

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOD'S WORD IN ISRAEL:
A "RE-CONSIDERED" FORM-CRITICAL ANALYSIS
OF THE BIRTH AND CALL NARRATIVES OF
SAMUEL (1 Sam 1:1-4:1a)

by

Margaret Page, O.P.



Dissertation presented to the Faculty of Theology
Saint Paul University, Ottawa
as partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Ph.D. (Th.) and D.Th.
degrees

Plymouth, Michigan 1983



Margaret Page, O.P., Ottawa, Canada, 1984.

UMI Number: DC53757

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI Microform DC53757
Copyright 2011 by ProQuest LLC
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation was written under the direction of Rev. Leo Laberge, OMI, of Saint Paul University in Ottawa. I am indebted to him for his careful reading of the text, for the questions he raised, for his attention to detail, and especially, for his remarkable patience and encouragement. I am also indebted to Rev. Marcel Dumais, OMI, for the help he provided in regard to exegetical method, and especially for the encouragement he offered during the last stages of the completion of this dissertation.

Since this dissertation is an initial experience in research, I alone accept responsibility for any of its shortcomings.

I am also happily indebted to the faculty members of Saint Paul University who taught and inspired me, and to all of the other great teachers in my life, whether or not they have been associated with academic institutions: the Adrian Dominican Congregation, which has always loved, supported and challenged me; my family and friends on both sides of the Atlantic, and finally, the academic

faculty and student community at Saint John's Provincial Seminary who, in a variety of unusual ways, have enabled me to finish this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.	ii
CHAPTER ONE: THE PERICOPE 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a: THE HISTORY OF THE EXEGESIS	1
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTION: OLD TESTAMENT FORM CRITICISM RECONSIDERED .	37
CHAPTER THREE: 1 Sam 1: A FORM-CRITICAL ANALYSIS. .	61
CHAPTER FOUR: 1 Sam 2: A FORM-CRITICAL ANALYSIS . .	129
CHAPTER FIVE: 1 Sam 3: A FORM-CRITICAL ANALYSIS . .	209
CHAPTER SIX: TEXT AND SETTING: THE STRUCTURAL DIALECTIC WITHIN THE UNITS OF THE TEXT. .	253
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION.	266
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS CITED	272

CHAPTER ONE

THE PERICOPE 1 SAM 1:1-4:1a THE HISTORY OF THE EXEGESIS

This chapter is concerned with presenting an overview of the history of the exegesis of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. As will be demonstrated in the following pages, the scholarly approach to the pericope, with very few exceptions, has been primarily a diachronic one. That is to say, nearly all scholars have been concerned either with a source-critical or tradition-historical approach to the story of Samuel's birth and call to prophecy. In the pages that follow, it will become evident that most of these scholars will conclude that 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a is not, strictly speaking, a factual account of Samuel's birth and call to prophecy. Moreover, many of these scholars will propose that the story did not originally pertain to Samuel, but that, in a later point in history, it was revised in such a way that it could apply to him.¹

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the source-critical research which had first focused on the

¹John T. Willis, "Cultic Elements in the Story of Samuel's Birth and Dedication," Studia Theologica 26 (1972), p. 34.

Pentateuch shifted to the Historical Books of the Bible. In regard to the books of Samuel, scholars immediately began to draw attention to the doublets, repetitions, and contradictions in the two books. Moreover, they began to wrestle with the fact that there appeared to be two different viewpoints in the books of Samuel relative to the idea of kingship. Wellhausen's research² led to an early recognition that there are two parallel strands in the books of Samuel. The earlier strand (1 Sam 9; 10:1-16; 11:1-15; 13-14) he deemed as being pro-monarchical, since Samuel's anointing of Saul is presented as being legitimated by divine command. To the later, and anti-monarchical strand, in which kingship is seen as being something akin to apostasy, he assigned chapters 7; 8; 10:17-17; and 12.

The critical work of Wellhausen gained widespread support, and was carried to its conclusion by Budde,³ who theorized that the parallel strands in the books of

²Julius Wellhausen, Die Composition des Hexateuch und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments (4th ed., unchanged reproduction of the 3rd ed. of 1899. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1963), pp. 260-263. This book contains Wellhausen's analysis of the books from Judges to Kings which had first been published in Bleek's Einleitung in das AT in 1878.

³Karl Budde, Die Bücher Richter und Samuel, ihre Quellen und ihr Aufbau (Giessen: J. Ricker'sche Buchhandlung, 1890), pp. 167ff.

Samuel could be identified as continuations of the Yahwistic and Elohistic strands in the Pentateuch. In general, Budde and his followers viewed the pro-monarchical passages as being Yahwistic, and the anti-monarchical passages as belonging to the Elohistic traditions. All of these scholars recognized that a redactor (usually referred to as a "Deuteronomic editor") had woven the two sources together.

As will be demonstrated in the following pages, most of the early exegetes identified the pericope 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a as being part of the anti-monarchical strand. The connection of chapters 1-3 with the beginning of the prophetic movement seemed to situate the text within a worldview sympathetic to the Elohistic tradition, a body of literature which seemed to have its roots in the north where the institution of kingship was charismatic and usually subject to prophetic designation.

In order to understand some of the specific reasons why the early exegetes identified 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a as being Elohistic, a few summarizing words about the Elohistic tradition, as a whole, will be helpful.

The Elohistic strand was first identified by Hupfeld⁴ in 1853, and "was characterized by the literary

⁴Hermann Hupfeld, Die Quellen der Genesis und die Art ihrer Zusammensetzung (Berlin: Wiegand & Grieben,

criticism of the nineteenth century as an independent narrative reaching from the patriarchal stories in Genesis to the account of the conquest in Joshua."⁵

By comparing Yahwistic and Elohistic parallels in the Pentateuch, subsequent scholars⁶ were able to isolate specifically Elohistic characteristics:

- the use of Elohim as a divine name;
- the centrality of the covenant;
- the high ethical tone, and the concern with sin and guilt
- the theme of "fear of God";
- the themes of testing and obedience;
- the concern for monotheism
- the concern for revelation, and the use of dreams as a vehicle of divine communication
- a frequent mention of local shrines, and the use of other geographic reference points

1853), quoted in Alan W. Jenks, The Elohist and North Israelite Traditions, SBL Monograph Series 22 (Missoula, Montana: SBL and Scholars Press, 1977), p. 2.

⁵Alan W. Jenks, Ibid., p. 2.

⁶For detailed discussions of the Elohistic tradition, see Carl Cornill, Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), pp. 79-84; S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897) pp. 116-126; Alan W. Jenks, op. cit., Chapter 2, "The Content and Scope of E," pp. 19-82; Arthur Weiser, Introduction to the Old Testament (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), pp. 111-125; Hans Walter Wolff, "The Elohistic Fragments in the Pentateuch," Interpretation 26 (1972), pp. 158-172.

- a theological sense of history; God brings about his purposes through the use of human instruments, even when the person involved is not conscious of this, or would not even wish it;
- a heavy use of dialogue;
- certain linguistic preferences: "Horeb" rather than "Sinai"; "Amorites" rather than "Canaanites"; "Jethro" rather than "Hobab" for the name of Moses' father-in-law, etc.

In the light of these ideas, the early attribution of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a to the Elohist tradition is completely understandable. Budde, Cornill, Wellhausen, Kittel,⁷ Thenius,⁸ and Dhorme,⁹ while agreeing that the Canticle of Hannah (2:1-10) and the judgement suit of the unknown "man of God" (2:27-36) were later insertions, all placed the main storyline of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a within the Elohist tradition. They believed that these two interpolations, along with several minor clauses, had been added to the Elohist narrative by a Deuteronomistic redactor. In view of the basic tenets of Elohist religious concerns, one can see why they would ascribe the pious story of Samuel's family background and his call to

⁷For a chart showing the literary-critical positions of Budde, Cornill, Wellhausen and Kittel relative to 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, see Otto Thenius, Die Bücher Samuels (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1898), XIV-XVII.

⁸Otto Thenius, Ibid., XVI-XVII.

⁹Paul Dhorme, Les Livres de Samuel. Etudes Bibliques (Paris: J. Gabalda & Cie, 1910), pp. 16-45.

prophecy to that tradition. The high moral tone of the story, the piety of Samuel's parents in contrast to the impiety of the Elides, the night-time revelation of the Lord to Samuel, and the divine intervention in human history through which Samuel was born and called to prophecy, all seemed to place 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a within the same strain of religious thought that characterizes the remaining fragments of the Elohistie epic.

The following is a summary of the specific aspects of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a which the source-critical exegetes delineated as belonging to the Elohistie tradition:

1) Dhorme¹⁰ recognized an Elohistie influence in Hannah's vow (1 Sam 1:11). He compared her vow to that of Jacob (Gen 28:20-22) and to the vow of Jephthah (Judg 11:30), both instances of which he attributed to the Elohistie tradition. He noted the words "maidservant" (ʔmh) and "remember" (zkr), which he considered to be common Elohistie terminology. He further noted the use of the vocative "Lord of Hosts" in 1 Sam 1:11 as being characteristic of Elohistie style.

¹⁰Paul Dhorme, Ibid., p. 20.

2) Regarding 1 Sam 1:19, Dhorme¹¹ noted that the expression "and they got up in the morning" (wyškmw bbqr) is an Elohist term.

3) Budde¹² compared the phrases "and she nursed" (wtyng) and "until she had weaned him" (ʿd-gmlh ʾtw) in 1 Sam 1:23 with Exod 2:7-10 and Gen 21:8, the Elohist birth narratives of Moses and Isaac.

