

2. Saul, the Dead Samuel, and the Woman (1 Samuel 28:3–25)

The narrative in 1 Sam 28:3–25 depicts King Saul who practices necromancy. When the Philistines encamp at Shunem to fight against Israel, Saul seeks to inquire of YHWH but fails to receive YHWH's answer (vv. 4–6). In this situation, Saul comes to a woman in Endor and asks her to bring up the dead Samuel (vv. 8, 12), who had anointed him ruler over Israel as YHWH's command (1 Sam 9:16; 10:1) and had conveyed YHWH's words to him (15:1, 16). The dead Samuel, who appears through the necromancy, mentions the disobedience of Saul who had not annihilated the Amalekites (15:9), and foretells David's ascent, the deaths of Saul and his sons, and the Philistines' victory (28:15–19).

Although necromancy is expressed as one of abhorrent practices of the Canaanites and is strongly banned in Deut 18:9–14,¹ it is seemingly described in 1 Sam 28:3–25 as an effective method to convey YHWH's message.² Moreover, it is Samuel, YHWH's prophet, who appears in the necromancy.³

What is the purpose of this odd narrative? Scholars have suggested that this narrative represents Saul's fall and David's rise,⁴ the fulfillment of the prophecy,⁵ the existence of cults of the dead,⁶ and the forbidden cultic practices as

¹ P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *1 Samuel*, AB 8 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 268, 421; A. Graeme Auld, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 327; Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, WBC 10 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 271.

² Mordechai Cogan, "The Road to En-Dor," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, ed. David P. Wright et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 326.

³ For the difference between the rabbinic and Christian exegesis regarding the dead Samuel's appearance in the necromancy, see K. A. D. Smelik, "The Witch of Endor: I Samuel 28 in Rabbinic and Christian Exegesis till 800 A.D.," *VC* 33 (1977): 160–79. See also Walter Dietrich, *Samuel (1Sam 27,1–28,25)*, BKAT VIII/3.1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2016), 75–80.

⁴ Kenneth M. Craig, Jr., "Rhetorical Aspects of Questions Answered with Silence in 1 Samuel 14:37 and 28:6," *CBQ* 56 (1994): 221–39; Bill T. Arnold, "Necromancy and Cleromancy in 1 and 2 Samuel," *CBQ* 66 (2004): 199–213.

⁵ W. A. M. Beuken, "1 Samuel 28: The Prophet as 'Hammer of Witches,'" *JSOT* 6 (1978): 3–17; Fabrizio Foresti, *The Rejection of Saul in the Perspective of the Deuteronomistic School: A Study of 1 Sm 15 and Related Texts* (Roma: Teresianum, 1984), 131–36.

⁶ Theodore J. Lewis (*Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, HSM 39 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989], 104–17) suggests this narrative as evidence for the existence of cults of the dead in the preexilic period, while Brian B. Schmidt (*Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition*, FAT 11 [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1994], 201–20) explains that this narrative was interpolated in the postexilic period.

the cause of the exile.⁷ In particular, Christophe L. Nihan throws an interesting light on the narrative; this narrative represents that the Torah, which replaced the prophecy, was the only method to know the will of God while ancestor worship and divination, opposing Yahwistic monotheism, were banned in the post-exilic period.⁸ These studies enhance our understanding of the odd narrative, but tend to overlook similarities between its characters, which give us a clue with respect to its messages and purposes.

I will observe similar actions between Saul and the woman, and between the woman and Samuel, which have not been fully discussed. The observations will help in uncovering a main message of the narrative and in revealing syncretism implied in the narrative. These results will be considered to discuss the date of the narrative and to detect its rhetorical purposes. As a result, this chapter will demonstrate what the Deuteronomists sought to convey to the postexilic community through the narrative.

2.1 *Literary Analysis*

By focusing on the main characters, I will explore the narrative in the following four subsections. First, it is essential to analyze the literary structure of this narrative in order to determine a main message. Second, by examining related passages in the book of Samuel, I will detect condemnations of Saul implied in the narrative. Third, I will survey superiority (or inferiority) and similarities between the dead Samuel and the woman, which indicate the criticism of syncretistic Yahwism. Finally, it will be suggested that the narrative highlights the contrast between the fall of Saul and the succession of David as the true king.

