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Saul and David – Stages of Their Literary Relationship

1 Point(s) of Departure

Within the so called “History of David’s Rise”, the relationship between Saul and David is the central theme along which the narrative unfolds. Like all interpersonal relationships, it undergoes some changes and developments. On a synchronic level, one may distinguish three phases: a) the young, handsome harpist, shepherd and warrior becomes more and more closely acquainted with the king (1 Sam 16–17); b) a relatively short honeymoon period in 1 Sam 18; and c) a long and nasty divorce of the two unequal partners in 1 Sam 19–27. This latter stage is full of jealousy and accusation, whether justified or not. Occasions of apparent reconciliation and remorse are not entirely absent (1 Sam 24; 26). Of course, all along there is more at stake than mere emotions, but it cannot be denied that love and fear are important factors in the advancement of the plot.

Viewed from a diachronic perspective, I think that all of the contributors to the current volume agree on the basic assumption that the literary relationship between Saul and David has undergone changes as well. In this article I attempt to trace some stages of this relationship.¹

The presuppositions that shape this endeavour rest upon theories about or insights into the redaction history of the Books of Samuel in general and in detail. With these presuppositions, however, I am about to leave the domain of agreement common to all participants of our symposium. These four points of departure are:

1. There is a rather widespread theory that the “History of David’s Rise” does not represent a once independent source or tradition,² as was Leonhard Rost’s

1 Within the last two decades, a large number of published monographs and articles has given witness to the current scholarly interest in the literature about the “Early Monarchic Period” and its protagonists, especially Saul and David. As a *pars pro toto* see DIETRICH 2004, and ADAM 2007.

2 But note that, for example, Jacob Wright works with an independent David story (cf. WRIGHT 2014: 35–39), and Jeremy Hutton tries to find two independent sources which he labels HDR₁ and HDR₂ (cf. HUTTON 2009: 263).

Note: I would like to express my thanks to my friend and colleague Paul Keim, Goshen (IN), for correcting and improving my English. Of course, all remaining mistakes are my own.

idea,³ but should be seen as a work of literature written for the purpose of connecting traditions about Saul on the one hand and David on the other.⁴ Whether or not the authors of this integrated narrative made use of traditional material is another matter, and in my view, one of the main issues to be addressed in this symposium.

2. As Wellhausen and Budde have noted,⁵ the bridgehead for this “History of David’s Rise” can be seen in 1 Sam 14:52. This verse is an early addition to what I have called Saul’s obituary, which originally rounded off the oldest Saul tradition in chapters 9–10*; 11*; 14*.⁶ However, this does not mean that all the material between 1 Sam 14:52 and 2 Sam 5 should be regarded as belonging to this early redactional link between the traditions about Saul and David.

3. Based on observations about the different ways in which Saul’s death is depicted after his obituary in chapter 14, in 1 Sam 31 and 2 Sam 1, I am led to conclude that 1 Sam 31:1–13* and 1 Sam 29:1, 11b should be understood as segments of an expanded Samuel-Saul-narrative which was still composed before it was connected with the material about David. This extended Samuel-Saul-Cycle is structured by references to the respective deployments of the Philistine army. These notations can be found similarly phrased in 1 Sam 4:1^{LXX}; 13:5; 17:1; 29:1⁷ – and, on a secondary level, in 28:4 and 28:1.⁸ In between we find the story of Saul and David’s relationship.

Another observation is that 1 Sam 31 shows no interest in, or even knowledge of, a character named David. Taken by itself, it tells the story of a great king’s heroic end.⁹

This last point looks quite different in 2 Sam 1. There the focus is no longer on Saul but on David. Generally following the analysis made by Alexander Fischer,¹⁰ I have identified a basic layer of this chapter in 2 Sam 1:1α. βα.2α².β.3.4.11.12a.βα¹¹ and ascribed it to a first, or at least early, version of

³ Cf. ROST 1926: 132 f.

⁴ Cf. the independent studies by WHITE 2000: 281 f., and KRATZ 2000: 182–86. *Pace*, for example, Vermeylen, who has “[d]e 1 S 11 à 2 S 7 [...] un ‘récit de base’, cohérent, unifié par une logique narrative constante” (VERMEYLEN 2000: 484).

⁵ Cf. WELLHAUSEN ¹⁹⁶³: 252; BUDDE 1902: 103.

⁶ Cf. BEZZEL 2013: 340; BEZZEL 2015: 143–47; 204–7.

⁷ Cf. BEZZEL 2015: 229 f.

⁸ Cf. VEIJOLA 2004: 264.

⁹ Cf. BEZZEL 2015: 231.

¹⁰ Cf. FISCHER 2004: 18–23, with 2 Sam 1:1α.2α²βγ, 3–4.11.12*, 17, 18α (רִימֹן), 19–27.

¹¹ Cf. BEZZEL 2015: 132.

a “History of David’s Rise”.¹² It may be understood, according to point 1 above, as a link between the once independent traditions about Saul and David. In what follows, this last result will have to be scrutinized once again.¹³ For the time being, a slight modification of my statement will be in order: 1 Sam 31* does not *necessarily* know a “History of David’s Rise” – but 2 Sam 1 *clearly* presupposes it – whatever its shape may have been. Taken together with 1 Sam 14:52, these episodes represent the two fixed points between which the net of the Saul-David relationship could be spread out.

4. Related to the question of how David originally found his way to Saul’s court – whether as a player of the lyre, as related in chapter 16, as an armour bearer, as 16:21¹⁴ has it, or as the one who killed the elite warrior of the Philistines, I think that Erik Aurelius has made a compelling case in favour of the latter option.¹⁵ Whether a basic layer of chapter 16 once belonged to an independent source or rather should be explained in terms of a *Fortschreibung*, is not a crucial matter at this point in the discussion. However, I would tend to favour the second option, primarily based on the principle of Ockham’s razor.¹⁶ Second, the proposed original continuation of these supposed two independent versions of a Saul-David-story does not seem totally convincing to me.¹⁷ Third, because 1 Sam 16:14–23 can be understood as an addition to 16:1–13. Again, I refer to Erik Aurelius who states, (*nota bene* using the subjunctive mood):

12 Cf. BEZZEL 2015: 236 f.

13 Cf. below, p. 174 f.

14 Cf. HEINRICH 2009: 125. The problem with Heinrich’s idea of an isolated verse 16:21 as connecting link to 14:52 is that the reader is confronted with a certain “David” who has not been introduced before.