4) In 1 Sam 2:25 Dhorme¹³ noted that the idea of a man sinning (ḥtʾ) against a man is a characteristic concern of the Elohist.

5) In 1 Sam 1:26 Dhorme¹⁴ compared "as you live" (ḥy npšk) to Saul's question to Abner in 1 Sam 17:55, a text which he also attributed to the Elohist.

6) For all of the early exegetes, the Lord's revelation to Samuel during the night is the strongest point of identification with the Elohist tradition. Thenius¹⁵ and Dhorme¹⁶ compared Samuel's sleep in 1 Sam 3 to that of the Elohist account of Jacob's dream at

¹¹Paul Dhorme, Ibid., p. 22.

¹²Karl Budde, Die Bücher Samuel. KHC VIII (Tübingen and Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1902), pp. 11-12.

¹³Paul Dhorme, Les Livres de Samuel, p. 39.

¹⁴Paul Dhorme, Les Livres de Samuel, p. 24.

¹⁵Otto Thenius, Die Bücher Samuels, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

¹⁶Paul Dhorme, Les Livres de Samuel, p. 42.

Bethel (Gen 28:10ff.); Dhorme also compared 1 Sam 3 with Jacob's vision at night in Beersheba (Gen 46:2ff.), another Elohist text.

7) Thenius¹⁷ and Dhorme¹⁸ compared the call of Samuel (1 Sam 3:4,6,8,10), containing the repetition of Samuel's response, "Here I am," to the Lord's calling of Abraham in regard to the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22:1,11), and to the call of Moses (Exod 3:4).

8) Budde¹⁹ connected the account of Samuel sleeping near the ark (1 Sam 3:3) to Exod 33:11, the Elohist account of Joshua sleeping near the ark in the Tent of Meeting.

9) Dhorme²⁰ considered the phrases "lamp of God" (nr ʔlyhm) and "ark of God" (ʔrwn ʔlhym) in 1 Sam 3:3 as probably being Elohist terms.

H. P. Smith²¹ believed that the pericope 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a was a composite unity. In contrast to most of the exegetes of his time, Smith did not attribute the

¹⁷Otto Thenius, Die Bücher Samuels, pp. 11-12.

¹⁸Paul Dhorme, Les Livres de Samuel, p. 43.

¹⁹Karl Budde, Die Bücher Samuels, p. 27.

²⁰Paul Dhorme, Les Livres de Samuel, p. 43.

²¹H. P. Smith, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1899), pp. xix-xx.

story of Samuel's birth and call to prophecy to the Elohist tradition. In his analysis of the books of Samuel, Smith identified two sources, "Sm" and "Sl," which he said were "like JE." He designated "Sl" as being the older document, since it was " . . . more primitive in its religious ideas."²² "Sm" corresponded to what other exegetes had identified as the Elohist strand, but Smith qualified his identification of it by saying that it resembled the Deuteronomistic source as much as it did the Elohist. In regard to 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, Smith singled out the anti-Elide sections (1 Sam 2:12-17; 22-25; 27-36) as being the older core of the pericope to which the birth and call narratives were added.

In 1930 A. Lods²³ identified two sources in the books of Samuel, a "seer" source, and a "Jabesh" source. In relation to 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, Lods speculated that 1 Sam 1, the story of Samuel's birth, originally belonged to the "Jabesh" source, the narrative strand in 1 Samuel which demonstrated the heroic qualities of Saul. According to Lods, the puns based upon the root שׁל in 1 Sam 1:20, 28 suggest that the birth narrative of Samuel

²²H. P. Smith, Ibid., p. xx.

²³Adolphe Lods, Israel from Its Beginning to the Middle of the Eighth Century, trans. S. H. Hooke (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), pp. 408-413.

was originally connected with the story of Saul rather than with Samuel. In light of Lods's hypothesis, 1 Sam 1:20 could be read, "She conceived and gave birth to a son, and called him 'Saul' (š'wl), because from Yahweh I have asked for him (š'ltw)."

Lods' theory was intriguing, and it was picked up and developed by Hylander²⁴ two years later. Hylander's basic hypothesis²⁵ was that, from a birth legend originally pertaining to Saul, two separate birth narratives emerged, one pertaining to Samson and the other to Samuel. In regard to the birth narrative now attributed to Samuel, Hylander offered two reasons why the pericope could not have originally been composed for Samuel:

1) Since the adult Samuel was opposed to the idea of the monarchy, it seems unlikely that the story of his birth would contain wordplays on the name of Saul, the first king; and 2) the story of Samuel's birth and dedication has little connection with his adult life.

²⁴I. Hylander, Der literarische Samuel-Saul-Komplex (1 Sam 1-15) traditions-geschichtlich untersucht (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1932), pp. 31-39, 309.

²⁵For a more detailed summary of Hylander's hypothesis, see John T. Willis, "Cultic Elements in the Story of Samuel's Birth and Dedication," op. cit., pp. 34-35.

In pursuing the search for the oral and written traditions behind the transmitted text, Richard Press²⁶ noted an inner tension within 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, due to the fact that some sections place the personality of Samuel in the foreground while others seem to be primarily concerned with the Elides. While noting that the wordplays on the root šl in 1 Sam 1 are reminiscent of Saul,²⁷ Press, unlike Lods and Hylander, found it impossible to determine whether or not the birth story of Samuel was originally concerned with Saul. Consequently, Press directed his attention primarily to the role of the Elides in 1 Sam 2, and to the "oracle of doom" in chapter 3. Like H. P. Smith, Press considered the anti-Elide sections of 1 Sam 2 (2:12-17; 22-25; 27-36) to be the core around which the birth and call narratives of Samuel had been composed.

First of all, Press observed that the character of Eli is portrayed in several different ways:²⁸

1) According to the oracle uttered by the man of God (2:27-36), Eli is depicted as sharing in the crimes

²⁶Richard Press, "Der Prophet Samuel. Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung," ZAW 56 (1938), pp. 177-225.

²⁷Richard Press, Ibid., pp. 189ff.

²⁸Richard Press, Ibid., pp. 178-179.

of his sons. The accusation in v. 29 is specifically directed to Eli, "Why do you (2nd person singular) keep a greedy eye on my sacrifices . . . and why do you honor your sons in preference to me, fattening yourselves (2nd person plural) . . ."

2) According to 2:22 ff. Eli is described as a father who tried to divert his sons from their evil ways. Indeed, if it was the hardening will of God (2:26) that brought about the downfall of the Elides, then Eli can not be responsible for his sons' sins, since his warning to them had been in vain.

3) According to 3:13, Eli is not depicted as sharing in the crimes of his sons, but he is guilty of silent toleration since he did not reprove them.

Proceeding from the lack of harmony in these three sections, Press concluded that three different hands had edited 1 Sam 1-3. To the youth story of Samuel (1 Sam 1; 2:11, 18b-21; 3), which was written in the form of an Idyll, was added 2:13-16. In the same way that 2:18 is a redactional sequel, 2:11, 2:12 and 2:17 are the redactional links joining the anti-Elide narrative (2:13-16) to the youth story. In addition, the dissimilar word usage of "know" (yd^c) in 2:12 and 3:7 indicates two different story lines. Press saw the third redactional level in the insertion of the oracle of the

unnamed man of God (2:27-36), an addition which is artificially linked to the story by the redactional explanation in 3:12, ". . . I will carry out against Eli everything I have spoken against his house."

Hertzberg's²⁹ analysis of 1 Sam 1-3 is similar to, but less detailed than, that of Press. He, too, notes the possibility of a link between the birth narrative of Samuel and one which originally may have pertained to Saul.³⁰ He also states that Hannah's vow (1 Sam 1:11), with the reference to Nazirite life (" . . . and no razor shall ever touch his head"), could have been taken over from the Samson story (Jdg 13:5).³¹ In regard to the text as a whole, Hertzberg's view³² is that the stories of the rise of Samuel (1 Sam 1:1-28; 2-11, 18-21; 3:1-10, 15-21) and the fall of the Elides (1 Sam 2:12-17, 22-25) need not to have been always linked together. However, by the time the final redactor had received the material, the two independent stories had been woven into one narrative unit. The redactional

²⁹H. W. Hertzberg, I and II Samuel. A Commentary, Old Testament Library, trans. by J. S. Bowden (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964).

³⁰H.W. Hertzberg, Ibid., p. 26.

³¹H.W. Hertzberg, Ibid., p. 25.

³²H.W. Hertzberg, Ibid., pp. 43-44.

activity of the final compiler, whom Hertzberg believed to have been part of the Deuteronomistic school, can be seen in three major sections of 1 Sam 1-3: 1) the Canticle of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1b-10), 2) the oracle of the unnamed man of God (1 Sam 2:27-36), and 3) the announcement of doom to Eli's house which the Lord himself makes to the young Samuel (1 Sam 3:11-14).

According to Hertzberg³³ the Deuteronomistic function of the Canticle of Hannah is to give a theological interpretation of the beginning of Samuel's life.

Similarly, the oracle of the man of God (1 Sam 2:27-36) functions to give a theological explanation for the downfall of the house of Eli.³⁴ In vv. 27-34 the Deuteronomistic compiler, according to Hertzberg, has re-worked older material which may have originally been part of the Ark Narrative. Vv. 35-36 reflect the viewpoint of the Deuteronomistic compiler, who knew from the circumstances of history that the Elides had been supplanted by the Zadokite priestly line.

In chapter 3, vv. 11-14, the Deuteronomistic compiler has inserted an additional threat of doom to Eli's house. Because this threat parallels that of 2:27-36,

³³H.W. Hertzberg, Ibid., p. 44.