2.1.1 The Structure of the Narrative

After the background information,⁹ v. 8a depicts Saul's arrival: At night (*לִילָה*), Saul and his servants came to a woman in Endor (*וַיַּבְאָז*). Saul's arrival at night

⁷ Matthew Michael, “The Prophet, the Witch and the Ghost: Understanding the Parody of Saul as a ‘Prophet’ and the Purpose of Endor in the Deuteronomistic History,” *JSOT* 38.3 (2014): 315–46.

⁸ Christophe L. Nihan, “1 Samuel 28 and the Condemnation of Necromancy in Persian Yehud,” in *Magic in the Biblical World*, ed. T. Klutz, JSNTSup 245 (London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 23–54.

⁹ The background information regarding Saul's necromancy is narrated in vv. 3a–7b: Samuel's death, Saul who had expelled necromancers, Saul's fear of the Philistines, and

corresponds to v. 25b that describes Saul's departure from her at night (וַיָּלֹכְךָ בְּלִילָה), and Saul's arrival and departure form both the beginning and end of the narrative.¹⁰

In vv. 8b–14b Saul asks the woman to practice necromancy, but the woman refuses his request because she knows that Saul has cut off the necromancers (אַבּוֹת and יְדֻעַּנִים).¹¹ However, through Saul's persuasion, she asks him a question that shows her acceptance of Saul's request (v. 11a) : "Whom shall I bring up for you?" (אַתְּ-מִי אַעֲלָה-לְךָ). This part corresponds to vv. 20a–25a: Saul, falling to the ground after Samuel's words, at first rejects her request to eat some food but finally accepts it. Saul is persuaded by the woman, as she was persuaded by Saul. Consequently, vv. 8b–14b and vv. 20a–25a, in changing the subject to the object and the object to the subject, are structured in sequential order as follows: request, rejection, and acceptance.

At the center of the structure lie vv. 15a–19b in which Samuel announces the end of Saul who disobeyed YHWH.¹² The central message is shown both in v. 18aα, "you did not obey YHWH's voice" and in the paralleled v. 19aβ, "tomorrow you and your sons will be with me." In other words, as the result of Saul's disobedience (18aα) , both the defeat of Israel and the fall of Saul's royal family are announced by the dead prophet.¹³

This narrative is formed in a chiastic structure:

YHWH's silence to Saul. Cf. Peter Mommer, *Samuel: Geschichte und Überlieferung*, WMANT 65 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 163; Dietrich, *Samuel* (1Sam 27,1–28,25), 39.

¹⁰ Uriel Simon, "A Balanced Story: The Stern Prophet and the Kind Witch," *Proof* 8 (1988): 160.

¹¹ As the meaning of the words אַבּוֹת and יְדֻעַּנִים (singular), and אַבּוֹת and יְדֻעַּנִים (plural), various possibilities have been suggested. According to Harry A. Hoffner, Jr. ("Second Millennium Antecedents to the Hebrew 'ÔB,'" *JBL* 86 [1967]: 401), אַבּוֹת is "a ritual hole in the ground dug to give infernal deities or spirits of the deceased access to the upper world for a brief interval of time," and אַבּוֹת are the spirits. According to J. Lust ("On Wizards and Prophets," in *Studies on Prophecy: A Collection of Twelve Papers*, ed. G. W. Anderson et al., VTSup 26 [Leiden: Brill, 1974], 142), אַבּוֹת and יְדֻעַּנִים are "the ghosts of the deceased fathers and the instruments representing them." Joseph Blenkinsopp ("Deuteronomy and the Politics of Post-Mortem Existence," *VT* 45 [1995]: 13–14) construes יְדֻעַּנִים and אַבּוֹת as a ghost or spirit, and אַבּוֹת and יְדֻעַּנִים as "objects representing the spirits of the ancestral dead." Lewis (*The Cults of the Dead*, 114) suggests that the term אַבּוֹת refers to female necromancers, and that the term יְדֻעַּנִים refers to male necromancers. McCarter (*1 Samuel*, 420) translates אַבּוֹת and יְדֻעַּנִים as "necromancers and mediums," respectively. Alexander Heidel (*The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963], 200–203) regards אַבּוֹת and יְדֻעַּנִים as spirits, and אַבּוֹת and יְדֻעַּנִים as necromancers. See also Mommer, *Samuel*, 164, 166, nn. 142, 144, 150, 153; Rainer Kessler, *Samuel: Priester und Richter, Königsmacher und Prophet*, Biblische Gestalten 18 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2007), 194–95; Dietrich, *Samuel* (1Sam 27,1–28,25), 34, 54, 58–60.