15 Cf. AURELIUS 2002: 64–66; see also Peter Porzig’s contribution to this volume and his hint to Reinhard Kratz’ change of mind in this question as it is displayed by the difference between the German and the English version of his “Komposition der erzählenden Bücher” (cf. PORZIG in this book).

16 Cf. AURELIUS 2002: 45.

17 Pace HUTTON 2009: 263. Hutton’s HDR₁ begins with “1 Sam 16:14–23; 17:1–11,32–40,42–48a,49,51–54; 18:6aβb*–8a*,9,12a,13–16,20–21a,22–26a,27–29a” (ibid.), whereas his HDR₂ consists of “1 Sam 17:12* (with beginning emended to ישׁ וגוֹמרוּ אִישׁ אִפְרַתִּי... אִישׁ אִפְרַתִּי, and with original אִישׁ אִפְרַתִּי), 13–14,16–18,20–23a,24–30,41,48b,(50),55–58; 18:1–2,(3),4–5,8b,(10–11a),12b,17–18*29b–30” (ibid.). To my mind, narrative problems in this independent HDR₂ appear in 17:16 (who is “the Philistine”, הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, who suddenly appears on stage?) as well as in the transition between 17:30 and 17:41 with the Philistine approaching David all of a sudden and without reason.

“[D]ieses Stück [viz. 1 Sam 16:14–23] müßte aber nicht deshalb eine selbständige Überlieferung gewesen, sondern könnte eine Fortschreibung von 16,1–13 sein.”¹⁸

2 Saul and David – An Amicable Relationship?

It is with these four presuppositions in mind that the literary-historical development of David and Saul’s relationship between 1 Sam 17 and 2 Sam 1 shall be considered. My initial and leading question is simply whether or not the literary motif of Saul’s change of attitude towards David was a constituent part of the “History of David’s Rise” from the beginning, or whether the antagonism of the two players might represent a further elaborated form of the story.

Let me introduce two basic observations which might throw light on this question.

2.1 The flight-rescue-pattern

As stated above, that which I call the expanded narrative cycle of Samuel and Saul (“die erweiterte Saulüberlieferung”) has been structured by means of references to the deployment of the Philistine army. Similarly – and different at the same time – there is a structuring element between 1 Sam 19 and 27 that binds the episodes of David’s wanderings together. It consists of a formula like “and David fled to X” or “David escaped to Y” (using the roots בָּרַח or מָלַט) – and, correspondingly, a phrase stating that Saul got wind of the refugee’s whereabouts: “and Saul got to know that David was in Y” (with יָדַע). Accordingly, David flees or escapes in 1 Sam 19:18; 20:1; 21:11; 22:1; 27:1, and Saul comes to know where to find him in 19:19; 22:6; 23:7; 24:2; 26:1; 27:4. By means of this simple stylistic device, the respective chapters appear as one long “cat and mouse game”¹⁹ that sends David on a tour from Benjamin through Judah with a side-trip to Gath.²⁰ Put differently, this flight and rescue pattern is the string on which the pearls of the separate episodes are strung.

¹⁸ “This piece [viz. 1 Sam 16:14–23] has not to be seen necessarily as an independent tradition but might as well have been a *Fortschreibung* of 16:1–13” (AURELIUS 2002: 65); cf. HEINRICH 2009: 123 f.

¹⁹ EDENBURG 2016: 479.

²⁰ Cf. ADAM 2007: 97. For a more detailed analysis of this pattern, see also Cynthia Edenburg’s contribution to this volume, EDENBURG in this book, speaking of a “flight and pursuit theme” (*ibid.*).

There are some irregularities in this pattern, though:

First, David flees from Nabal in Rama in 20:1 but does not arrive at another place before 21:2, where we read that, he simply “comes” to Nob (וַיָּבֵא דָוִד נֹב). In between we find the touching and lengthy episode of Jonathan and David’s covenant and farewell. It doesn’t take a radical critic to doubt that the broadly extended material on the special friendship between Jonathan and David is part of the oldest material.²¹

Second, there is the exception of chapters 24–26. The episode about David and Abigail – or David, Nabal, and Abigail – (ch. 25) is self-explanatory in this context. Saul plays no part in this story whatsoever. The absence of any reference to David’s flight at the end of chapter 24 is not surprising either, since both adversaries depart in peace. Likewise, no flight is necessary at the transition from chapter 23 to 24. Saul ceases his persecution of David due to a Philistine attack which he has to deal with urgently. The interruption comes just at the moment when a direct confrontation of the rivals seems imminent (1 Sam 23:27 f.). But even apart from these compositional aspects, fleeing would not be in the nature of David as he is depicted in chapters 24 and 26. This David acts in just the opposite way. When he receives intelligence that Saul and his men have approached his hiding place, he does not try to rescue himself but dares to perform a risky exploit. On the other hand, his final decision to avoid possible further confrontation with Saul in 27:1 does not fully fit this heroic and noble image of the king-to-be. Perhaps, in this case he displays more common sense instead.

For my present purpose, I would like to put chapters 24–26 into brackets, referring the reader to the papers by Natan Evron and Alexander Fischer in this volume²² as well as to an earlier article by Cynthia Edenburg.²³ I will look instead at the third exception to the flight-rescue pattern.

This third exception can be found in the story about David in Keila (ch. 23). At the beginning of this episode, the reader is not under the impression that David is fleeing. Instead, he is told of an emergency situation in Keila and feels responsible to intervene on behalf of the residents of the town. It is not before v. 7 that Saul comes onto the scene, in a way that is not very well integrated into the rescue story, which already ends in v. 6.²⁴ Saul attempts to take advantage of the situation and capture David immediately. According to v. 7 he reasons that David has become trapped in a walled city. Accordingly, he starts to besiege

²¹ Cf. KRATZ 2000: 185.

²² Cf. EVRON in this book.

²³ Cf. EDENBURG 1998.