³⁴H.W. Hertzberg, Ibid., p. 39.

Hertzberg suggests³⁵ that each oracle must have been transmitted independently of the other.

In his analysis of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, Martin Noth³⁶ remarked that, curiously enough, the sole OT reference to Samuel in connection with the ark sanctuary of Shiloh is found in the Jugendgeschichte of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. Since birth stories of great men usually attain meaning in later traditions about them, Noth concluded that the connection of the birth and childhood of Samuel with the sanctuary of Shiloh was probably a secondary, non-historical segment of the Samuel tradition. The consequent aim of the birth and call narratives of Samuel was to serve as a bridge between the pre-monarchical (represented by Shiloh) pan-Israelite history and the newly emerging monarchy at the time of the adult Samuel.³⁷

Noth himself admitted that this over-all assessment of the Jugendgeschichte still called for a more detailed tradition-historical investigation, and in that pursuit, Noth delineated the presence of three

³⁵H.W. Hertzberg, Ibid., p. 42.

³⁶Martin Noth, "Samuel und Silo," VT 13 (1963) pp. 390-400.

³⁷Martin Noth, Ibid., pp. 390-391.

different traditions.³⁸ The first tradition (1 Sam 1-3a; 4-28; 2:11, 18-21, 26) deals with the circumstances of Samuel's birth, particularly his consecration to the Lord and his temple service at Shiloh. The second tradition deals with the wickedness of Eli's sons (2:12-17 and 22-25) and the oracular announcement of doom upon Eli's house (2:27-36). The third tradition, which consists of the Lord's revelation of Himself to the young Samuel in chapter 3, is, according to Noth, dependent upon the other two traditions. Not only does chapter 1 give the reason for Samuel's presence in the temple, but the condemnation of the Elides in chapter 2 is presupposed in 3:11-14.³⁹

In relation to the first tradition, Noth, unlike Lods and Hylander, did not believe that the word-play on the verb š^vl offered sufficient reason to attribute that section of the birth narrative to Saul. Not only is the first chapter of 1 Sam unrelated to the well-known origins of Saul (1 Sam 9:1 and 1 Sam 11:5 ff.), but it is a well-attested fact that when names are given to children in the OT, the explanation of the name often resides only in the similarity of audible consonant

³⁸Martin Noth, Ibid., p. 391.

³⁹Martin Noth, Ibid., p. 392.

sounds. The story, then, was probably originally written for Samuel, with the specific purpose of connecting him with the Shiloh sanctuary.⁴⁰

Noth viewed the second tradition,⁴¹ the condemnation of the Elides, as a Jerusalem polemic against Shiloh and the Silonic priesthood. Unlike nearly all of the other exegetes, Noth did not consider 2:35-36 as being a Deuteronomistic addition; according to him, 2:36 is hardly in keeping with Josiah's reform as outlined in 2 Kgs 23:8 ff., and that stylistically, the sentence is formulated in a non-Deuteronomistic way.

For Noth, then, the intent of the author of chapter 3, who was also the compiler of chapters 1 and 2, was to connect Samuel with the site of the pre-monarchical pan-Israelite Yahweh cult. According to that author, Shiloh was determinant for a correct understanding of the meaning of Samuel. The story climaxes in 3:19-20, in the affirmation that all Israel recognized Samuel as an accredited prophet. Noth's final remark is that 3:21, which in some way says the opposite of 3:19-20, must be considered as a supplementary addition. According to 3:19-20, Shiloh was important for Samuel. On the other

⁴⁰Martin Noth, Ibid., pp. 394-395.

⁴¹Martin Noth, Ibid., pp. 393-394.

hand, the significance of 3:21 is that Samuel was important for Shiloh.⁴²

Probably the most extensive tradition-historical analysis of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a is that of Jan Dus.⁴³ Using the tensions within the text of the Geburtslegende as a point of departure, Dus speculated that a ninth century author had added sections from an earlier substratum to 1 Sam 1, the birth legend proper. And, within the first chapter itself, Dus found traces of both the Samson and Saul birth stories.

In regard to the Samson tradition, Dus noted a tension in 1 Sam 1:11, which suggests that the young Samuel will become a nazir, a charismatic figure like Samson (Jdg 13:5, 14-16) who will defend Israel in the face of enemy assault. In contrast to this idea, 1 Sam 1:22 surprisingly presents Samuel as a temple servant. Dus further remarks that chapters 2 and 3 of the birth legend have little in common with either the figure of Samson or with the adult Samuel.

⁴²Martin Noth, Ibid., p. 400.

⁴³Jan Dus, "Die Geburtslegende Samuel 1: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu 1 Sam 1-3," Rivista degli studi orientali 43 (1968) 163-94.

In the tradition of Lods⁴⁴ and Hylander,⁴⁵ Dus connects "the one who is asked for" in 1:20 and 1:28a with Saul, and concludes that the birth legend of Samuel originally pertained to Saul. Moreover, Dus outlines a parallel relationship with Samson and Saul,⁴⁶ which may account for the nazirite implications in 1 Sam 1:11. According to Dus, both Samson and Saul are nazirs who bring military victories to Israel.⁴⁷ Both are young adults. In each of their lives an unimportant occasion (a Philistine wife and the lost asses) leads to their first heroic act. The spirit of Yahweh (rwḥ yhwḥ) falls upon each of them (1 Sam 10:6,10; 11:6 and Jdg 14:6, 19; 15:4). And finally, the phrases "the Lord has abandoned him" (yhwḥ sr m'lyw) in Jdg 16:20, and "God has abandoned me" (ʔlhyḥ sr m'ly) in 1 Sam 28:15) play a role at the end of each of their lives. Based upon these similarities, the conclusion of Dus is that the author of the

⁴⁴Adolph Lods, Israel from Its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century, pp. 408-413.

⁴⁵I. Hylander, Der Literarische Samuel-Saul-Komplex (1 Sam 1-15) traditions-geschichtlich untersucht, pp. 31-39, 309.

⁴⁶Jan Dus, "Die Geburtslegende Samuel 1: Eine traditions-geschichtliche Untersuchung zu 1 Sam 1-3," p. 177.

⁴⁷Dus speculates that Saul had long hair, a fact which may have led the author to compare him with Samson.

original birth story of Saul conspired to portray him as another Samson.⁴⁸

According to Dus, the original birth narrative of Saul had nothing to do with the apostasy of the Elides. The author, probably a contemporary of Solomon, wanted to circulate an edifying, pastoral story. In order to make the story acceptable he inserted the oracle of the unnamed "man of God" (1 Sam 2:27-36), which served to legitimate Solomon's deposition of Abiathar (1 Kgs 2:27). By the time of its insertion into the birth narrative, the original oracle (1 Sam 2:27-30), which may have been part of an introduction to the Ark Narrative, had been expanded by two vaticinia ex eventu. Vv. 31-34 referred to Saul's slaughter of the priests at Nob (1 Sam 22:18 ff.) and vv. 35-36 referred to the downfall of Abiathar and the rise of the Zadokite line. Since the expanded oracle signaled the definitive demise of the Elides, it also served to legitimate the Jerusalem temple. The Lord's oracle of doom pertaining to the Elides (1 Sam 3:11-14) is an additional vaticinium ex eventu, which functioned to reinforce the man of God's oracle in chapter 2.

Dus believed that the other anti-Elide sections of the birth narrative (1 Sam 1:3b and 9; 2:12-16 and

⁴⁸Jan Dus, "Die Geburtslegende Samuel 1: Eine Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu 1 Sam 1-3," pp. 174-175.

22-25) stem from an earlier source which apparently circulated after the battle of Ebenezer. The purpose of that source was to absolve Eli from the guilt of his sons.⁴⁹

At this point, a clearer synthesis of Dus's views may be put forth. A ninth century author, wishing to write an edifying story, had the following sources at his disposal:

1) An early birth story of Saul (1 Sam 1), in which the author had attempted to portray Saul as another Samson.

2) An authentic oracle of doom concerning the Elides (2:27-30).

3) Three vaticinia ex eventu: 2:31-34 and 35-36; 3:11-14.

4) An early circle of traditions pertaining to the sinfulness of Eli's sons (1 Sam 1:3b, 9; 2:12-15, 22-25).

According to Dus, the final author's weaving together of these different sources has resulted in our being able to detect "visible seams" in the present birth legend of Samuel. The following are Dus's proposed

⁴⁹Jan Dus, "Die Geburtslegende Samuel 1: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu 1 Sam 1-3," pp. 181-185.

solutions for the major textual difficulties in the pericope 1 Sam 1-4:1a:⁵⁰

1) In 1 Sam 1:5a the word ḥpym does not mean "sad" but "angry." In his reconstruction of Saul's birth legend, Dus speculates that Kish, contrary to the pious Elkanah, was a merciless husband who was angry with Hannah because she could not have children.

2) In 1 Sam 1:6 gm means "moreover" or "besides." In addition to Elkanah's (Kish's) anger, Hannah faced the provocation of Peninnah.

3) 1 Sam 1:9, 18 suggest a pilgrimage to and from Elkanah's house to a sanctuary, rather than a going away from and a return to the place where Elkanah held his sacrificial meal within the same sanctuary. It was the ninth century author who specified that this sanctuary was Shiloh.

4) 1 Sam 1:4, 5a (cf. Deut 12:15, 21) can point to any meal, not necessarily a sacrificial one. By inserting the references to Shiloh in 1:3a and 9, the author intended that the home meal and sacrifice be reinterpreted as having taken place in Shiloh.