¹² Cf. Dietrich, *Samuel* (1Sam 27,1–28,25), 39.

¹³ Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *Die Samuelbücher*, ATD 10 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 178–79.

3a–7b	The background information
8a	A Saul’s arrival to the woman at night
8b–14b	B The woman’s acceptance of Saul’s request
15a–19b	X The end of Saul who disobeyed YHWH’s voice
18a α	Saul who disobeyed the voice of YHWH
19a β	The fall of Saul’s royal family
20a–25a	B’ Saul’s acceptance of the woman’s request
25b	A’ Saul’s departure from the woman

This chiastic and concentric structure¹⁴ sharpens the result of disobedience to YHWH: death or disaster. In the center of the structure, Saul’s disobedience is vigorously condemned, and thereby, obedience to YHWH is accentuated.

2.1.2 Implied Condemnations of Saul

While the denunciation of Saul’s disobedience is clearly shown in the center of the structure, other condemnations of Saul are implied in this narrative. To identify the condemnations, we need to examine similarities between the narrative and its related passages in 1 Samuel, as in the following.

Saul seems to be likened to a Philistine, the archenemy of Israel, and to Dagon, the Philistine god. The Philistines, who captured the Ark of God from Israel, experience disasters (1 Sam 5); as a consequence, they call for (מִקְרָאָו) the diviners and ask them, “What shall we do?” (מַה־גַּעֲשָׂה), in 1 Sam 6:2. These actions show remarkable similarity to those of Saul who “called on” (מִקְרָאָה) Samuel and asked him “what to do” (מַה אֲשַׁעַ) in 1 Sam 28:15. The expression “to fall on the ground” (נִפְלֵא רַצְחָן) in 1 Sam 28:20 appears in 1 Sam 5:3, 4; and 17:49. In 1 Sam

¹⁴ Chiasmus is a rhetorical device to lead readers/listeners to focus on the center of a unit, where a climax or a central message is placed. For examples representing the central climax in the chiasmus, see, e.g., Nils W. Lund, “The Presence of Chiasmus in the Old Testament,” *AJSL* 46 (1929–30): 104–26; *idem*, “Chiasmus in the Psalms,” *AJSL* 49 (1932–33): 281–312; William H. Shea, “Chiasmus and the Structure of David’s Lament,” *JBL* 105 (1986): 13–25. Cf. Elie Assis, “Chiasmus in Biblical Narrative: Rhetoric of Characterization,” *Proof* 22 (2002): 273–304.

5 Dagon falls on his face on the ground (נִפְלֵל לְפָנָיו אֶרְצָה) due to the presence of the Ark of God.¹⁵ In 17:49 Goliath is stricken with a stone from David's slingshot and falls, on his face, to the ground (וַיַּפְלֵל עַל-פָּנָיו אֶרְצָה). In 1 Sam 5 and 17 it is YHWH Himself who throws down Dagon, the Philistine god, and it is David, YHWH's loyal soldier,¹⁶ who strikes down Goliath, the Philistine soldier. Given these stories in 1 Sam 5 and 17, the fact that Saul falls on the ground in 1 Sam 28, just as Dagon and Goliath did, can be interpreted as YHWH's punishment.¹⁷

