

Vorwort/Preface

Walter Dietrich's five-volume commentary on the "continuous narrative of the Books of Samuel" has been available in its entirety since 2023, some two decades after the first issue was printed in 2003.¹ Over this period, the project has benefited from ongoing dialogue with scholarly research on the Books of Samuel from all over the world, but also shaped this research. The wider scholarly discussion began in the year 2000, when researchers from a wide range of disciplines - Jewish studies, Christian theology, Islamic studies, history, Byzantine studies, art and music history, musicians, psychology and literary studies - came together in Gerzensee near Bern, to discuss the figure and person of King David. The fruit of this conference can be found in the volume „König David, biblische Schlüsselfigur und europäische Leitgestalt“, published in 2003.² This and the conferences which followed attracted contributors from around the world and approaches from across the scholarly spectrum, reflecting and exploring the tension between synchrony and diachrony, and between literary and historical approaches. At a conference held at the University of Bern in September of 2003, for example, this tension between synchronicity and diachrony in the context of the conflict between Saul and David took centre stage.³ Three years later, in March of 2006, Erik Eynikel and Graeme Auld organized a conference in Nijmegen focusing on story and history through the lens of 'for' and 'against' David.⁴ The following year, Christa Schäfer-Lichtenberger invited participants in the IOSOT conference in Ljubljana to a seminar exploring the connections between the sources and the work of the Deuteronomists.⁵ In the autumn of 2009, it was once again Walter Dietrich who invited Samuel scholars back to Bern to reflect on secondary figures in the Book of Samuel—a topic which was explored further in a workshop which took place at the IOSOT Congress in Helsinki in 2010.⁶ Yet another workshop, this time focused on "Stories of Men and Women in the Books of Samuel", was moderated by Dietrich three years later at the IOSOT congress

1 Walter Dietrich, *Samuel*, 5 Vol. (BKAT), 2003–2023.

2 Hubert Herkommer / Walter Dietrich (eds.), *König David – biblische Schlüsselfigur und europäische Leitgestalt*, Freiburg/Stuttgart 2003.

3 Walter Dietrich (ed.), *David und Saul im Widerstreit, Diachronie und Synchronie im Wettstreit. Beiträge zur Auslegung des ersten Samuelbuches* (OBO 206), 2004.

4 Graeme A. Auld / Erik Eynikel (eds.), *For and Against David. Story and History in the Books of Samuel* (BETL 232), 2010.

5 Christa Schäfer-Lichtenberger (ed.), *Die Samuelbücher und die Deuteronomisten* (BWANT 188), 2010.

6 Walter Dietrich (ed.), *Seitenblicke. Literarische und historische Studien zu Nebenfiguren im zweiten Samuelbuch* (OBO 249), 2011.

in Munich in 2013 and the following year, he chaired the Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense, in which the Books of Samuel were explored from the perspective of story, history and reception history.⁷ At the 2019 IOSOT congress in Aberdeen, it was the treatment of the monarchy in the Books of Samuel which was the object of scholarly attention⁸ and three years later, at the 2022 IOSOT Congress in Zurich, in the last seminar before the commentary was completed, the focus of the seminar was the tension between fiction and fact and history and religion, to which this volume is dedicated.

While the contributions gathered here all explore this tension, they do so from very different perspectives, reflecting as they do the expertise and interests of those working in various ways on the books of Samuel.

Ilse Müllner's contribution deals with the credibility and reliability of the narratives at different levels of communication and establishes criteria for their evaluation. By contrast, Jeremy Hutton's contribution interrogates the origins of the major differences in the manuscript versions of the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text of 1 Sam 17–18. For his part, Yigal Levin attempts to trace the historical realities behind the literary ideology that shaped the stories of the founding of the monarchy under Samuel and Saul. Turning to thematic interests, Hannes Bezzel analyzes the concept of the spirit in the Books of Samuel synchronically and diachronically, identifying connections between the Books of Samuel and the Book of Judges. Casting the canonical net still wider, Cha-Yong Ku analyzes the critical ideas behind the succession story based on observations on the theology of experience in the Book of Qohelet. Operating in a more historical mode, Steven Germany describes the motif of the "uncircumcised Philistines" in the Book of Samuel and locates it in the late monarchy or more likely in post-monarchical times. Rachelle Gilmour examines the reasons for the rejection of Saul (1 Sam 15) and finds in them and this text, evidence of diachronic development. Thomas Naumann examines the literary form of David's relationship with God during his flight from Saul and later from Absalom and attempts to classify it in terms of religious history. Walter Dietrich observes in his contribution that evidence of David's piety can be found in all textual layers of the Books of Samuel and concludes that it may have a historical basis, even if David only became a theologically reflective king in his literary afterlife. David Shepherd examines the notion of bloodguilt in Psalm 51 in light of the Davidic narratives in Samuel, where it is assumed that blood and bloodguilt must be avenged, and finds that the meaning in Psalm 51 is more consistent with its use in Isa 1 and 4, where blood and bloodguilt can be removed by a kind of washing. Mahri Leonard-Fleckman concludes that the figures of Samson and Saul were handed

7 Walter Dietrich (ed.), *The Books of Samuel. Stories, History, Reception History* (BETL 284), 2016.

8 Sara Kipfer / Jeremy M. Hutton, *The Book of Samuel and Its Response to Monarchy* (BWANT 228), 2021.

down together as northern savior figures, based on literary similarities between them, as well as Samson's position in the book of Judges and the fact that Saul crosses the boundaries of Judges and Samuel. At the same time, she considers how the creation and preservation of texts relate to the emergence of history and tradition. Finally, Johannes Klein explores the question of whether the future can still be open if it has been communicated beforehand. In doing so, he also considers whether predictions of the future require a concept of determinacy and to what extent the concept of free will is compatible with such predictions.

In offering this volume as a further contribution to the scholarly discussion of the books of Samuel, the editors would like to take this opportunity to thank Kohlhammer and the editors of the BWANT series for making this publication possible. Of course, special thanks is owed to the contributors for their efforts in preparing, presenting, reviewing and revising their contributions—all undertaken in the spirit of ongoing dialogue fostered over more than two decades by Walter Dietrich, who has always been hard at work in the background and very often in the foreground.

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