AMSTERDAMSE CAHIERS
39

1 & 2 SAMUEL

Het zijn misschien wel de mooiste verhalen in de Bijbel, die over de koningen Saul en David, over de profeet Samuel en over Jonatan, de koningszoon (van Saul) en boezemvriend van David. En dan zijn er ook nog intrigerende bijrollen voor God en voor enkele vrouwen. Alleen al dat laatste roept vanuit theologisch en gender perspectief veel vragen op. Hoe zit dat precies met die verhouding tussen God, zijn profeten en de door God uitgekozen koningen? En wat moeten we denken van de manier waarop er met vrouwen wordt omgegaan? En ook de verhoudingen tussen mannen onderling geeft te denken. Dit alles en nog veel meer wordt in deze bundel artikelen grondig besproken. Naast een degelijk overzicht van het recente wetenschappelijke onderzoek gaat het over goed gebruik en misbruik van macht, goede en foute relaties en over levende en dode profeten.

Deze bundel bevat bijdragen van Joep Dubbink, Mirjam Elbers, Stephen Germany, Jos Hoogstede, Hedda Klip & Jeanet van 't Licht, Nico Riemersma, Klaas Smelik, Klaas Spronk, Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman, Janneke Stegeman en Willien van Wieringen

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1 & 2 SAMUEL

onder redactie van

Joep Dubbink & Klaas Spronk

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ABSTRACTS

Trends in Recent Research on the Books of Samuel (2021–2026)

Stephen Germany

This article begins with a discussion of recent commentaries on Samuel, then discusses and evaluates recent studies using an analytical approach (textual criticism, literary approaches, intertextual approaches, compositional history, historical approaches, comparison with extra-biblical literature, thematic studies, theological and ethical approaches, other hermeneutical approaches, and reception history).

Do the Books of Samuel contain Eyewitness Accounts?

Klaas A.D. Smelik

The reconstruction of the history of Ancient Israel has been dominated by the concept of the eyewitness account. The Books of Samuel, for instance, have been considered to be largely based on such accounts. In the authoritative study by Leonhard Rost, *Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids*, published in 1926, it is argued that two main sources have been used in composing these books, both written by a contemporary of King David and King Solomon who had access to the testimonies of eyewitnesses. For this reason, there were no objections to relying heavily on the Books of Samuel when reconstructing the history of the Early Monarchy. Literary analysis of the narratives found in the Books of Samuel, however, suggests that the concept of an eyewitness account is misleading. Due to the literary skill of the authors, it is suggested to the reader that the narrator was present during the events described in the narratives, but in reality, this was not the case. This different approach, considering the biblical account as a piece of literary art, has a great impact on our understanding of the Hebrew Bible as well as for the reconstruction of the history of Ancient Israel.

Samuel, Saul, and David as Successors of Moses and the Judges

Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman

Anyone who starts reading the Old Testament Canon at Genesis and reaches the Books of Samuel will recognise much of the earlier narratives in the birth story of Samuel (1 Sam. 1:1–2:11). The opening chapter of the Books of Samuel shows that the history of Israel continues along lines comparable to earlier histories. Two of these lines are strongly emphasised in the chapters that follow (2–14): the line of Moses and his leadership during the exodus from Egypt, and the line of the judges who, under the guidance of God's Spirit, were capable of mighty

deeds. The first line focusses primarily on the person of Samuel as Moses' successor, the second on Saul as the successor of the judges. Afterwards, the line of Moses continues in a more subtle way in the stories of the persecuted David (1 Samuel 15–2 Samuel 1).

The Ark and the Philistines in the Ark Narrative in 1 Samuel

Janneke Stegeman

The so-called *Ark Narrative* (AN) is a fascinating story that raises questions about the nature of the ark and the relationship between YHWH and the ark. One out of many scholars whose attention was drawn to this rich narrative is Klaas Smelik, whose article, 'The Ark in the Philistine Land,' was published in the first volume of the *Amsterdamse Cahiers* in 1980. According to Smelik, the Books of Samuel as a whole is an original composition from the period of the Babylonian exile, and the AN projects pressing exilic questions of YHWH's power and presence into Israel's past. This article discusses whether such projection of questions of identity onto the ark would not benefit from a more layered perspective on the text: in the texts, the ark became a 'locus of longing.' In addition, it is argued that as exegetes we should also be mindful of the afterlives of (elements in the) texts. In the Dutch context, of particular relevance are the ways in which imaginations of idolatry and of 'Israelites versus Philistines' continue to function.

Samuel and the Request for a King. 1 Samuel 8 and its Context

Nico Riemersma

The story of Israel's monarchy begins in 1 Samuel 8. The sentence that sets the story in motion is the appeal by the elders of Israel to Samuel to appoint a king 'for us' 'to judge us like all the other nations.' It is an appeal made on the basis of what the elders regard as problematic: the behaviour of Samuel's sons (v. 5). The person responsible for bringing about the transition from the existing system of judges to the new monarchy is Samuel. This article therefore focusses on him, the central character of the story, and in particular on his reactions (vv. 6, 10–18, 21, 22). What 1 Samuel 8 and the following chapters certainly seek to convey is (1) that the kingship in Israel is not a divine or sacred institution, (2) that it sprang from human will, (3) that it is not in keeping with the God of Israel, (4) but that it was ultimately accepted by everyone (God, the prophets, and the people), in the knowledge that this kingship often bears a striking resemblance to the kingships found amongst the nations. This makes prophetic guidance of that type of kingship essential.