The condemnation of Saul is also found in responses from the woman and from the dead Samuel. The woman and Samuel are placed in a difficult position by Saul's request for necromancy. In the case of the woman, because practicing necromancy threatens her life, she asks Saul, "Why are you laying a snare for my life to bring about my death?" (1 Sam 28:9). In the case of Samuel, although the woman summoned the dead Samuel (v. 11), Samuel says to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" (v. 15).¹⁸ In addition, Samuel's query, "Why do you ask me?" in v. 16 is viewed as a complaint against Saul's request. Both the woman and Samuel use the word "why" (לְמַה)¹⁹ to respond to Saul. This expression is regarded as a complaint about the unreasonable demand.²⁰ In fact, in 1 Samuel, the word "why" is employed to describe the following three scenes: (1) Samuel's condemnation of Saul who disobeyed YHWH (15:19); (2) Jonathan's protest against Saul who was planning to kill David (19:5; 20:32); and (3) David's remonstrance to Saul who pursued him (24:10[9]; 26:18). In particular, Saul's behaviors in 24:10 and 26:18 are construed as condemnations of the attempts to kill David without having a convincing reason for doing so. Consequently, in this narrative, it seems that the woman and Samuel are condemners, while Saul is the condemned.

¹⁵ Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 329.

¹⁶ 1 Sam 17:45–47.

¹⁷ According to Anne Marie Kitz ("The Hebrew Terminology of Lot Casting and Its Ancient Near Eastern Context," *CBQ* 62 [2000]: 212–14), the verb נִפְלֵל in qal or hiphil is used to express lot casting in the Hebrew Bible (1 Chr 24:31; 25:8; 26:13, 14b; Neh 10:35; 11:1; Ps 22:19; Prov 1:14; Isa 34:17). According to Kitz, that a lot (גּוֹלֵל) falls (נִפְלֵל) to the ground means "the decision of Yahweh" (מְשֻׁפֵּט יְהָוָה). If Kitz's opinion is correct, it seems justifiable to assume that 'Saul's falling to the ground after necromancy' means the decision of YHWH who sentences him to death.

¹⁸ Klein (*I Samuel*, 272) and Auld (*I & II Samuel*, 328) describe Samuel's words in v. 15 as Samuel's complaint, and Lewis (*Cults of the Dead*, 116) interprets those as Samuel's condemnation.

¹⁹ Craig ("Rhetorical Aspect of Questions Answered with Silence," 235) explains that Saul's questions with "what" (מה, vv. 13–15) contrast with the questions with "why" spoken by the woman and Samuel (vv. 9, 16). According to Craig, the final question of Samuel (v. 16) is the rhetorical question to disambiguate Saul's fate.

²⁰ Simon ("The Stern Prophet and the Kind Witch," 160–61) also observes that the questions with "why" mean their accusations against Saul, and suggests that the woman's accusations emanate from "fear" but Samuel's accusations from "an anger."

In the light of the understanding of the word “why,” Saul’s disguise (v. 8)²¹ is blamed by the woman in 1 Sam 28:12: “Why have you deceived me?” (למה רמיתני). The woman’s complaint to Saul (v. 12) is a repetition of Saul’s complaint to Michal in 1 Sam 19:17 (למה בכہ רמיתני).²² In vv. 11–13 Michal lays the teraphim²³ on the bed to deceive Saul, who plans to kill David. Saul who was deceived by Michal in 1 Sam 19 deceives the woman in 1 Sam 28. According to W. Randall Garr,²⁴ after Saul asked men to bring him up on his bed, he came to take the teraphim, which are probably associated with necromantic practices.²⁵ If Garr’s opinion is plausible, Saul, who was deceived by Michal, practiced necromancy to find David and also deceived the woman in order to consult with her,

²¹ The term **התחפש** (“to disguise oneself”) is also used in 1 Kgs 22:30 (Ahab’s disguise). According to Auld (*I & II Samuel*, 326–27), Ahab compared with Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:3) is “another of the literary models for Saul.” These disguises seem to imply both the death on a battlefield (1 Sam 31:6; 1 Kgs 22:35) and the condemnation of disobedience to YHWH. Josiah also disguised himself in the battle and died because he did not listen to the words of Neco from God (2 Chr 35:22). As for disguises, see Richard Coggins, “On Kings and Disguises,” *JSOT* 50 (1991): 55–62. See also Dietrich, *Samuel* (1Sam 27,1–28,25), 60–62.