²⁴ Cf. VEIJOLA 1990: 29.

Keila in 23:8. Nowhere in v. 1–6 is it mentioned that David has gone *into* the town, though. Rather, he simply travels *to* Keila to defeat the Philistines. I will come back to a more detailed analysis of chapter 23 below.²⁵

Bearing these primary observations in mind, I would like to draw a tentative conclusion. Whereas chapters 20 and 24–26 appear to be secondary to the flight-rescue-pattern – or at least might well be seen that way – in chapter 23 the situation is different. Here, matters are quite the reverse. It is the flight-persecution-pattern in verses 7–13 that is secondary to the story related in 23:1–6*.

With this in mind, we turn to David's affiliation with Achish of Gath²⁶ in chapter 27. According to Walter Dietrich, Jacob Wright and others, the framing of the story around the motif of David on the run is secondary here too.²⁷ It may be less obvious than in chapter 23, but it is at least possible to separate a beginning of this episode in 27:2 (“and David rose and went over [...] to Achish, Son of Maoch, king of Gath”) from the notes about flight and persecution in 27:1,4.

With the suspicion that the flight-rescue-pattern might be secondary to a basic layer of the narrative in 1 Sam 17–2 Sam 1, one might naturally surmise that the entire motif of Saul persecuting David, and with it the enmity between both protagonists as a whole, could be secondary as well.

2.2 De mortuis nil nisi bene

The next observation is rather modest. The basic layer of 2 Sam 1 as proposed above, with David receiving the message of Saul's death on Mount Gilboa, does not tell the reader of any preceding confrontational history between the two. This does not necessarily mean much in light of the fact that the son of Jesse finds himself in a situation overshadowed by *de mortuis nil nisi bene*.

However, the *Fortschreibung*, which transforms the ragged messenger from the battlefield into “the young man who was reporting to him” (הַנֶּעֶר הַמְגִיד),²⁸ signifies that the author of this literary layer was well aware of the enmity between David and Saul. Here the messenger's ill-fated attempt to please the

²⁵ See below, p. 173–6, VEIJOLA 1990, and MÜLLER in this book.

²⁶ During the conference, one main aspect of the discussion was the relation of 1 Sam 27* to a basic layer of the “History of David's Rise”. I am thankful to all participants, and I have tried to integrate their questions and comments into this published version of the paper.

²⁷ Cf. DIETRICH 2019: 16 f., with 1 Sam 27:2,3a,6,7(8a); WRIGHT 2014: 36, with 1 Sam 27:2–3a,[5–6],7–11; HEINRICH 2009: 360, with 1 Sam 27:1–6*; see also KIPFER in this book, with 1 Sam 27:2,3a,5–12.

²⁸ The identification of this unhappy person as an “Amalekite” in v. 8 happens on an even later stage of the literary development, cf. BEZZEL 2015: 141.

king by handing over the royal insignia is recounted.²⁹ If the author of this stratum would not have known about some kind of conflict between the deceased and the future king, no doubt both characters would have acted differently in this scene. It is noteworthy that the “young man” is pictured as a counterpart to David himself. What the son of Jesse abstained from in chapters 24 and 26, this person is found guilty of, viz., laying a hand on the anointed one of YHWH (2 Sam 1:14, cf. 1 Sam 24:7,11; 26:9,11,23).

In contrast to this, on the level of the assumed basic layer in 2 Sam 1, things look differently. Here, when informed of the terrible defeat, David reacts with the appropriate mourning rites, as might be expected. Alexander Fischer has pointed out the parallels with 1 Sam 4.³⁰ So it is *de mortuis nil nisi bene* in both cases. The crucial difference is that the basic layer of 2 Sam 1 does not give any hint of a prior conflict between Saul and David. Yet such a conflict is clearly presupposed in the second layer. This observation does not constitute decisive proof, of course. But it is another piece of circumstantial evidence in favour of the hypothesis that a first version of the “History of David’s Rise” was far less conflictual than its final form.

A third observation points back to chapter 18. This is the key passage for everything that follows when it comes to questioning the basic layer of the “History of David’s Rise”. Here we see the relationship between Saul and David at its height. At the same time we see the estrangement between them, or rather Saul’s change of attitude. And we see this happen not once but several times. It has often been noted with surprise that the king offers his rival the chance to become his son-in-law while he was already “eyeing” him (18:9) and “fearing him” (18:5). If one does not want to attribute this incompatible behaviour to Saul’s desolate mental constitution, a closer look at the literary stratification of 1 Sam 18 is necessary.

3 1 Sam 18

3.1 Long version and short version in 1 Sam 18

1 Sam 18 is the key chapter for analysing the “History of David’s Rise” – and it is key for basic methodical discussions as well. The reason for the latter is the

²⁹ This second layer of 2 Sam 1 would have comprised vv. 1aβ.bβ,2αα, b,5–7,9,10,13–16, cf. BEZZEL 2015: 140; see also FISCHER 2004: 32–36, and already BUDDE 1902: 193.

³⁰ Cf. FISCHER 2004: 18–23.

fact that the well-known text-critical crux of 1 Sam 17 reaches over into chapter 18. There is a long version, represented by MT and the so-called Lucianic Greek text. There is also a short version (though containing notable pluses over the MT).³¹ It is represented by the non-Lucianic Greek witnesses, for example, and most prominently, by Codex Vaticanus. As with the situation in chapter 17, there is reason to believe that a reconstruction of how these versions are related may never be a matter of scholarly consensus.

Three models are currently in circulation that attempt to explain the existence of both the long and the short version. 1) LXX^B represents the *lectio brevior*, and should therefore be seen as the older version, whereas the pluses in the MT derive from later additions to the proto-Masoretic text.³² 2) MT represents the *lectio difficilior* and should therefore be preferred over the short version, which is the result of deliberate elisions.³³ And finally, 3) there is the source-critical option, which regards the short version on the one hand and the pluses on the other as representatives of two independent traditions.³⁴ There used to be a fourth hypothesis suggesting that the differences between the long and the short version should be ascribed to either the translators of the Old Greek or to redactional alterations made in the course of the development of the Greek text. This option, however, may be ruled out due to studies in Septuagintal translation technique carried out over the past three decades,³⁵ beginning with Emanuel Tov's contribution to the important volume edited by Barthélemy, Gooding, Lust, and Tov.³⁶

As for the remaining three hypotheses, it can be said that perhaps all arguments in favour or against each of them have been put on the table. The situation may be described best with the famous saying by the Bavarian artist Karl Valentin:

“Es ist schon alles gesagt, nur noch nicht von allen”.³⁷

Nevertheless, it is necessary to clarify my own point of view in this question. I will confine myself to highlighting the two points of contention which to me seem the most important:

³¹ These are to be found in 1 Sam 17:36,40,43.