5) In birth legends, the birth of a hero and his mighty deeds are usually connected only by a very short

⁵⁰Jan Dus, Ibid., pp. 164-69; 190-91.

reference to his growth (cf. Jdg 13:24). A similar reference occurs in 1 Sam 3:19, a statement which must have originally pertained to Saul. The author changed the name Saul to Samuel.

6) The author changed the "one who is asked for" in 1 Sam 1:20b and 28a from Saul to Samuel.

7) After inserting the anti-Elide sections, the author made Hannah meet Eli in 1 Sam 1:9-18.

8) The author extended the meaning of Hannah's vow (1 Sam 1:11), so that in 1 Sam 1:22 the consecration of Samuel included the idea of a lifetime of temple service.

9) The author made the "one who is asked for" grow up in the presence of Eli (1 Sam 2:11). In 1 Sam 3:11-14, 18 he put one of the anti-Elide oracles into his mouth.

10) By making the young Samuel into a temple servant (1 Sam 2:11), the author also made him a colleague of Eli's two sons.

11) The author made Kish, the rough husband of Hannah, into the thoughtful (1 Sam 1:8) and pious Elkanah who, with his family visited Shiloh and sacrificed there (1 Sam 1:3a, 21).

Joseph Bourke,⁵¹ in his analysis of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, contrasts it with the Ark Narrative, (1 Sam 4-6) and finds that the two stories stem from ". . . two distinct groups of sources, each having its own subject and point of view."⁵² In his overall assessment, Bourke suggests that while the Ark Narrative stems from the southern, or pro-monarchical source, the youth story of Samuel derives from an Ephraimite, or northern source which, in language and style, closely resembles the Elohist source of the Pentateuch.

After suggesting that the Canticle of Hannah (2:1-10) and the man of God's announcement of doom (2:27-36) be "set aside" as obvious interpolations, Bourke finds that the remainder of the text constitutes a continuous and self-contained narrative. He divides that narrative into seven episodes or "scenes":⁵³

- First scene: Hannah's prayer and vow (1:1-18)
- Second scene: Samuel's birth and dedication (1:19-28)
- Third scene: The blasphemous behavior of Eli's sons (2:12-17)

⁵¹Joseph Bourke, O. P., "Samuel and the Ark: A Study in Contrasts," Dominican Studies 7 (1954), pp. 73-103.

⁵²Joseph Bourke, Ibid., p. 73.

⁵³Joseph Bourke, Ibid., p. 73.

Interlude: Hannah's restored
fruitfulness (2:19-21)

Fourth scene: Eli's futile protest of his son's
behavior (2:22-26)

Fifth scene: The call of Samuel (3:1-9)

Sixth scene: Yahweh imparts his word to Samuel
(3:10-15)

Seventh scene: Samuel prophesies first to Eli
and then to all of Israel
(3:15b-4:1a)

Bourke deals with these seven scenes only from the standpoint of thematic symmetry. According to him, the first two scenes (1:1-28) are concerned with "the forces of good." The next two scenes are mainly concerned with "the forces of evil." In the last three scenes (3:3-4:1a) the ". . . good in the person of Samuel is empowered to overcome the evil and to bring back the word of God to Israel."⁵⁴

Thematically, Bourke characterizes Samuel's family as the "anawim," whereas Eli's family are like the po'ale ʿawen, the "workers of iniquity." In addition, Bourke perceptively noted that the absence of the word of God in the pericope is associated, by juxtaposition, with Eli's blindness.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Joseph Bourke, Ibid., p. 82.

⁵⁵Joseph Bourke, Ibid., p. 84.

In general, Bourke assumed that 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a had its roots in historical traditions; but, he believed that an Ephraimite author had "stylized" the characters so that they conformed to conventional literary types. Consequently, the story of Samuel's birth and call to prophecy served theological rather than historical purposes.⁵⁶

Murray Newman's analysis of the youth story of Samuel⁵⁷ focuses only upon chapter 3, but he acknowledges Martin Noth's assessment of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a as ". . . eine in sich geschlossene Prophetentradition, deren Ziel in 3. 19-20 ausdrücklich angegeben wird."⁵⁸ In this sense Newman suggests that chapter 3 might be considered as an etiological legend seeking to explain the emergence of the prophet in Israel.⁵⁹ According to him, the key for understanding the narrative is the ark, particularly in relation to the oral forms of the E covenant legend. Within the E tradition, the covenant mediator was the

⁵⁶Joseph Bourke, Ibid., p. 83.

⁵⁷Murray Newman, "The Prophetic Call of Samuel," in Anderson, B. W. and Harrelson, W. Israel's Prophetic Heritage (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), pp. 86-96.

⁵⁸Martin Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien, p. 60.

⁵⁹Murray Newman, "The Prophetic Call of Samuel," p. 87.

cult official who, in the presence of the ark, presided over a regularly observed covenant renewal ceremony. Appointed by the people (Ex 20:19), the covenant mediator would have performed the role of Moses in the re-enactment of the Sinaitic covenant.

Newman speculates⁶⁰ that, after the time of Joshua, the role of covenant mediator may have been assumed by Levitical priests. When the ark was moved from Shechem to Shiloh, the new ark shrine became the cultic center of the Israelite amphictyony; and, in this setting, Eli's principal function was that of covenant mediator. With the downfall of the Elides, the role of covenant mediator shifted from priest to prophet.

In some ways, Newman's analysis deals more with the evolution of classical prophecy than with a tradition-historical examination of the text. Within that frame of reference, Newman sees Samuel's call to prophecy as signalling a development in Israel which involved a gradual evolution from ecstatic to classical prophecy; that evolution also entailed a shift of cultic responsibility from the covenant mediators to the classical prophets.⁶¹

⁶⁰Murray Newman, Ibid., pp. 88-9.

⁶¹Murray Newman, Ibid., pp. 90-93.

Newman's next point of inquiry centers upon the group responsible for preserving and passing on 1 Sam 1-3. According to him, "It would have been a northern prophetic community with a vital concern for the covenant faith of the old twelve-tribe amphictyony."⁶² In regard to this Newman offers two possibilities.

First, he notes theological similarities in both 1 Sam 1-3 and Hosea, particularly in regard to a common concern for the covenant. Since Hosea, an 8th century northern prophet, was also acquainted with the Elohist tradition, it is possible that 1 Sam 1-3, like Hosea, can be dated to the eighth century.

Or, if E can be dated earlier than the eighth century, then the 9th century prophetic circles associated with Elijah could have preserved the tradition of Samuel's call to prophecy.⁶³ The call narratives of both E (Ex 3:4; Gen 22:11; 46:2) and Elijah (1 Kgs 19:12,13) emphasize audition rather than vision; all are proponents of Mosaic Yahwism; and Elijah (1 Kgs 18:17-40), like Moses (Dt 11:26-32), Joshua (Jos 24) and Samuel (1 Sam 12:18), is portrayed in terms ". . . reminiscent

⁶²Murray Newman, Ibid., p. 93.

⁶³Murray Newman, Ibid., p. 94.

of the covenant assembly at Shechem under Joshua . . ."⁶⁴
 Therefore, Newman concludes that "It would seem clear
 that the circles which preserved and shaped the Elijah
 legends were informed by the same theological concerns
 that motivated those who preserved, shaped, and used the
 story of Samuel's call. Though we cannot be certain
 about such matters, it is possible that they were one and
 the same group."⁶⁵

John T. Willis analyzes the story of Samuel's
 birth and call to prophecy primarily from the standpoint
 of it being an integral part of 1 Sam 1-7. In his
 analyses⁶⁶ he uncovers a contrast schema, similar to
 that of Bourke, which opposes the exaltation of Samuel to
 the degradation of the Elides,⁶⁷ a literary technique
 which he feels mirrors the relationship of David to
 Saul.⁶⁸ According to Willis, the symmetry of this

⁶⁴Murray Newman, Ibid., p. 97.

⁶⁵Murray Newman, Ibid., p. 97.

⁶⁶John T. Willis, "An Anti-Elide Narrative Tradition from a Prophetic Circle at the Ramah Sanctuary," JBL 90 (1971), pp. 288-308 and "Cultic Elements in the Story of Samuel's Birth and Dedication," Studia Theologica 26 (1972), pp. 33-61.

⁶⁷John T. Willis, "Cultic Elements in the Story of Samuel's Birth and Dedication," Ibid., p. 38.

⁶⁸John T. Willis, "An Anti-Elide Narrative Tradition from a Prophetic Circle at the Ramah Sanctuary," op. cit., pp. 290-91.

literary technique is too uniform to be attributed to a redactor.⁶⁹ Therefore, he concludes that 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a is part of ". . . a pre-Deuteronomistic tradition which the Deuteronomist selected as material which best represented the chaotic period through which Israel passed just before the establishment of the monarchy."⁷⁰

In arguing for the homogeneity of 1 Sam 1-7, Willis outlines a pattern of crises and deliverance in Israel. In each pattern, or schema, the hero is introduced, the crisis is described, and finally, the hero successfully leads Israel through the given crises.⁷¹ Willis sees 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a as constituting one phase of the schema, the introduction of the hero. Accordingly, 1 Sam 4:1b-7:1 describes the crisis, and 1 Sam 7:2-17 describes the liberation of Israel as brought about by Samuel.

From a somewhat historicizing perspective, Willis also outlines the nature of the Shiloh cult as it would have existed during the time of Samuel's youth.⁷² In

⁶⁹John T. Willis, Ibid., p. 294.

⁷⁰John T. Willis, Ibid., p. 289.