²² Pamela Tamarkin Reis, “Eating the Blood: Saul and the Witch of Endor,” *JSOT* 73 (1997): 15.

²³ The term “teraphim” appears in Gen 31:19, 34, 35; Judg 17:5; 18:14, 17, 18, 20; 1 Sam 15:23; 19:13, 16; 2 Kgs 23:24; Ezek 21:26[21]; Hos 3:4; and Zech 10:2. Both Karel van der Toorn (“The Nature of the Biblical Teraphim in the Light of the Cuneiform Evidence,” *CBQ* 52 [1990]: 203–22; *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 221, 224) and Theodore J. Lewis (“Teraphim,” *DDD*: 1598–99) suggest that the teraphim were ancestor figurines used in necromancy, on the following grounds. (1) The word **אלדים** refers to the dead, in view of synonyms *ilānu* (“gods”) and *etēmmū* (“spirits of the dead”) in the Nuzi texts, and of hendiads *ilū* (“gods”) and *mētū* (“the dead”) in the Emar texts. (2) The term is expressed as **תרפים** and **אלדים** (Gen 31:30, 32; Judg 18:24). (3) The term occurs with **תרפים** and **אבות** in 2 Kgs 23:24. See also Anne E. Draffkorn, “*Ilāni/Elōhim*,” *JBL* 76 (1957): 222; Charles A. Kennedy, “Cult of the Dead,” *ABD* 2: 106; Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 25C (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 184–87; H. Rouillard and J. Tropper, “*TRPYM*, rituels de guérison et culte des ancêtres d’après 1 Samuel XIX 11–17 et les textes parallèles d’Assur et de Nuzi,” *VT* 37 (1987): 340–61; Benjamin D. Cox and Susan Ackerman, “Micah’s Teraphim,” *JHebS* 12 (2012): 1–37; Johannes C. de Moor, “Standing Stones and Ancestor Worship,” *UF* 27 (1995): 4. Cf. Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., “Hittite *Tarpīš* and Hebrew *Terāphîm*,” *JNES* 27 (1968): 61–68; Shawn W. Flynn, “The Teraphim in Light of Mesopotamian and Egyptian Evidence,” *CBQ* 74 (2012): 703–4, 708–9.

²⁴ According to W. Randall Garr (“Necromancy and 1 Samuel 19:22,” in *Sacred History, Sacred Literature: Essays on Ancient Israel, the Bible, and Religion in Honor of R. E. Friedman on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Shawna Dolansky [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008], 23–31), in 1 Sam 19:22, Saul who possessed the teraphim goes to the cistern, where the dead might be buried, “asks” (לְשָׁוֹן) and is “spoken” (אָמַר). Garr suggests that these actions indicate Saul’s necromancy. Reis (“Eating the Blood,” 15–16) also presents similarities between 1 Sam 28 and 19:11–17, and writes, “The allusion to teraphim in relation to Saul may also be a portent of the forbidden ancestor worship to come.”

²⁵ Garr, “Necromancy,” 24, n. 4. See above n. 23.

through necromancy, about the war against the Philistines. Saul, who is either the deceived or the deceiver, is described as a person who practices necromancy.

In sum, there are various allusions to the negative views against Saul in 1 Sam 28:3–25, and these allusions are found in the scenes where Saul practices the necromancy. In other words, the practice of the necromancy is tied to the condemnation of Saul. This leads us to assume that the necromancy is also a target of criticism in this narrative (for the details, see 2.3.2).²⁶

2.1.3 Samuel and the Woman

In 1 Sam 28, since Saul bows down to Samuel (v. 14), who foretells Saul's end (v. 19), Samuel is described as being superior to Saul. Since the woman is the character who must be protected by Saul (v. 10), Saul has authority over her. Considering these relationships between Samuel, Saul, and the woman, the dead Samuel should be superior to the woman. However, a close look at the narrative reveals the woman's superiority to the dead Samuel and even similarities between the woman and Samuel.