The Bromance of Jonathan and David. The Narrative Aim of the Sketch of their Relationship

Joep Dubbink

Throughout the centuries, Jonathan and David's relationship has attracted much attention. It is one of the rare times we find a detailed description of a friendship between two men in the Hebrew Bible. Older exegesis has often taken the selfless attitude of Jonathan as a starting point, while critical biblical scholarship has tried to show how the series of stories aims to reinforce the kingship of the house of David. During the last two centuries a new aspect has been added, in which it is asked whether the stories do not at least hint at a homoerotic or homosexual interpretation of the relationship of the two 'brothers in arms.' As a result, the debate was strongly ideologised with both sides accusing each other of bias in favour of or against homosexuality. This article tries to weigh the data as objectively as possible and to arrive at a plausible answer to the question of why the author wrote the story the way he did, and what ideas he tried to convey to his audience.

A Shocking Story about Saul, Samuel, and David The Diachronic versus the Synchronic Interpretation of 1 Samuel 28

Klaas Spronk

The survey of the history of interpretation shows the quite different answers are given to the questions on the reality of the necromancy and on how to judge Saul's actions. The problem of the seemingly contradictory chronological data at the beginning of chapter 28 compared with those at the beginning of chapter 29 is discussed by presenting and evaluating the work of Walter Dietrich's diachronic approach versus Jan Fokkelman's synchronic approach to the texts. It is concluded that the best way to explain the inconsistencies is to assume that they have a meaningful function in the text, leading to the insight that the story is primarily about the contrast between the events around Saul in chapter 28 and the simultaneous events around David in chapters 29–30, emphasizing the stark contrast between Saul seeking divine counsel through necromancy and the ease with which David communicates directly with God.

A Limitation for the King: 2 Samuel 6 as a Critique of the Religious Total State

Mirjam Elbers

This article offers a political reading of the story of 2 Samuel 6, in which King David seeks to bring the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem, as a 'jewel to his crown,' legitimising royal authority. Drawing on Jan Assmann's observation concerning the distinctively political character of Mosaic monotheism, this article argues that the narrative demonstrates the

limitations of leadership in Israel in exerting control over YHWH, whether through religious or political means. The analysis proceeds to compare this episode with the account of Moses, the other principal leader of the Israelites, who eventually was denied access to the promised land. Rather than interpreting these two narratives – historically or psychologically – as tragic, this article contends that both convey a hopeful and liberating message: within Israel, leadership can be critiqued on the basis of the Torah itself. This interpretative approach brings to light the profound biblical criticism of both religious and political authority, even where such authority claims to represent YHWH.

Rizpah in Translation. About Translation Options and Queerness in 2 Samuel 3 and 2 Samuel 21

Willien van Wieringen

Does a queer reading provide new insights into the story of Rizpah in 2 Samuel? Most commentaries focus on sectional reading (Rizpah's identity, the family line of the daughter, the relational-functional line of the concubine). By relating the different sections to each other, it can be seen that the family line takes precedence over the relational-functional line. This highlights the relationship between Rizpah and Saul, which is less important than the relationship between Rizpah and Abijah. Perhaps this can be extended to the statement that blood ties take precedence over relational ties. It can be debated whether this counts as a queer reading, because a queer reading usually seeks something unfamiliar in the text that is relevant to today's reader, and crosses boundaries such as binarity, sexuality, and gender. On the other hand, the search brought to light the benefit of looking at intersectionality. In any case, in order to arrive at an interpretation that does justice to the Hebrew text, a distinction should be made between the world of the source language and that of the target language.

Tamar, a Sister not allowed to be a Daughter. How the Kinship Terms in 2 Samuel 13 indicate Sexual Abuse

Hedda Klip, and Jeanet 't Licht

The genealogical position of Tamar is weak from the beginning: as a sister she is wedged between two sons of David and has no direct link to her father. We reflect on the significance of the use of genealogical terms as 'sister,' 'brother.' and 'father' and on the absence of 'daughter.' At the end of the text, Tamar is silenced by Absalom. The other male characters in the story, Jonadab and David, either contribute to the abuse or condone it. Jeanet van 't Licht, a survivor of sexual abuse, reflects on the biblical account in separate comments. She describes the lack of justice and the silencing of Tamar as a second rape. It is our hope that this story will no longer be ignored but be used in churches to give a voice to Tamar and to survivors of sexual abuse.

The Rhetorical Function of Ascension Offerings/Burnt Offerings within the Books of Samuel

Jos Hoogstede

עֹלָה (‘ascension offering’; ‘burnt offering’) is the most prominent sacrificial type in the OT. In this article, its rhetorical function within the Books of Samuel is explored. עֹלָה occurs at key points in the narrative and the dynamic behind it is examined, namely, at the return of the ark from the Philistines (1 Sam 6:14–15), at the first Israelite national act of repentance, led by Samuel (7:9–10), in the context of Saul’s installation (10:8) and his rejection as king (13:9[2x],10,12; 15:22), at the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem, with king David acting as a priest (2 Sam 6:17–18), and, finally, at the end, with a contrite David wholeheartedly serving YHWH (24:22,24,25). Thus, עֹלָה shapes the narrative, especially since the theme of sacrifice forms an *inclusio*, as offerings are already mentioned in 1 Samuel 1:3,4. Recurring themes like devotion and confession are compared and contrasted to find out what עֹלָה confers rhetorically in the covenantal relationship between YHWH and Israel.