³² Cf., for example, AULD 2004: 122f., see also AULD and HO 1992: 19f.; VERMEYLEN 2000: 101–6; ADAM 2007: 142; DRIESBACH 2016: 74 (with respect to 18:5 only).

³³ Cf., for example, ROFÉ 2015: 69.

³⁴ Cf., for example, HUTTON 2009: 263.

³⁵ Cf. Tov 1986: 45; Wirth, in his 2016 monograph, does not even address the question but seems to take it for granted that the *Old Greek* would represent a Hebrew *Vorlage* par to par (cf. WIRTH 2016: 24, 233).

³⁶ Cf. BARTHÉLEMY ET AL. 1986.

³⁷ “Everything may already have been said, but not yet by everyone”.

1. The differences between both textual versions are not coincidental but the result of deliberate redactional activity.³⁸
2. In addition, the most crucial point seems to be that the short version, as represented by LXX^B, “in 20,8 und 18,6 f. die nur in MT vorhandenen Verse 18,3 bzw. 18,5 voraussetzt”.³⁹

Therefore, of the three options mentioned above I prefer option 2 *in general*: The long version, as represented by the MT, is prior to the short version as represented by LXX^B. “In general” means that it is nevertheless possible that in the case of some of the minor pluses of the MT, it is LXX^B which preserves the older text.

In chapter 18, the situation is as follows: The beginning in 18:1–5 (along with the end of chapter 17) is lacking in the short text. There is no reference to Jonathan’s love for David, of David’s being taken to Saul’s house (18:2), nor any mention of David being appointed the king’s general (18:5). Furthermore the short text contains no reference to an evil spirit descending upon Saul nor the attack with the spear in 18:10–11,12b; the king’s first marriage scheme including Merab in 18:17–19, and the final reference to the Philistine leaders and David’s continuing success in 18:30. There are, of course, other differences in detail as well.

In the case of 18:1–5, the situation is clearly in favour of an MT priority. According to the line of argument delineated above, the David-Jonathan motif in 18:1,3,4 and the closure of the Goliath story in 18:2,5 must be attributed to different hands.⁴⁰

So along with Erik Aurelius and André Heinrich, I would maintain that the majority of the differences between the long and the short versions are due to deliberate shortening of the former by the *Vorlage* of the latter. This is especially the case when it comes to the end of the David and Goliath story. Here the missing pieces clearly extend over literary seams, in our case over the (secondary) first reference to the David-Jonathan-motif (18:1,3,4), and the closure of the Goliath story in 18:2,5. With the evil spirit, Saul’s attack and the non-marriage of Merab, things might be different. Here, the MT pluses embrace coherent segments, each dealing with one specific topic respectively. Furthermore, they duplicate certain actions of Saul, e.g., his throwing of the spear and his plan to

³⁸ Cf. AULD 2004: 125.

³⁹ “That it presupposes in 20:8 and 18:6 f. the verses 18:3 and 18:5 respectively, which are extant only in MT” (AURELIUS 2002: 48; cf. BARTHÉLEMY 1986: 50). The case of 20:8 referring back to 18:3 seems to me to be more striking than the one of 18:6, *necessarily* referring to 18:3.

⁴⁰ Cf. AURELIUS 2002: 60, n. 68; HEINRICH 2009: 178.

marry David to one of his daughters. In this respect, they bear a certain resemblance to 4Q51's version of 1 Sam 11, with the clearly secondary account of Nahash the Ammonite's eye gouging. In the case of Nahash, Alexander Rofé speaks of a "characteristic midrashic feature: the duplication of biblical events."⁴¹ This means that "a single deed of one hero is multiplied, thus being transformed into a salient aspect of his character."⁴² A similar motivation could explain the potentially secondary addition of 18:10,11,12b and 18:17–19,21b. As in 1 Sam 11, where Nahash becomes "an inveterate 'eye-gouger'",⁴³ so Saul appears to be a notorious spear thrower and schemer of pernicious marriages in the aforementioned pluses.

3.2 The basic layer of 1 Sam 18

For the following considerations of the stratification of chapter 18, however, I will start from the Masoretic text, while at the same time trying not to lose track of the short version.

In 1 Sam 18 there are some signals which point to the successive growth of the text. Besides several changes in Saul's attitude towards David, which could be explained by his evidently bipolar or multipolar character, there is the simple observation that David's promotion, his military success, and the people's response to his personality are recounted at least two, perhaps even three times, in 18:5; 18:13–16 and 18:28–30. Even the short version of LXX^B has David's "going out and coming in" (ἐξεπορεύετο καὶ εἰσεπορεύετο) twice, in 18:13 and 18:16. If one accepts *Wiederaufnahme* as a typical marker of redactional activity, as can best be illustrated in 1Sam 1–3⁴⁴ – and all over 1 Samuel – one may wonder which of the passages under consideration may belong to the oldest version of the story. Things are a little more complicated here than in other instances, however, and one should avoid any mechanical application of the criterion.

In comparing these passages with each other, many significant differences are evident. Perhaps the most important of these is that 18:12–16 emphasises both Saul's fear of his new rival and YHWH's presence with David. More precisely, vv. 12,14 include YHWH's presence with David while vv. 13,15,16 lack this motif. Verses 18:28–29 imply both the motif of rivalry and also YHWH's presence

⁴¹ Rofé 1982: 130.

⁴² Rofé 1998: 66.

⁴³ Rofé 1982: 132.