⁷¹John T. Willis, "An Anti-Elide Narrative Tradition from a Prophetic Circle at Ramah," p. 288ff.

⁷²John T. Willis, "Cultic Elements in the Story of Samuel's Birth and Dedication," op. cit., pp. 54-57.

addition, Willis reflects upon the role of Hannah in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. He concludes that her privileged position in the Old Testament may function as a precursor to the queen mother in the monarchy of Judah.⁷³

In his doctoral dissertation, A. E. Zannoni⁷⁴ attempted to situate 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a within the context of the history of Israel's cult. Specifically, he situates the pericope within the context of the Josianic reform, circa 622 B.C. According to Zannoni, the Deuteronomic Historian has reworked the traditions of Samuel, Shiloh and the Elidic priesthood from the perspective of the centralized cult in Jerusalem. Consequently, 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a is to be read as a homily ushering in a new cultic era, and calling for a new change of heart relative to the cult.

The next analysis of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a to be discussed in this section is that of P. Kyle McCarter, Jr.,⁷⁵ who also sees the youth story of Samuel as being an integral part of 1 Sam 1-7. In order to understand McCarter's theory concerning the birth and call

⁷³John T. Willis, Ibid., pp. 57-61.

⁷⁴A. E. Zannoni, An Investigation of the Call and Dedication of the Prophet Samuel. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Marquette University, 1976.

⁷⁵P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. 1 Samuel. A New Translation with Introduction. Notes and Commentary. The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1980), pp. 1-101.

narratives, one must realize that he believes that chapters 1-7, like the story of Saul (1 Sam 8-15) and the story of David's rise (1 Sam 16ff.), are part of what he calls the "Prophetic History."⁷⁶ This history, according to McCarter, is pre-Deuteronomistic, and constitutes the middle stage in the growth of 1 Samuel. McCarter theorizes that this history had its roots in the north where kingship was subject to prophetic designation. But, since the prophetic writer also had a "certain southern orientation,"⁷⁷ in regard to David as Yahweh's chosen king, McCarter speculates that the writer composed his work during the 8th century around the time of the fall of the northern kingdom. The prophetic writer most probably left the chaotic conditions of the north, and travelled to the south ". . . to which he looked for hope and in which he knew the future of Israel to be."⁷⁸ The history which had its origins in the prophetic circles of the north was ultimately incorporated into the work of the southern-based Deuteronomistic writer.

In regard to the specific formation of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, McCarter speculates that, during the 8th century, the prophetic historian incorporated into his

⁷⁶p. Kyle McCarter, Jr. 1 Samuel, pp. 18-23.

⁷⁷p. Kyle McCarter, Jr. 1 Samuel, p. 22.

⁷⁸p. Kyle McCarter, Jr. 1 Samuel, p. 22.

account of Samuel's birth certain elements which had originally belonged to the birth story of Saul. In this respect McCarter closely follows the painstaking tradition-historical work of Lods, Hylander and Dus. Like all of these scholars, he traces the wordplays on שׂל (1 Sam 1:20,27,28) and the verses suggesting the lifestyle of a nazir (1 Sam 1:11,18) to an earlier tradition about Saul. The prophetic historian next incorporated a section from the Ark Narrative describing the scandalous behavior of Eli's sons, and interspersed within this block of material (1 Sam 2:11-16) some favorable comments about the boy Samuel. According to McCarter, chapter 3, with the exception of vv. 11-14, ". . . is an original composition of our prophetic writer from beginning to end."⁷⁹ Then, to demonstrate that the nation of Israel could not survive without prophetic leadership, the prophetic historian added the bulk of the Ark Narrative (1 Sam 4:1b-7:1) to the birth and call narratives of Samuel.

According to McCarter, the oracles of doom (2:27-36 and 3:11-14) were inserted into the narrative later on by a Deuteronomistic editor.

⁷⁹P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. 1 Samuel, p. 100.

The final and most recently proposed analysis of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a to be discussed is that of Robert R. Wilson.⁸⁰ As a preliminary to his study, Wilson notes that there are three narrative complexes in which Samuel appears in a prophetic role: 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a; 1 Sam 7-12; and 1 Sam 13:1-15; 15; 16:1-13; 19:18-24; 28. According to Wilson, earlier editorial layers and earlier layers of traditions are sometimes visible in these three narratives, all of which bear traces of a final Deuteronomistic editor.

In regard to 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, Wilson follows the literary and tradition history proposed by scholars such as I. Hylander, M. Noth, Jan Dus, and H. W. Hertzberg. According to all of them, the story of Samuel's call to prophecy was prefaced by a birth narrative and by several narrative units dealing with the sinfulness of the Elides. The author who gave the call narrative its present shape, and who molded the different narrative units together was a Deuteronomistic redactor and author.

At the end of this overview of the history of the exegesis of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, four summarizing conclusions may be offered:

⁸⁰Robert R. Wilson, Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 169-72.

1) There is an almost unanimous sense that 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a is not a factual account of Samuel's birth and call to prophecy. Rather, the story is understood as being a theological interpretation of the events leading up to the institution of prophecy in Israel.

2) Lods's hypothesis, which connected the wordplays on the root š'p in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a with a possible birth story about Saul, continues to intrigue contemporary exegetes.

3) Although some exegetes continue to situate the origins of the birth and call narratives in the north (either as an extension of the Elohist Tradition, or as a cult story stemming from Ephraim or Ramah), there is a growing tendency to attribute the final form of the narratives to the redactional activity of the Deuteronomistic school, a school rooted in the theological traditions of the south.

4) Although a number of scholars have, in a rather general manner, generically classified 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a as a Jugendgeschichte, or an Idyll, or a Geburtslegende, no comprehensive form-critical analysis

of the pericope (at least to my knowledge) has been undertaken.⁸¹

⁸¹A. E. Zannoni, op. cit., has devoted one chapter in his dissertation to a form-critical analysis of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. However, his form-critical approach to the pericope is incomplete and ambiguously executed. He finds four literary forms in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a: a birth story (1:1-18); a hymn of praise (2:1-10); a judgment suit (2:27-36); a call narrative (3:1-4:1a) and some "topical narrative" which is not analysed except in relation to cultic history.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTION: OLD TESTAMENT FORM CRITICISM RECONSIDERED

Reflections Upon Method

The genesis of the methodology used in this chapter had its roots in two works which stemmed from the Old Testament Form Critical Project under the editorship of Rolf P. Knierim and Gene M. Tucker, at the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, Claremont Graduate School, in Claremont, California.

The first work was Gene M. Tucker's Form Criticism of the Old Testament.¹ In that book, which is an introduction to the form-critical method for students, Tucker deals with such areas as the history of form criticism, its basic principles and aims, the relationship of form criticism to other Old Testament disciplines, and especially, the methods of form criticism.

According to Tucker, there are four basic steps in the form-critical analysis of a biblical text:

¹Gene M. Tucker, Form Criticism of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

1) The analysis of the structure. For Tucker, the analysis of the structure ". . . refers to the outline, the pattern or schema of a given piece of literature or a given genre."² A preliminary step to the analysis of the structure, of course, entails the delimitation of the unit to be analyzed. In outlining the structure of a unit primary attention is given to matters of form, and secondary attention is given to matters of content.³

2) Genre. The second step in the form-critical analysis is ". . . to define and describe a particular text as an example of one or another genre. The description may move from very broad observations to more precise ones."⁴ In other words, the analysis of a genre may begin with a broad classification (i.e., prose or poetry) and proceed to more precise ones (i.e., a psalm may be described as lyric poetry, then as a hymn, and finally as a hymn of praise). This step also includes the comparison of one example of a genre with other examples of the genre in the OT or in ancient Near Eastern literature.⁵

²Gene M. Tucker, Ibid., p. 12.

³Gene M. Tucker, Ibid., p. 12-13.

⁴Gene M. Tucker, Ibid., p. 13.

⁵Gene M. Tucker, Ibid., p. 14.

3) Setting. Tucker's understanding of "setting" is a nuanced version of Gunkel's Sitz im Leben. While "setting" refers to the sociological situation which produced the genre (v. g., the cult, law court, family, etc.), it is not concerned primarily with establishing the historical period in which the genre developed. The basic questions relative to determining the genre, according to Tucker, are "Who is speaking?" and "Who are the listeners?". The answers to these questions provide the setting for genres.⁶

4) Intention. For Tucker, this last step in the form-critical analysis is not an attempt to read the mind of the ancient speaker or writer; ". . . it is rather an attempt to discern the function the genre served or attempted to serve in its ancient setting."⁷ Tucker chooses the term "intention," rather than "function" because it helps to distinguish between the intention of the original material and that of a later compiler or redactor.⁸

The second work to influence the methodology of this chapter was published two years after Tucker's Form

⁶Gene M. Tucker, Ibid., p. 15-16.

⁷Gene M. Tucker, Ibid., p. 16.

⁸Gene M. Tucker, Ibid., p. 17.

Criticism of the Old Testament. Rolf P. Knierim, in his comprehensive article, "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered,"⁹ responded to contemporary questions relative to the discipline of form criticism itself. While basically adhering to Tucker's four steps in the form-critical analysis of a biblical text, Knierim sought a broader and more flexible method for the analysis and interpretation of texts. In his reflections upon the form-critical method, Knierim realized that not only must we deal with the fact that there are ambiguities in regard to the nature of genre (i.e., Is a genre constituted by its morphology? mood? societal setting? a context of belief?), but even the history of the way we have approached the question of genre "shows a perplexing methodological flexibility and inconsistency."¹⁰

Moreover, recent studies in different academic disciplines, i.e., literature, folklore, myth and symbol, linguistics and structuralism have raised, in regard to the question of genre, an entirely new set of questions:

⁹Rolf P. Knierim, "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered," Interpretation 27 (1973), pp. 435-68. For application of method proposed by Knierim, see the articles in the same issue of Interpretation by George Coats, Dennis McCarthy, Roland Murphy and Gene Tucker. See also Antony F. Campbell, The Ark Narrative (1 Sam 4-6; 2 Sam 6) A Form-Critical and Traditio-Historical Study. Dissertation Series, Number 16 (Missoula: Scholars' Press, 1975).