We can find descriptions indicating the woman's superiority to the dead Samuel. It is the woman who calls up the dead Samuel, the prophet of YHWH. The woman is therefore recognized as the character who possesses the power and the authority to summon him from his rest in the underworld.²⁷

In v. 22 the woman asks Saul, who has fallen to the ground because of his fear of Samuel's words, to obey her voice (*בְּקוֹל שְׁפָחָתךְ*).²⁸ In v. 23 Saul eventually comes to obey both the woman's and his servants' voices (*בְּשָׁמָע לְקָלָם*),²⁹ and in v. 25, he eats some food prepared by the woman. This obedience is a remarkable contrast to Saul's disobedience to YHWH (1 Sam 15:19),³⁰ which is condemned again (*בְּקוֹל יְהוָה*, 1 Sam 15:19) in 1 Sam 28:18.³¹ Saul considers the voice either of the woman or of the people³² as being

²⁶ See below n. 73. Cf. Saul Zalewski, "The Purpose of the Story of the Death of Saul in 1 Chronicles X," *VT* 39 (1989): 466–67; Esther J. Hamori, "The Prophet and the Necromancer: Women's Divination for Kings," *JBL* 132 (2013): 827–43; *idem*, *Women's Divination in Biblical Literature: Prophecy, Necromancy, and Other Arts of Knowledge*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 103–30. See also Mommer, *Samuel*, 167.

²⁷ Hamori, "The Prophet and the Necromancer," 834; Dietrich, *Samuel* (1Sam 27,1–28,25), 45.

²⁸ Two reasons for Saul's fall are Samuel's words (*דְּבָרִי שְׁמָאוֹל*) and no strength (*כַּח לְאַדְהָה*) because of fasting (v. 20). The woman persuades Saul to listen to her voice (*בְּקוֹל שְׁפָחָתךְ*) and to eat food in order to have strength (*כַּח כְּחִי בְּךָ*) when Saul goes on his way (v. 22).

²⁹ Nihan, "1 Samuel 28," 37.

³⁰ Reis, "Eating the Blood," 15; Klein, *1 Samuel*, 273; Michael, "The Prophet, the Witch and the Ghost," 326; Nihan, "1 Samuel 28," 37.

³¹ See Dietrich, *Samuel* (1Sam 27,1–28,25), 74.

³² Dawn Maria Sellars, "An Obedient Servant? The Reign of King Saul (1 Samuel 13–15) Re-assessed," *JSOT* 35.3 (2011): 317–38; Hamori, "The Prophet and the Necromancer," 835.

more important than that of YHWH or of Samuel, the prophet of YHWH. This point indicates not only the reason for the condemnation but also the woman's strong influence on Saul.

In the scene describing the woman's preparation of food, the woman is described as the character who has good will toward Saul.³³ The woman asks Saul to eat some food so that he will "have the strength" to go on his way (v. 22). In contrast, the dead Samuel foretells Saul's death, which causes Saul to fall (נִפְלֵא)³⁴ to the ground; while it is the dead Samuel who strikes terror in Saul's heart and provokes him to fall; it is the woman that prepares the food to provide the strength needed for him to rise from the ground and walk.³⁵

On the other hand, similarities between the woman and Samuel are revealed. A similar role of accuser is found in the characters of both the woman and the dead Samuel. As noted earlier, "why" in vv. 9 and 15 indicates the complaint against Saul; there is some similarity between the two concerning the condemnation of Saul.

Further, the similar role between the woman and the dead Samuel is observed in Saul's eating. The account of Saul's eating is also depicted in 1 Sam 9,³⁶ where Samuel meets Saul for the first time. Samuel is informed by YHWH that Saul will rule over the people (v. 17), and he invites Saul to eat with him. In the following chapter (1 Sam 10), Saul is anointed and approved as a ruler (v. 1). Saul's eating with Samuel (9:24) is situated between the scenes of Saul's hearing about the future, that is, about his enthronement (9:20), and of Saul's anointment (10:1). Saul's eating in 28:25 also occurs between his hearing about the future regarding his death (28:19) and the fulfillment of the foretold death (31:4–5). Considering the similarity in the plot between the two narratives, it seems

