 14:47–51*. This retrospective summation looks back on the first king's reign with some appreciation and leaves open a possibility for a continuation of the Saulide dynasty.

This possibility, however, is thwarted in the second stage of textual development with the story of Saul's end in 1 Sam 31*. All three of the king's sons named in 1 Sam 14:49 die in battle together with their father, and his body is saved by the courageous Jabeshites from further desecration at the hands of the Philistines (vv. 8–13), an act that recalls Saul's successful intervention in 1 Sam 11.

While the treatment of the end of Saul in these first two (or three) passages focuses solely on the fate of the king and his family, things change with the retelling of the story in 2 Sam 1:1–12. The interest shifts from the past to the present, from what befell Saul to the reaction of David. This movement develops by emphasizing the David-Jonathan relationship and by giving Saul's spear a role in the context of his death. This spear serves as a *leitmotiv* in the complex of the David-Saul narratives. Furthermore, by making the messenger of defeat and apparent assassin an Amalekite, the text spans an arc to Saul's failure in 1 Sam 15.

The focus on Jonathan in the account in 2 Sam 1:1–12 may have given rise to the insertion of the names of the three princes in 1 Sam 31:2, thus

revising the totality of the Saulide disaster and opening a door for Ishbaal's intermezzo in 2 Sam 2–4.

Finally, the passage in 2 Sam 1:14–16 stresses the issue of David's innocence and his obedience to YHWH. This is made explicit by speaking of Saul as the "anointed one of YHWH" (משיח יהוה), connecting the chapter with 1 Sam 24; 26.

Now, what can be said about Deuteronomism in this context? Taken by themselves, none of the above-mentioned texts dealing with Saul's death displays Deuteronomistic features in its relevant literary layers, as long as "Deuteronomistic" shall be taken to mean that a text orientates itself to Deuteronomy either through language and style or through theology. But the non-Deuteronomistic character of the main pillars on which a good part of the stories about Saul rests does not necessarily imply that they all are pre-Deuteronomistic as Noth thought. Thus, is it possible to draw a line between a pre-Deuteronomistic non-Deuteronomistic and a post-Deuteronomistic non-Deuteronomistic Saul story by means of his "deaths"?

The best candidate for such an endeavor is probably 2 Sam 1:1–12*. However, the spear *leitmotiv* will not serve for this purpose, due to the heterogeneous literary character of the reference texts in question. Nor can the David-Jonathan connection be used. At best, it is the Amalekite soldier who could serve for this purpose—if his introduction into the story of Saul's downfall and David's rise indeed alludes to 1 Sam 15 as has been argued above. This, however, shifts all problems considering Deuteronomism in the book of Samuel to 1 Sam 15. Though few scholars will deny that 1 Sam 15 in its present form resonates with Deuteronomistic phraseology,[60] the classification of its basic layer is highly disputed. Some identify a pre-Deuteronomistic kernel,[61] while others regard it as

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60. See Dietrich, *1 Samuel 13:1–14:46*, 147–48, arguing against scholars who advocate a general pre-Deuteronomistic character of 1 Sam 15.

61. Dietrich, for example, offers a pre-Deuteronomistic "account of a campaign of Saul against the Amalekites" ("*Bericht von einem Amalekiter-Feldzug Sauls*"; see Dietrich, *1 Samuel 13:1–14:46*, 148, emphasis original), which he dates "scarcely after the downfall of the northern state (722 B.C.E.)" ("kaum nach dem Untergang des Nordreichs [722 v. Chr.]," 149). This basic layer comprises 4, 5, 7a, 8a*, 12b, 13a, 32, 33. In his earlier studies on the topic, this story comprised a few verses more: 1 Sam 15:4–8a, 12b, 13a, 31b–33 (see Dietrich, *David, Saul und die Propheten*, 11). Later on, several additions were made, prophetic as well as Deuteronomistic.

Deuteronomistic from the start[62] or label even its oldest layer as post-priestly.[63]

That means that even if one agrees with the assertion that the Amalekite of 2 Sam 1 alludes to 1 Sam 15, the spectrum of scholarly opinions allots a range of five hundred years, between the eighth to the fourth century B.C.E., for the origin of this allusion.

But perhaps it is possible to narrow this time frame a little. The introduction of the Amalekite in 2 Sam 1 was probably not meant to remind the reader of one of Saul's successful military campaigns. As seen above, one tendency of the story is to redirect the reader's attention from Saul to David. Thus, the back reference from 2 Sam 1 to Saul's battle in 1 Sam 15 against the Amalekites presupposes a literary level in which this battle was no longer reported as mere example for one of the king's remarkable military deeds but was already seen as the crucial event that finally drew YHWH's attention from Saul to David. This interpretation of 1 Sam 15 as the definite turning point for Saul's reign is expressed most pointedly by 1 Sam 15:28: "This very day, YHWH has torn the kingdom from you and given it to a neighbor of yours who is better than you." However, this assumption is based more on the interpretation of implicit text signals than on explicit identifiable intertextual connections, and therefore can hardly be corroborated.

But can this interpretation of Saul's fate (still) be called "Deuteronomistic" anyway? As to its theology, it can hardly be denied that it displays a rather close proximity to a Chronistic way of understanding history.[64]

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62. Fabrizio Foresti finds a Deuteronomistic basic stratum with two Deuteronomistic redactions. See Fabrizio Foresti, *The Rejection of Saul in the Perspective of the Deuteronomistic School: A Study of 1 Sm 15 and Related Texts* (ST 5; Rome: Edizioni del Teresianum, 1984), 166–77. All links to 2 Sam 1 are created by the nomistic Deuteronomist DtrN (140–48). For discussion of 1 Sam 15, see Walter Dietrich and Thomas Naumann, *Die Samuelbücher* (EdF 287; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 41–45; Walter Dietrich, *1 Samuel 13:1–14:46*, 147–48.

63. See Heinrich, *David und Klio*, 71. His conclusion is based on the assumption that 1 Sam 15 presupposes Exod 17: 8–16 (but not yet Dtn 25:17–19), a passage which should be regarded as post-Priestly. According to Römer, however, 1 Sam 15 does presuppose Deut 25:17–19. See Römer, *So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 146 n. 86.

64. See 1 Chr 10:14, expressing a similar idea of "*translatio imperii*" (Willi, *1 Chronik 1, 1–10, 14*, 328; emphasis original; see also 330–31) as 1 Sam 15:28: "And he [i.e., YHWH] turned the kingdom over to David, the son of Jesse." Considering a closer proximity of 1 Sam 15 to Chronistic theology than to Deuteronomism:

To conclude: "When it comes to questions concerning the Deuteron-
omistic History, the figure of and the stories about King Saul seem to be
anything but a good test case for any overarching hypotheses." This was
the starting point of this paper, and the analysis of the "numerous deaths"
of King Saul has confirmed this skeptical point of view. The investigation
into how the death of Israel's first king was depicted by the different arcs
that span the book of Samuel leads me to conclude that none of these texts
can be labeled "Deuteronomistic." Therefore, the term "Deuteronomistic"
does not appear to be the most suitable heuristic tool for the reconstruc-
tion of the literary genesis of the books of Samuel, at least as far as con-
cerns the stories about the first king of Israel, Saul.

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