¹⁰Rolf P. Knierim, Ibid., p. 436.

Is there such a thing as an "intrinsic genre"? Are there fundamental patterns of the human mind that underlie the diversity of its expression? Ought we to distinguish between langue, the pre-linguistic activity of the mind, and parole, the activity of language? Between synchronic (the horizontal language field) and diachronic (the vertical language-history)? Is it the "occupation of the mind" that gives a distinct identity to genre? What is the interrelation between the language of generic forms and the evolution of human self-understanding?¹¹

In the light of these, and other similar questions, Knierim calls for a critical re-evaluation of the form-critical method, especially in regard to the interrelation of genre and setting. Since the coherence of the two can no longer be dogmatically upheld, a method must be designed which will allow scholars to do justice to the nature of given texts.¹²

Another issue addressed by Knierim is the relationship between the structure of a genre and its content. If our identification of genre is based strictly on morphological grounds, then that eliminates the possibility that a given text could be governed by some other

¹¹Rolf P. Knierim, Ibid., p. 437-44.

¹²Rolf P. Knierim, Ibid., p. 448-49.

typicality. And, ". . . if we expand genre to include a diversity of possible typicalities by which texts can be constituted, it would be a departure from the mainstream of the form-critical tradition."¹³ In view of this, Knierim believes that it may be necessary ". . . to revise the form-critical method in such a way that its major traditional categories can function as heuristic tools that enable us to discover the typicality or typicalities governing a text."¹⁴

Before describing his proposed revised form-critical method, Knierim deals with two additional considerations. First he questions the presupposition that every literary typicality can be explained in view of its oral background, and calls for a recognition of the qualitative difference between oral and written language. If written language has its own modality, then the form-critical method must take the literary character of texts seriously. After all, "the literary versions are the only ones we possess."¹⁵ And second, "through the exegesis of text units, the identification of text-types must

¹³Rolf P. Knierim, Ibid., p. 456.

¹⁴Rolf P. Knierim, Ibid., p. 456.

¹⁵Rolf P. Knierim, Ibid., p. 457-58.

be established in contradistinction to the individuality of the texts."¹⁶

In outlining his "reconsidered" form-critical method, Knierim calls for a less ideological and more flexible application of the specific form-critical tools. His method, like Tucker's, involves four steps:

1) Text and structure. Although we are far from possessing a fully developed method of structural analysis,¹⁷ the fact remains that there is no text in the Old Testament which is not structured. Form criticism, then, must ask for the structure of the text as a text.

There are many possibilities which may help to understand the structural principles which govern a text: rhetorical or stylistic devices; institutional patterns (i.e., rib patterns, the seven-day week, etc.); a systematic viewpoint (i.e., a process of thought, climax and anti-climax, etc.), and so forth.

Knierim singles out narrative texts as being especially problematic, since scholars have only recently begun to make inroads in the analysis of them.

¹⁶Rolf P. Knierim, Ibid., p. 458.

¹⁷It is important to note that Knierim is not dealing here with the question of structuralism.

It is only on the basis of a close textual analysis, according to Knierim, that the structure of a given text can be discovered. In the process of that analysis certain patterns, or schemas, may emerge; but, it is important to realize that they emerge from the text itself, not from structures imposed upon them by partial association. This approach differs from traditional form-critical research in so far as it is only after the analysis of the individual given text that the text is then compared with other typical structures.¹⁸

2) Text, Text-type, and Genre. The typicality of a text may be based on a number of possibilities: structure, regardless of content (v.g., the decalogues); setting, regardless of structure (v.g., sermons); a concern, or occupation of the mind (v.g., memorabilia); the domination of a particular motif, etc.

This range of possibilities has consequences for form criticism. If genre is understood to mean "structural scheme," then we need to account for other typicalities which govern texts. If genre is understood to mean the typicality which governs texts, then it would mean the same as text-type, and both terms could be used interchangeably. In either case, form-critical

¹⁸Rolf P. Knierim, Ibid., p. 459-62.

methodology needs to be flexible enough to realistically uncover the typical factors to which a given text owes its existence.¹⁹

3) Text and setting. In his attempt to move away from the viewpoint that understands a setting only from its oral societal origin, Knierim adopts Richter's view²⁰ that we can differentiate between three sorts of settings: institutions, the style of an epoch, and literature itself.

Within that viewpoint, setting can still be understood as "the creative institutional matrix within which genres, or types, and individual texts exist."²¹

But, the style of an epoch can also be understood as a matrix, in so far as it provides typical categories of communication used by a given people in a particular age.

And third, literature, itself, following its own rules, can be a setting of its own.

Regarding the question of setting, Knierim stresses that settings are not only the matrices of

¹⁹Rolf P. Knierim, Ibid., p. 462-63.

²⁰Wolfgang, Richter, Exegese als Literaturwissenschaft (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), p. 145ff.

²¹Rolf P. Knierim, Ibid., p. 464.

patterns. They can also be governed by such things as a particular concern, or an occupation of the mind.

And finally, Knierim warns that the recognition of a text-type will not automatically reveal its setting. A failure to determine a correct setting can lead to a distorted understanding of the text.²²

4) Intention. The ambiguity of this last aspect of form-critical interpretation is reflected in the fact that Knierim lists five terms for it: content, mood, occupation of the mind, function and intention. The terms themselves mean different things, and so far, there has been no comprehensive, methodological investigation of what the final step of interpretation should entail.

Each of the above terms can be applied to either genre, text-type, or text, or parts within text. The function of a genuine genre may be different from the function of a genre within a given text. Moreover, the "function of a text can be explained diachronically (in terms of its traditional type) or synchronically (in terms of its context)."²³

²²Rolf P. Knierim, Ibid., p. 464-65.

²³Rolf P. Knierim, Ibid., p. 466.

According to Knierim, since there are so many possibilities in regard to this level of interpretation, we must be ready to expect varying results.²⁴

Recently Martin Kessler²⁵ has criticized Tucker's form-critical method.²⁶ The basis of Kessler's criticism resides in his view that Tucker's strong diachronic perspective tends to make his analysis of structure dependent upon source criticism, his treatment of genre more like Gattungsgeschichte, and his treatment of setting comparable to traditio-historical criticism.²⁷ Kessler's concern is that such a diachronic tendency will detract from giving the received text the full emphasis which it deserves.

In the meantime, Roland E. Murphy has published Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles,

²⁴Rolf P. Knierim, Ibid., p. 466-68.

²⁵Martin Kessler, "A Methodological Setting for Rhetorical Criticism," in Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature, edited by David J. A. Clines, David M. Gunn and Alan J. Hauser (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), pp. 1-19, esp. pp. 12-13.

²⁶It is surprising that Kessler does not react to Knierim's broadened and expanded development of Tucker's form-critical method in "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered."

²⁷Martin Kessler, op. cit., p. 12-13.

Ecclesiastes, Esther.²⁸ This book is the first of a twenty-four volume series, scheduled for publication during this decade, which "will present a form-critical analysis of every book and each unit of the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) according to the standard outline and methodology." The methodology employed follows that developed by the scholars in the Old Testament Form Critical Project, under the editorship of Rolf Knierim and Gene M. Tucker. That methodology consists of four rubrics: the analysis of structure, genre, setting and intention.

Murphy realizes that the methodology employed is not necessarily a complete one, for he writes in the preface to his book:

The writer has attempted to glean the best from the relevant form-critical studies of the past. The general reader of the Bible will be the judge of how sharply this tool cuts into the material and lays it out for exposition. The scholar will be the judge among the differing points of view, and may sense the need of more "rhetorical criticism," which is a growing concern in biblical studies.²⁹

²⁸Roland E. Murphy, Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Esther, the Forms of the Old Testament Literature, Vol. 13, edited by Rolf Knierim and Gene M. Tucker (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1981).

²⁹Roland E. Murphy, Wisdom Literature . . ., p. xiii.

Towards A Personal Working Methodology

This study follows the four basic steps³⁰ to the form-critical method as proposed by Tucker; but the methodology employed here is nuanced by Knierim's call for more flexibility in the form-critical method. On the level of "setting" and "intention," as will be later indicated, the focus is shifted to one of the several methodological possibilities suggested by Knierim.³¹ That shift in focus allows this once again "reconsidered" method to deal, at least in some way, with Kessler's critique of Tucker's method, i.e., Kessler's concern that Tucker's strong diachronic interests detract from a rightful emphasis upon the received text. The method employed here also responds to Murphy's insight that scholars who make use of The Forms of the Old Testament Literature series ". . . may sense the need of more 'rhetorical criticism.'"³²

Before outlining, as simply as possible, the methodology employed in this study, it should be noted that throughout the study, the Masoretic text (Biblica

³⁰Tucker assumes that his four steps will be preceded by the delimitation of the unit to be analyzed.

³¹Rolf P. Knierim, "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered," op. cit., pp. 435-468.

³²Roland E. Murphy, op. cit., p. xiii.