³³ Simon ("The Stern Prophet and the Kind Witch," 159–71) points out the abundant kindness of the woman compared with Samuel's hard-heartedness. According to Robert Couffignal ("Le Roi, le Prophète et la nécromancienne: Interprétation du chapitre 28 du Premier Livre de Samuel," ZAW 121 [2009]: 24–25), the woman is similar to a mother who devotedly takes care of her son. Auld (*I & II Samuel*, 329) explains that, like Abigail, the woman who provides food for Saul is the character offering hospitality. For the positive images of the woman in the story, see also Hertzberg, *Die Samuelbücher*, 179; Hamori, *Women's Divination*, 110–30; Dietrich, *Samuel (1Sam 27,1–28,25)*, 45, 72–73. Cf. Reis, "Eating the Blood," 3–23.

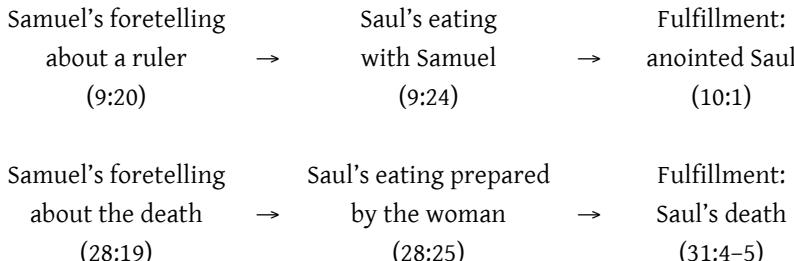
³⁴ In v. 20 "to fall" (נִפְלֵא), which is used nine times in 1 Samuel as the meaning of "to die," is employed; the verses directly related with Saul's death are 31:1, 4, 5, and 8. The person who fell and died is indicated in parentheses as follows: 1 Sam 4:10 (Israel), 18 (Eli); 14:13 (the Philistines); 17:49 (Goliath), 52 (the Philistines); 31:1 (Israel), 4 (Saul), 5 (Saul's armor bearer), 8 (Saul and his three sons).

³⁵ Simon, "The Stern Prophet and the Kind Witch," 164–65.

³⁶ Michael ("The Prophet, the Witch and the Ghost," 333–34), pointing out the similarity between the narratives in 1 Sam 9 and 28, explains that the eating in 1 Sam 28 is a parody of the story in 1 Sam 9.

that Samuel's preparation of food for Saul, who is to be crowned as king, is deliberately replaced by the woman's preparation of food for Saul, who is now going to die and be dethroned.³⁷ Therefore, the woman's role as necromancer parallels Samuel's role as prophet; the woman is described as a character who imitates Samuel's past action.

The similarity in the plot is shown as follows:



The similarity between the woman and the dead Samuel is also found in dialogues. While the dialogues (vv. 7-14) are connected as a chain (Saul-servants, servants-Saul, Saul-the woman, the woman-Saul),³⁸ the chain is disconnected from the beginning of the dialogue between the dead Samuel and Saul (vv. 15-19).³⁹ In v. 14b Saul's act of bowing to the ground (**הַרְחָא**) is expressed, and in v. 15, Samuel's question to Saul opens the dialogue between them. The chain of the dialogue between the woman and Saul (vv. 21-23) is also disconnected from the preceding dialogue.⁴⁰ In v. 21 the woman's request to Saul, who has fallen to the ground (**הַרְחָא**), begins. Thus, the first speaker of these two scenes is Samuel and the woman, respectively, instead of Saul, whose body is facing toward or is on the ground.⁴¹ Samuel and the woman are deemed to share the role, since they

³⁷ Saul gets up (**וַיַּעֲשֶׂה**) after the eating in both scenes (9:26; 28:25). Samuel who let Saul get up (9:26) became the character to cause Saul to fall to the ground (28:20), and the woman is described as the character to help Saul get up (28:23, 25), just as the prophet.