⁴⁴ Cf. Wonneberger 1992: 227–40; Porzig 2009: 104–21; Bezzel 2015: 185–88.

with David. V. 30, however, does not do so. It simply states that David was more successful than Saul's servants. Read synchronically, the root of Saul's jealousy lies in David's success. From a diachronic perspective this also holds true. The motif of David's success is the root and kernel of the entire development of the enmity between both characters.

In 18:5, as in 18:30, both aspects which are highlighted in vv. 12–16 and 28 f., i.e., the rivalry and YHWH's presence with David, are completely absent. I would therefore opt for 18:5 as the oldest instance of the promotion motif. Furthermore, one may doubt whether the success motif had to be separated from David's promotion – at least in this case. The note about David's going out and successfully coming back in 18:5a α seems oddly placed before his promotion to general. In what capacity would the king have sent him? This is even more evident when verses 3 and 4 about Jonathan and David are identified as secondary. Finally, one *could* become suspicious about the change of verb forms from the narrative tense to the – iterative – *yiqtol* of the relative clause. In light of these factors I would make a case for omitting 18:5a α , or at least the relative clause, and identify the basic layer as 18:5a β .b (perhaps with, rather than without, the preceding “and David went out”). This verse should be understood as the original continuation of 18:2:

ויצא דוד וישמהו שאול על אנשי המלחמה וייטב בעיני כלהעם וגם בעיני עבדי שאול

“And David went out, and Saul set him over the men of war, and it was good in the eyes of the entire people and also in the eyes of the servants of Saul.”

But if the success motif is secondary in 18:5, where does it come from originally? It may be worthwhile to compare the respective references:

18:5: ישכיל שאול אשר ישלחנו שאול – “in everything Saul would send him he would succeed”.

18:14: ויהי דוד לכל־דרכו משכיל ויהוה עמו – “and David was successful in all his way, and YHWH was with him”.

18:15: וירא שאול אשר הוא־משכיל מאד – “and Saul saw that he was very successful”.

18:30: ויהי מדי צאתם שכל דוד מכל עבדי שאול ויקר שמו מאד – “and whenever they [i.e. the Philistines] went out, David had success, more than all the servants of Saul, and his name became very precious”.

In v. 14 David's success is combined with YHWH's presence with him, and in v. 15, it is combined with the motif of Saul's jealousy, both of which are absent from 18:30. If 5a α is indeed secondary, I would give 18:30 preference over the other instances – despite its absence in LXX^B. This formulation also gives a different impression of David's success than 18:14 and 18:15. In 18:30 certain actions of the young hero against the Philistines are crowned with success

(שָׂכַל, *qatal*), whereas in v. 14 and 15 we read the participle מְשַׂכִּיל, related to “all his way” in the first instance. “Having success” or rather “being successful” has become a part of David’s character in general.

Let us turn back to the connection between 18:2.5aβ.b and the continuation of the narrative thread. The reconstruction of the basic layer of v. 5 makes it possible to recognise the *Wiederaufnahme* in 18:16. Again, David’s going out and coming back is recounted, together with the affection that accrues to him as a result. But now, the subject of this love is “all Israel and Judah” (כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיַהוּדָה). As Erik Aurelius states: “alles dazwischen dürfte daher Zusatz sein”.⁴⁵

One may well argue that 18:30 would be the next *Wiederaufnahme* at the end of the chapter, and thus indicate that all the remaining material would be secondary as well. This may be tempting, but if I were to do so, I am sure that I would be criticised for being hypercritical – and rightly so (in this case at least).⁴⁶ The reason is simple: With our reconstruction of v. 5, 18:30 does not appear to be a repetition of 18:5 at all. It is rather understood as a continuation. In v. 5 David wins the hearts of the “servants of Saul”. In v. 30 he proves to be more valiant than they. In v. 5 it is David who “goes out”. In v. 30, the initiative of “going out” is said to be on the side of the enemy.

Thus, I would be quite reluctant to remove the entire wedding story from the basic layer of the chapter. There is little doubt that the entire episode about Saul’s elder daughter Merab in vv. 17–19 is a later addition,⁴⁷ and perhaps even LXX^B represents an earlier textual version in this case.⁴⁸ But what can be questioned is the original purpose of the entire wedding plan in the section about *Michal*. Two noticeable doublings can be found. David is told twice about Saul’s plan to marry him to Michal. The first time he is told directly in v. 21, and then a second time, in secret, by Saul’s servants in v. 23. This second report is quite pointless, following the direct conversation between the king and his future son-in-law. The first dialogue is necessary, however, since it serves as a literary device to introduce the Merab episode and thus belongs with it.

⁴⁵ “Everything in between ought to be additions”. AURELIUS 2002: 67.

⁴⁶ Cf., considering and dismissing the possibility of 18:30 as a *Wiederaufnahme* of 18:16, AURELIUS 2002: 67.

⁴⁷ Cf., for example, MOMMER 2004: 199; WILLI-PLEIN 2004: 150. The case of the latter is a little bit difficult, though. On the one hand, she declares that only Michal would belong to the basic layer (cf. *ibid.*), on the other hand she suggests this basic layer to consist of 18:2,5–9,16–30 (cf. WILLI-PLEIN 2004: 166). This would include Merab.

⁴⁸ See above, p. 167. Jeremy Hutton, however, interprets the duplications, in this case 18:17–18*, as witnesses for another source, HDR₂ (cf. HUTTON 2009: 239–43). But, as Mommer states, even with an exclamation mark: “Die Doppelungen reichen bis in Einzelzüge hinein!” (“The doublings reach even into detailed narrative traits”, MOMMER 2004: 199). This point speaks rather against independent sources.

In the passage about Michal, the dialogue between the king's servants and David takes place twice in a similar fashion, and there is a small but instructive case of a *Wiederaufnahme* to be noted at the end. The phrase להתחתן במלך, “to become the king's son-in-law”, is highlighted in v. 22, v. 23, v. 26, and v. 27aα. Of course this is what the entire passage is about. It should be noted, however, that in the latter case, it corresponds with David's action to adduce the bride price in the form of the required Philistine foreskins. It thus raises the suspicion that this motif is also secondary. The theme itself, in turn, is closely connected with the entire *first* dialogue between Saul's servants and David in v. 23–26 as well as with v. 21, Saul's evil intentions “that the hand of the Philistines be against him” (ותהייבו יד־פלשתים).