Hebraica Stuttgartensia) is closely followed. For the English translation of the text, the Revised Standard Version will be employed. Where quotations from RSV differ significantly from MT, or where a variant reading is preferred, the appropriate information will be provided in the footnotes.

The methodology employed in this study will follow five basic steps:

1) Delimitation of the text. This first step is crucial, since an error in establishing the boundaries of a text would falsify the structural, formal and material perspectives of the analysis. The clearest indicators for delimiting a text are realities such as typical introductory and concluding formulas; the inclusio or ring composition; changes in time, location, characters or literary style. If there is a shift in genre, then the presence of the conventional patterns of a given genre (i.e., the prophetic lawsuit, blessings, curses, avowals of innocence, hymns, etc.) will be helpful in determining the extent of the unit. However, the criteria for delimiting a text are not always simple, especially in the case of Hebrew narrative. Richter³³ has noted that the process for establishing the boundaries of

³³Wolfgang Richter, op. cit., pp. 22ff., and pp. 86-87.

a text cannot always be reduced to the strictly controllable ones of syntactic connection. Nor can the process be limited to the purely formal analysis of style. Campbell³⁴ is correct in suggesting that the more intuitive factors (i.e., content, theme, horizon) must also be taken into consideration. According to Campbell, what we are looking for in the delimitation of a unit is ". . . that unit in the text which corresponds rather to the scene in drama, which has a substantial unity of its own within the movement of the whole composition."³⁵

2) Text and Structure. On this level the focus is upon a structural outline of the unit. The extremely detailed nature of the outlines may initially strike the reader as being excessive. However, it is the careful attention to all aspects of the structure of each unit that serves to uncover a variety of literary forms and typicalities within a given text or text-type. In some cases, the outline of the structure provides clues for understanding the intention of a given text, or unit.

It is precisely on this level of analyzing the structure that a new element is brought to traditional

³⁴Antony F. Campbell, The Ark Narrative, p. 56.

³⁵Antony F. Campbell, Ibid., p. 56; So also J. P. Fokkelman, in Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel, Vol. 1 (Assen: Van Gorcum Publishers, 1981), pp. 8-9.

form criticism. The detailed analysis of the text "asks for the structure of the text as text,"³⁶ and helps to uncover the range of structural principles which may govern it. A given text may be structured according to such realities as rhetorical devices, institutional patterns or systematic viewpoints. Although these different patterns or schemas may emerge in the process of analyzing the structure, it is important to remember that they emerge from the text itself, and not from a structure which is imposed upon it by partial association.

3) Text and Genre. Having established the typicality or "supra-individuality" of a unit through a detailed analysis of its structure, one is now in a position to determine the generic identity of the unit. Attention is first directed to the unit as a whole. If the passage is narrative, a decision must be made concerning the specific type of narrative operative in the text. Is it historical narrative, i.e., "a record and analysis of past events?"³⁷ Is it a factual report? Or,

³⁶Rolf P. Knierim, op. cit., p. 460.

³⁷See for example, Dennis J. McCarthy, S. J. "The Inauguration of the Monarchy in Israel. A Form-Critical Study of 1 Samuel 8-12," Interpretation 27 (1973), p. 404.

if the narrative embodies a tension and its resolution, is it a story?³⁸ If so, what kind of story?

Once the genre of the unit has been identified, it must then be compared with other similar texts in the Old Testament and, when possible, with other similar texts in ancient Near Eastern literature. Often, in a careful comparison of similar literary forms, the creative specificity of a given text will emerge. Those elements in a text which differ from conventional literary forms will call for special attention because they distinguish one text from others, and will hold clues for its interpretation.

On this level, much can be learned from the contemporary discussion of text-types and "typic scenes." Both Alter³⁹ and Williams⁴⁰ use the analogy of an icon to reflect upon literary conventions in biblical type-scenes:

³⁸For a reflection upon the diverse genres encompassed within the term "story" see Gene M. Tucker, "Prophetic Authenticity. A Form-Critical Study of Amos 7:10-17," Interpretation 27 (1973), p. 429.

³⁹Robert Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative (New York: Basic Books, 1981), Chapter 3, "Biblical Type-Scenes and the use of Convention," pp. 47-52, especially p. 51.

⁴⁰James G. Williams, Women Recounted: Narrative Thinking and the God of Israel (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1982), pp. 39-41.

The typic scene is a convention of story telling. Like conventions in painting and iconography, it has fixed elements that constrain the artist to work within them. For the artist there is a social necessity to offer the continuity of the long standing convention that the audience expects. The challenge to creativity is to achieve new meaning by dropping or adding an element here and there (too much dropping or adding would ruin the continuity), to effect different nuances, or to mold variations on the traditional elements.⁴¹

Finally, attention is directed to the presence of formulas and partial literary forms which may be found within an already determined genre. Tucker uses Amos 4:4 as an example of this phenomenon:

When Amos says, "Come to Bethel, and transgress; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression," he has borrowed a cultic formula (the call to worship), changed it, and used it in a prophetic speech in criticism of the cult.⁴²

4) Text and Setting. As we have already seen, Knierim called for a movement away from a monolithic approach to setting, an approach which understands setting only in terms of it being the oral societal origin of genres. Following Richter,⁴³ he differentiated between three sorts of settings: institutions, the style of an epoch, and literature itself.

⁴¹James G. Williams, Ibid., p. 40.

⁴²Gene M. Tucker, Form Criticism of the Old Testament, p. 15.

⁴³Wolfgang Richter, op. cit., pp. 145ff.

In this study, setting will be discussed only from the standpoint of literature itself. What is being sought at the level of setting, then, is the function of each unit within the context of the whole pericope 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. As we will see, this synchronic analysis of the relationship of units within the text will reveal that the story of Samuel's birth and call to prophecy builds its plot by means of a careful attention to symmetry between various units of the pericope.

It must be noted at the outset, however, that since the relationship of one unit to other units in the text can only be explicated after the analysis of all the units in the pericope, this step in the form-critical process will be dealt with in Chapter Six, "Text and Setting: The Structural Dialectic within the Units of the Text."

5) Text and Intention. Knierim noted that this step in the form-critical method ". . . is signaled by such words as content, mood, occupation of the mind, function and intention."⁴⁴ The range of problems inherent in this step of analysis is enormous, especially since we have no external evidence to assist us in determining why the narrator of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a told the story in a particular manner.

⁴⁴Rolf P. Knierim, op. cit., p. 466.

The approach taken in this study will be to concentrate upon the narrator's method of presentation as being the locus of his message. In a real sense, our only entrance into an author's "purpose," or "intention," or "occupation of the mind" is through an analysis of his narrative and stylistic features. Therefore, on this level of "text and intention," emphasis is placed upon the functions of keywords and motifs, and upon the presence of literary and rhetorical devices within the given units of the text. Since keywords and motifs play such an important role in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, a clarification of the use of them in this study will be helpful. The use of the term "keyword" in the following pages corresponds to the word Leitwort, which was coined by Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. Buber wrote:

A Leitwort is a word or word-root that recurs significantly in a text, in a continuum of texts, or in a configuration of texts: by following these repetitions, one is able to decipher or grasp the meaning of the text, or at any rate, the meaning will be revealed more strikingly. The repetition, as we have said, need not be merely of the word itself but also of the rootword; in fact, the very difference of words can often intensify the dynamic action of the repetition. I call it "dynamic" because between combinations of sounds related to one another in this manner a kind of movement takes place: if one imagines the entire text deployed before him, one can sense waves moving back and forth between the words. The measured repetition that matches the inner rhythm of the text, or rather, that wells up from it, is one

of the most powerful means for conveying meaning without expressing it.⁴⁵

The term "motif" is an extension of the idea of the "keyword" or "Leitwort." As used in this study, "motif" will indicate a situation, element, or idea which recurs in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a in such a manner that the repetition of the motif contributes to the unity of the narrative. The term "motif" thus points to situations, elements, or ideas which are pervasive throughout the whole pericope, "potently recalling or anticipating their earliest occurrences."⁴⁶

On the level of literary and rhetorical devices, attention will be focused upon the presence within the various units of realities such as the inclusio, or ring composition; chiasms; sonant devices such as alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia; metonymy; parataxis; paranomasia, and so forth.

An additional point must be made relative to the methodology as a whole which is used in this study. Although there are five distinct steps in the methodology, there is inevitably an overlapping within the five

⁴⁵As quoted in Robert Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative (New York: Basic Books, 1981), p. 93.

⁴⁶Sandra Beth Berg, The Book of Esther: Motifs, Themes and Structure, SBL Dissertation Series 44 (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1979), p. 16.

steps. To say, for example, that the structure of a given unit unfolds systematically in terms of an exposition, conflict, and resolution of the conflict, is already to say something about the genre of the text. To say that the boundaries of a given unit are determined by the presence of a chiastic structure is already to say something about the intention, or the meaning of the text. Nevertheless, care will be taken, as far as possible, to discuss each aspect of the form-critical analysis of a text in its proper order.

In the following chapters, therefore, each unit in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a will be analyzed from the following perspectives: 1) Delimitation of the text; 2) Text and Structure; 3) Text and Genre; 4) Text and Intention. Since the option has been taken to discuss "setting" within the context of literature itself, that step in the form-critical process will be dealt with in Chapter Six, "Text and Setting: The Structural Dialectic within the Units of the Text."