³⁸ In each dialogue (vv. 7-14), two characters appear as follows (Sm=Samuel; Sl=Saul; Sv=servants; W=the woman): Sl→Sv (v. 7a), Sv→Sl (v. 7b), Sl→W (v. 8b), W→Sl (v. 9), Sl→W (v. 10b), W→Sl (v. 11a), Sl→W (v. 11b), W→Sl (v. 12b), the king (Sl)→W (v. 13a), W→Sl (v. 13b), Sl→W (v. 14aα), W→Sl (v. 14aβ).

³⁹ In the dialogue (vv. 15-19), Samuel and Saul appear as follows: Sm→Sl (v. 15a), Sl→Sm (v. 15b), Sm→Sl (vv. 16-19).

⁴⁰ In the dialogue (vv. 21-23), the woman and Saul appear as follows: W→Sl (vv. 21-22), Sl→W (v. 23aα).

⁴¹ See Dietrich, *Samuel* (1Sam 27,1-28,25), 40.

commonly lead their dialogues with Saul, who, without a word, lay prone on the ground.

What is the purpose of describing superiority (or inferiority) and similarities between Samuel and the woman? It can be suggested that the purpose is to make the border between them blurred. The blurred border enables readers/listeners to imagine that Samuel and the woman are united and that the statement of the dead Samuel is spoken by the woman; it is difficult to distinguish between them.⁴² In view of the appearance of Samuel, YHWH's prophet, this unity seems to represent syncretism between necromancy and Yahwism.⁴³

2.1.4 David, the True King

If the assumption of such a unity between the woman and Samuel is correct, the following question arises: In v. 14, to whom does Saul bow with his face to the ground? Both Samuel and the woman can be recognized as the answer. Yet, we should consider the word **אלֹהִים** (v. 13)⁴⁴ as well. According to Nicolas Wyatt, Isa 14 indicates a cult of dead kings, who were understood to be divine, and Saul's necromancy probably “reflects a royal necromantic tradition, proscribed by the Deuteronomists, in which dead kings advised the living.”⁴⁵ For Wyatt, it is dead

⁴² According to van der Toorn (“Echoes of Judaean Necromancy,” 209), Isa 28:10 depicts that the necromancer reproduces “the murmured messages of the dead resembled the sounds made by birds.” Lust (“On Wizards and Prophets,” 141–42, n. 7) explains that the woman hears the words of the ghost in her vision and interprets for Saul.

⁴³ K. Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, AOAT 219 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986), 256; Reis, “Eating the Blood,” 6, n. 11; Lust, “On Wizards and Prophets,” 140; Michael, “The Prophet, the Witch and the Ghost,” 346. In fact, YHWH's will (vv. 17–19) is repeated through necromancy. In addition, Saul swears to the woman by the name of YHWH to relieve her anxiety (v. 10), and then the practice of necromancy begins (v. 11).

⁴⁴ According to Lewis (*Cults of the Dead*, 49–51, 115; “The Ancestral Estate (עַקְלַת אֲלֹהִים) in 2 Samuel 14:16,” *JBL* 110 [1991]: 602), the word **אלֹהִים** refers to the deceased; **אלֹהִים** and **מתים** appear in parallelism in Isa 8:19–20a, and the phrase “the sacrifices of their gods” (ובחן אלֹהִיהם) in Num 25:2 is translated as “sacrifices to the dead” (ובחן מותים) in Ps 106:28. See above n. 23. See also Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 131, 167; van der Toorn, “The Nature of the Biblical Teraphim,” 211; *idem*, *Family Religion*, 221–22; Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree*, 150–51; Elizabeth M. Bloch-Smith, “The Cult of the Dead in Judah: Interpreting the Material Remains,” *JBL* 111 (1992): 220; Blenkinsopp, “Deuteronomy,” 2, n. 5; Arnold, “Necromancy,” 202–3; Johannes C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism*, BETL 91 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 330. Cf. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 217; Dietrich, *Samuel* (1Sam 27,1–28,25), 67–68.

⁴⁵ Nicolas Wyatt, “Royal Religion in Ancient Judah,” in *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah*, ed. Francesca Stavrakopoulou and John Barton (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 73–75.