Taking all of this into consideration, the core of the marriage scene would comprise the king's initiative in 18:22, David being told of the proposal by the king's servants (who have been in favour of the young man since v. 5aβb at the latest) in 18:26 – and the execution of the plan in 18:27b. Erik Aurelius includes v. 28 in the basic layer, with the remark about Michal's love for David: “Letztere Bemerkung ist zugegebenermaßen nicht notwendig für die Grundschicht (oder für spätere Schichten), aber sie ist erfreulich und insofern auch angebracht, als Michal bald bei Davids Flucht die Loyalität mit dem Vater brechen wird.”⁴⁹ However, v. 28 has the motif of YHWH's presence with David⁵⁰ which, as noted above, was one reason to suspect v. 12,14 of being secondary compared with v. 5*. Furthermore, that the flight of David was already part of the basic layer of the “History of David's Rise” should not be taken for granted. Indeed, it is being questioned by this very study. Thus, I would opt for the theme of Michal's love to be part of the basic layer, as in the words of Aurelius, “not necessary but pleasant”. But I would rather narrow it down to 18:28b. On the other hand, I would argue that 18:20 belongs to this stratum as well. V. 20 corresponds nicely with v. 5* and adds the affection of the princess to the favour of the people and the gentry. As the promotion of the young son of Jesse is “good in the eyes of all the people and also in the eyes of the servants of Saul” (וייטב בעיני כל־העם וגם בעיני עבדי שאול, v. 5), now Michal's love is “right in the eyes” of Saul (וישר הדבר בעיניו, v. 20).

As a result, all these observations and literary-critical operations leave us with a putative basic layer in 18:2.5aβ.b.20.22.26a.27b.28b.(30?). This proposal

⁴⁹ “Admittedly, this last remark is not necessary for the basic layer (nor for any later layer), but it is pleasant and also adequate insofar as Michal is going to break loyalties with her father soon, during David's flight” (AURELIUS 2002: 67).

⁵⁰ *Nota bene*: “In 1Sam dürfte 18,28 der älteste Beleg dieser Formel sein” (“in 1 Sam, 18:28 may be the oldest instance of this formula” (AURELIUS 2002: 68, n. 90).

comes very close to the conclusions reached by André Heinrich and Erik Aurelius.⁵¹ In fact, the differences relate to a few verses or half-verses only and hardly affect the general gist of the story, which, admittedly, is rather short in any case. It describes David's rise at the Saulide court as a direct consequence of the former's military success in the Philistine wars. What is going on is good or right in everybody's eyes: the people's, Saul's servants' (v. 5), the king's (v. 20) – and David's (v. 26). And not to forget, Michal is said to love her husband (v. 20,28b). Having killed the dragon, so to speak, the hero wins the hand of the princess and, as a general, something like half of the kingdom. One is tempted to add: "And everybody lived happily ever after." However, the story has not yet come to an end. Therefore, it matters what one thinks about the original continuation of the story for understanding the entire "History of David's rise". Heinrich finds this continuation in 19:1a,11,12a; *22:1f.,⁵² Aurelius in 19:11,12; 21:2.⁵³ In both cases, Saul suddenly attempts to kill his newly appointed general and son-in-law. One might wonder about the reasons for this sudden change of mind. Of course, the proposed answers are: Because the king is jealous of the young hero's success, because he recognises him as a personal threat, or simply because he is mentally unstable. All these answers are reflected in the narrative itself. But according to our analysis, all these answers are given in secondary segments of the text. From the point of view of our basic layer, there may be more than enough reason to develop the literary motif of a rivalry between the king and the parvenu. But there is no narrative set-up in 1 Sam 18* for Saul's desire to kill David (19:1a or 19:11) – and thus no reason for the latter to flee from the court (19:12).

This fits well with the macro-structural observation made above about the flight-rescue-pattern in the following chapters. The framework appeared to be secondary to some stories, while other stories were well-integrated into it – and a third group seemed to be more recent than the pattern. Taken together with our hypothesis about the basic layer in chapter 18, we will next have to consider the passages which can be read independently of this framework. But if Saul's change of attitude and his schemes seeking David's life are absent from the basic layer of chapter 18, most of the following chapters are ill-suited to be its continuation. This affects 22:1f. most prominently, perhaps, depicting David's flight to the cave of Adullam and his gathering of a band of desperados. In

⁵¹ Heinrich finds a basic layer in 18:5a,20,22–25a,26a,27,28a* (cf. HEINRICH 2009: 243), Aurelius defines it in 18:2a,5,27b,28.

⁵² Cf. HEINRICH 2009: 360.

⁵³ Cf. AURELIUS 2002: 68.

general, this note is seen as a pivotal part of the old or oldest traditions.⁵⁴ These two verses are the basis for the literary reconstruction of an ancient “Erzählkranz vom Freibeuter David”⁵⁵ as well as for a historical reconstruction of David as an ‘Apiru leader.⁵⁶ Verse 22:1, however, is part of the flight-rescue-pattern, as is 22:3. Both begin with **וַיֵּלֶךְ דָּוִד מִשָּׁם** (“and David went from there”). What *might* be possible, though, is to directly continue with 22:2 after 18:30. David’s name came to be revered because of his military success, and as a consequence, another 400 volunteers join his forces. Whether the 2nd millennium ‘Apiru model is the best analogy to describe this process is another question altogether.

With the case of 22:2 left pending, the next story, David in Keila (ch. 23), is clearly independent from the flight-rescue-pattern. This is where we have to look next.

4 The Continuation: 1 Sam 23; 27

Regarding 1 Sam 23 I will be very brief. The classical analysis was made by Timo Veijola in 1984 (reprinted in 1990). Reinhard Müller’s revision of it is to be found in the current volume.⁵⁷ Veijola clearly delineates the division of the chapter. One section involves David alone (vv. 1–5 + 6) and a second part brings Saul to the stage (vv. 7–13).⁵⁸ According to Veijola, the second section is derived from the author of the “History of David’s Rise”, integrating elements of an ancient tradition.⁵⁹ However, I think it is better understood as a *Fortschreibung*. Further, Veijola identifies the phrases that evoke the saviour formula in verses 2b β and 5b and the threshing floors in v. 1b β ⁶⁰ as secondary additions. One might also ask whether the hesitation of David’s men and the second act of divination in vv. 3–4 might be secondary as well. Note, for example, the use of a more elabo-

54 Cf., as a *pars pro toto*, FINKELSTEIN 2013: 134.

55 “narrative cycle about David the privateer” (DIETRICH 1997: 248; and cf. Dietrich’s contribution to this volume, DIETRICH, in this book). “Die Nachricht in 1f, wonach David eine Miliz um sich sammelte, ist unentbehrlich für den Freibeuter-Erzählkranz” (“The note in v. 1f, according to which David gathered a militia, is indispensable for the privateer narrative cycle”, DIETRICH 2015: 611).

56 Cf. FINKELSTEIN 2013: 149.

57 Cf. also, without making literary-critical differentiations in the chapter, NA’AMAN 2010.

58 Cf. VEIJOLA 1990: 29.

59 Cf. VEIJOLA 1990: 34 f.

60 Cf. VEIJOLA 1990: 27 f.

rate *Übergabeformel* כִּי־אֲנִי נֹתֵן אֶת־פְּלִשְׁתִּים בְּיַדְךָ (“for I am giving the Philistines into your hand”).⁶¹

Notwithstanding these analytical details, 23:1–5* provide us with an excellent continuation of chapter 18* as well as of 22:2. Here David is presented in the role of Saul’s general, leading a counterstrike in Keila. *Nota bene*: Read from this perspective, “his men” first and foremost designates those אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה (“men of war”) over whom David is made leader in 18:5. This contingent may possibly, but not necessarily, be supplemented with the outlaws of chapter 22:2. That David becomes a freelance leader of a gang of “Merry Men” only becomes necessary when he is no longer the commander of Saul’s troops – because he had to flee. Thus, the figure of “David the privateer” entirely depends on the flight-rescue-pattern. Historically, the difference between a general of a Levantine Early Iron Age king and a Bronze Age ‘Apiru leader may well have been rather small in substance – but this is another question.

The similarity of David’s act of divination in chapter 23:2abα with the one in 2 Sam 2:2 (and 1 Sam 30:8, 2 Sam 5:19)⁶² has long been noted. This connection should not be underestimated, especially with regard to the first instance. Here, in 2 Sam 2 (or, to be more precise, in 2 Sam 2:1.2aα.3a^{LXX}.4a [without עַל־בֵּית יְהוּדָה], followed directly by 2 Sam 5:6),⁶³ we are dealing with the basic level of a “History of David’s Rise”. In 2 Sam 2, after the death of Saul, David asks YHWH whether he shall go up – and gets the approving answer that he is to go to Hebron. The phrase “to go up” means, according to 2 Sam 1:1bα,⁶⁴ from Ziklag to Hebron.

David’s presence in Ziklag, however, depends on his relation with Achish of Gath, as noted in chapter 27. In the version of this paper presented in Jena during the symposium, I expressed the opinion that 1 Sam 27 should be understood in terms of the flight-rescue-pattern. This would have meant to proceed directly from Keila to Gilboa, with the note about the Philistine deployment in 29:1 located in between. This decision caused considerable difficulty with the posited basic layer of 2 Sam 1, and led to a major discussion among the participants of the symposium. Upon further reflection, I allowed myself to be convinced that indeed at least a kernel of 1 Sam 27:2–6* (such as vv. 2*,3a,5,6) should not be excluded from the basic narrative. The plausible historical back-

⁶¹ This is quite exactly the same result as Müller’s, who ends up with “vv. 1abα, 2abα, 5a*(without וְאֲנָשָׁיו), and 13a* (ohne כְּאֲרֵבַע מְאוֹת אִישׁ אִישׁ)” (MÜLLER in this book). However, I would keep “and his men” in the basic layer in v. 5a just as in v. 13a.

⁶² Cf. VEIJOLA 1990: 10–13.

⁶³ Cf. BEZZEL 2021: 176–9.

⁶⁴ Cf. FISCHER 2004: 14.

ground for an Early Iron Age setting of this story has been pointed out more than once.⁶⁵ This is especially so regarding the role of Gath, which would mirror a pre-Hasaël situation. What holds true archaeologically and historically may hold true redaction-critically as well: “One cannot simply sweep the major polity in the region under the carpet.”⁶⁶

Here I would add the less consequential observation that in the undisputed basic stratum of 27: 2*,3a,5,6, reference is made to “Achish of Gath”. But the identity marker “Philistine” is not applied to him. It is only found in the secondary framework of vv. 1 and 7, which states that, with this move, David entered the “land of the Philistines”. Without overemphasizing the point, it seems that for the first “History of David’s Rise” the Philistines are the enemy against whom David fights. Therefore, when David operates within the sphere of influence of Achish, he is not collaborating with an enemy leader. In other words, a collective Philistine identity is construed first and foremost as an enemy identity.⁶⁷

This implies that David’s operations in the precincts of Gath do not necessarily presuppose a breach of his relations with Saul. Omer Sergi states that: “David is quite independent (as a leader of a warrior band) whenever he acts in the Judean hill country and its foothills (1 Sam 23–26 and 2 Sam 5). But he is at the service of the king of Gath whenever he crosses to the west or the south (cf. 1 Sam 27; 29–30).”⁶⁸ With respect to the analysis of 1 Sam 18 and 23 put forward in this article, I would modify the first part of this statement to clarify that even “as a leader of a warrior band” in the hill country, David may well remain at the service of king Saul – in quite the same way as he is at the service of king⁶⁹ Achish in chapter 27.

From a redaction-critical point of view it may be worth noting that, once again, it is “David and his men” who appear as subject of the plot (27:3; cf. 23:5,13a; 2 Sam 2:2aα,3a; 2 Sam 5:6*LXX). These verse numbers in brackets may give the outline of a first “History of David’s Rise”. It is another question, if anything about David’s actions in chapter 30 could be ascribed to it, too.⁷⁰ But

65 Cf. NA’AMAN 2006: 39 f.; DIETRICH 2012: 93; MAEIR 2012: 44–49; FINKELSTEIN 2013: 138 f.; SERGI 2015: 72 f.; SERGI 2019: 228; MAEIR 2017: 139–41; on Achish see EDENBURG 2011: 36 f.

66 MAEIR 2017: 141.

67 On the question of a Philistine identity cf. MAEIR 2017: 137; MAEIR 2019: 155, speaking of a “city-oriented identity”.

68 SERGI 2019: 228.

69 “Scholars have long observed that Achish, ruler of Gath in the David stories, is called *mlk*, king, in contrast to *sm*, the more common title for a high-ranking Philistine in the Books of Joshua–Samuel” (SERGI, LIPSCHITS and KOCH 2019: 188).

70 Kratz and Heinrich both regard 1 Sam 30 as secondary (cf. KRATZ 2000: 186; HEINRICH 2009: 84 f.), whereas Wright includes its basic stratum into his HDR (WRIGHT 2014: 44 f.).

this question is not of great relevance for this paper, since in ch. 30 the relationship between Saul and David is affected only indirectly. However, the intention of ch. 30 obviously is to make clear that a) while Saul was fighting the Philistines at Gilboa, David was as far away as possible from the events there; and b) David is forced to clean up after Saul because of the latter's disobedience in 1 Sam 15. Note furthermore that the reference back to 1 Sam 30 in 2 Sam 1a β is secondary.⁷¹ This provides another point of argument for the Amalekite thread not belonging to a basic layer of the "History of David's Rise".

What this HDR integrates by redactionally linking traditions about Saul with those about David, are the already existing segments of an enhanced Saul cycle, found in 1 Sam 29:1,11b; 31:1,2*(without the names of the sons),3–5,6^{LXX},8,9a^{LXX},10b–13.⁷²

In the end there is the story of how a young Ephratite guy from Bethlehem builds an astonishing career at the court of the king of Israel. He not only becomes this king's son-in-law, but proves himself to be a warrior-leader in the service of this king, as well as a liege of Achish of Gath. Not surprisingly, after the death of Saul and his sons he is the natural successor to the throne and is made king himself by the "men of Judah" (הַיְהוּדָה, 2 Sam 2:4).⁷³

All in all, this story does not relate anything about a rift between Saul and David, but rather gives the impression of a continuing, amicable relationship.

5 Stages

The literary relationship between Saul and David underwent considerable development. My starting point was the synchronic observation of a development from harmony to estrangement with phases of remorse and reconciliation. *Cum grano salis*, the diachronic analysis of the "History of David's Rise" gives a similar picture. Its first layer appears to present a "harmonic" narrative. Saul discovers David's military talent and fosters him as his mentor. David gets access to the kinship system of the Saulide clan by marriage and thus appears to be the king's natural successor when Saul and his three sons die on Mount Gilboa. He is made king by the "men of Judah" and together with "his men" goes up to Jerusalem. From the connecting verse in 1 Sam 14:52 on, this story continues through 17*;⁷⁴ 18:2,5a β .b,20,22,26a,27b,28b,(30?); (22:2?); 23:1a α ,2a α ,5a; 27:2*,

⁷¹ Cf. FISCHER 2004: 18–23.

⁷² Cf. BEZZEL 2015: 248.

⁷³ Cf. BEZZEL 2021: 176 f.

⁷⁴ For the basic layer of 1 Sam 17 cf. AURELIUS 2002.

3a,5,6; 29:1,11b; 31:1–13*; 2 Sam 1:1α.β,2α².β,3,4,11,12a.β¹β; 2:1. 2α.3α^{LXX}.4a (without על־בֵּית יְהוָה); 5:6. Thus, what I propose to be understood as the oldest continuing narrative thread comes close in some respects to what Walter Dietrich regarded in 2012 as the oldest – independent – traditions about David and the Philistines in this part of the books of Samuel (with some differences in detail).⁷⁵

This relationship is then problematized secondarily. Looking back into chapter 18, we can see the beginning of this tendency in 18:6–9,13; 19:1. The atmosphere is marred by jealousy – and with it, by Saul’s fear of losing control. Initially he demotes his general (if this is indeed a demotion) to a שָׂר אֶלֶף (“captain of a thousand”, 18:13), then he plans to kill him (in 19:1).⁷⁶ Afterwards, with 19:11–14* (agreeing with André Heinrich),⁷⁷ we see David on the run. This is the prime example for all the following flight episodes in their corresponding contexts, which are not always so easy to identify. (21:11–16*; 22:1–4; 23:7–8,13; 27:1,4).

What can be learned from chapter 18 is that matters tend to escalate further when another character becomes involved in this already complicated web of love, hate and jealousy among Saul, David, Michal, and the people of Judah and Israel. This character is God. When Saul realises that YHWH is “with David” – and no longer “with him”, the conflict between both is raised to another level. This is the case with 18:(10–12),14–16,28a,29, and with the preceding episode about the Philistine foreskins, which is dependent upon these last two verses (18:28a,29). This motif of YHWH’s presence with David is closely connected with chapter 16 – and it can also be found in 28:15, in the core of – or, according to Alexander Fischer, in a first reworking of⁷⁸ – the story about Saul’s necromantic session at En Dor.

Accordingly, with this motif the stage is set for Saul’s (and Jonathan’s) insight into this reality and the third phase, remorse. Remorse takes place in the touching scenes of chapter 24 and 26 as well as in 23:16–18. David’s behaviour becomes more and more saint-like,⁷⁹ and even a character like Saul – in his enlightened moments – is able or compelled to realise this.

⁷⁵ Cf. DIETRICH 2012: 87–90, with 1 Sam 17–18*; 23*; 27*; 29:1.2a,11b; 2 Sam 1 (the lament in vv. 19–27); 2 Sam 5 (the battles against the Philistines in vv. 17–21, 22–25) – but cf. differently, DIETRICH in this volume.

⁷⁶ 18:21,23–25,27a may be a later development of this motif. In substance, they belong to the same “stage”.

⁷⁷ Cf. HEINRICH 2009: 360. Heinrich, however, locates this connection on the level of the basic layer.

⁷⁸ Cf. FISCHER 2005: 115–22.

⁷⁹ For the drift towards a sanctification of David, see KRATZ 2000: 187.

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