Finally, it must be noted that the response of some scholars to this "re-considered" form-critical method might be to question whether or not the methodology proposed here can still legitimately be classified as "Form Criticism." Certainly, this approach has deviated from traditional form-critical work in several

areas. First, in this study, the interpretation of a given unit begins with a presentation of its structure in outline form. Rather than imposing a "form" upon a unit by partial association, this method, in trying to respect the text as "text," only then attempts to distinguish the typical from the individual or unique elements in the text, in order to determine its genre, setting, and intention. Second, the concentration in this study is upon the received text, without attempting to uncover the various levels of redactional activity which may be present in it. Third, in an attempt to respect and elucidate the meaning inherent in a given text, tools normally associated with Rhetorical Criticism are employed under "Text and Intention."

While the purpose of this study is not to elucidate an exegetical method which will be intellectually acceptable to all scholars at all times, it must be noted that this "reconsidered" approach to form-criticism consciously moves away from a reality in which texts are dominated, not by their message, but by a given methodology. In view of this, the method employed in the following pages is (an admittedly imperfect) attempt to focus on those factors which, in reality, dominate the biblical texts. Certainly, for those of us who are committed to the proclamation of the Christian message (a

message, incidentally, which we only have in its received form), this method is one way of enabling us to be pastorally responsible.

CHAPTER THREE

1 SAM 1: A FORM-CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, an analysis of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a will reveal that the pericope consists of seven literary units. Two of the units, the birth narrative (1 Sam 1:1-28) and the call narrative (1 Sam 3:1-4:1a) are composite unities consisting of three sub-units each. The units of the pericope are as follows:

1 Sam 1:1-28	A birth narrative, consisting of three sub-units: 1 Sam 1:1-8 1 Sam 1:9-18 1 Sam 1:19-28
1 Sam 2:1-11	The Canticle of Hannah
1 Sam 2:12-17	A report of cultic abuse
1 Sam 2:18-21	A blessing narrative
1 Sam 2:22-26	A warning against treason
1 Sam 2:27-36	A lawsuit against an individual

1 Sam 3:1-4:1a

A call narrative, consisting of three sub-units:

1 Sam 3:1-7;

1 Sam 3:8-18;

1 Sam 3:19-4:1a.

1 Sam 1:1-8

¹There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. ²He had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Penninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

³Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of Hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord. ⁴On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Penninnah his wife and to all of her sons and daughters; ⁵and although he loved Hannah, he would give Hannah only one portion, because the Lord had closed her womb. ⁶And her rival used to provoke her sorely, to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb. ⁷So it went on year by year; so often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. ⁸And Elkanah, her husband, said to her "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"

Delimitation of the Text

Several things can be said concerning the delimitation of this sub-unit. First, vv. 1-8 are governed by

a structure which allows the text to unfold systematically in terms of an exposition (vv.1-3), a conflict (vv.4-7), and a tentative resolution (v.8). Second, in contrast to vv.9-18 which describe a specific moment in the lives of Hannah and Eli, vv.1-8 depict a pretemporal, on-going situation in Elkanah's family. And third, between vv.1-8 and vv.9-18 there is a shift of characters. Vv.1-8 introduce all of the characters in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a; by way of contrast, vv.9-18 focus entirely upon Hannah and Eli.

The Structure of 1 Sam 1:1-8

I. Exposition (vv.1-3)

A. Elkanah's background (v.1)

1. his geographical roots (v.1a)
2. his ancestral roots (v.1b)

B. Elkanah's immediate family (v.2)

1. Hannah (v.2a)
2. Peninnah (v.2b)
3. Peninnah has children (v.2c)
4. Hannah has no children (v.2d)

C. Elkanah's religious background (v.3)

1. He regularly sacrifices at Shiloh (v.3a),
2. where the sons of Eli are priests (v.3b)

II. Complication: the on-going rivalry (vv.4-7)

- A. Transition: temporal, frequentative statement, "On the day when Elkanah sacrificed . . ." (v.4ab)
- B. Distribution of portions
 - 1. He gives portions to Penninnah for "all her sons and daughters" (v.4c)
 - 2. He gives only one portion to Hannah (v.5a)
 - a. the wife he loves (v.5b)
 - b. because she is barren (v.5c)
- C. Penninnah torments Hannah because of her barrenness (v.6ab)
- D. Resumption: "this is what happened year after year" (v.7a)
 - 1. Hannah is miserable (v.7b)
 - 2. She weeps (v.7c)
 - 3. She does not eat (v.7d)

III. Tentative resolution (v.8)

- A. Narrative introduction: "Then Elkanah would say to his wife" (v.8a)
- B. Concluding discourse:
 - 1. "Hannah why (lmh) are you crying? (v.8b)
 - 2. Why (lmh) are you not eating? (v.8c)
 - 3. Why (lmh) are you so miserable? (v.8d)
 - 4. Am I not (hlw²) more to you than ten sons? (v.8e)

The exposition provides the geographical and ancestral background of Elkanah (v.1), brings to light

the significant relationships within his family (v.2), provides information concerning Elkanah's piety (v.3a), and draws attention to the presence of the Elides at the Shiloh sanctuary (v.3b).

The complication (vv.4-7) revolves around the rivalry which exists between the two wives, a rivalry which is aggravated each year during the distribution of portions from the sacrificial meal (vv.4-5). Hannah, the barren wife whom Elkanah loves (v.5), receives only one portion¹ because she has no children to feed, while Peninnah, with "all her sons and daughters," receives the lion's share. It is within that context that Peninnah continues to torment Hannah (v.6).

The resumptive statement in v.7a, "so it went on year by year," indicates that the unit is "pretemporal,"² that is to say, it provides background for all of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a by describing the ongoing situation in Elkanah's family rather than providing the reader with a specific moment in the history of that family.

¹v.5, which deals with Elkanah's distribution of portions, is difficult. In reference to Hannah's portion, MT reads mnh ʔht ʔpym, "one portion for (two) faces." RSV, following LXX^B, emends ʔpym to ʔps, "although." That emendation is clearly in keeping with the context of the story: Elkanah gives Hannah only one portion, in spite of the fact that he loves her.

²Robert Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative, p. 83.

In v.8 Elkanah's questions to Hannah function as a (tentative) resolution to the conflict in the sub-unit. Although he cannot remove the source of Hannah's anguish, her barrenness, Elkanah reminds her that, in spite of everything, she still possesses his love. Elkanah's questions to Hannah can be understood, not as one isolated conversation with her, but as the typical response that he would make to her each time that she experienced distress because of her barrenness.

Text and Genre

1 Sam 1:1-8 is one of three stories in the Old Testament which deal with conflict occurring between a favored wife who is barren, and a surrogate wife who becomes her rival. As such, this sub-unit can be classified generically as a "conflict story between two wives." The other similar stories in the Old Testament are Gen 16:1-6; 21:1-14 (the story of Sarah and Hagar) and Gen 29:31-30:24 (the story of Rachel and Leah).

Williams³ classifies these same accounts as "contests" in which the barren woman "initiates the process whereby she overcomes the shame of her condition and

³James. G. Williams, Women Recounted: Narrative Thinking and the God of Israel, pp. 48-55.

the vexation caused by her rival."⁴ He lists five common elements in each of these narratives:

- 1) The favored wife is barren.
- 2) The husband has another woman who is a rival.
- 3) The rival woman is fertile, and bears a son for her husband.
- 4) The rival woman belittles the barren wife, bringing about the conflict.
- 5) The barren wife eventually is heard by God and bears a son.⁵

While all three stories have most of these elements, an analysis of them also reveals some dissimilarities.

In the story of Sarah and Hagar (Gen 16:1-6; 21:1-14), Hagar is portrayed as the personal maidservant of Sarah. It is Sarah herself who takes the initiative in giving Hagar to Abraham. She does so precisely in order that she will be able to "obtain children by her" (Gen 16:2). Vawter⁶ notes that, in the light of life situations which are described in Mesopotamian legal documents, Sarah is acting in a way that will produce two consequences. First, Sarah's action, by exercising

⁴James G. Williams, Ibid., p. 49.

⁵James G. Williams, Ibid., pp. 48-49.

⁶Bruce Vawter, On Genesis: A New Reading (New York: Doubleday, 1977), pp. 214-25.

control over the concubine who will sleep with her husband, enables her to remain the undisputed mistress of her household. Second, since the children born to her through her personal maid will be counted as her own, Sarah's action prevents the possibility of a divided inheritance. In Gen 21:10 Sarah's rather venal preoccupation with the question of inheritance is more explicitly developed. She says to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac." In 1 Sam 1:1-8, by way of contrast, there is no evidence at all that Hannah fights to exercise control over her household. Moreover, there is nothing in the text to suggest that she is concerned with the question of inheritance.

Second, the fact that Hagar conceives a son, and begins to look upon Sarah with contempt (Gen 16:4) seems to alter the relationship between Abraham and Sarah. In Gen 16:5 Sarah says to Abraham, "May the wrong done to me be on you! . . . May the Lord judge between you and me!" In 1 Sam 1:1-8 the loving relationship between Elkanah and Hannah is not altered by the presence of a fertile rival wife.

Third, after Isaac is born, Sarah deals with Hagar in a harsh manner (Gen 16:6, 21:10ff). The sub-unit 1 Sam 1:1-8 does not include an account of a son

being born to Hannah. Instead, it highlights Peninnah's unwarranted mistreatment of Hannah. In v.6 we are told that Penninah "used to provoke her sorely, to irritate her" (literally, she "vexed her even with a vexation": w^eki cāsattâ . . . gam-ka^cas).⁷ In spite of her unjust treatment, Hannah never deals with Peninnah in a vindictive manner.

The conflict story between Rachel and Leah (Gen 29:31-30:24) is embedded within the narrative devoted to the successive births of Jacob's sons. After Leah, the less loved wife, has given birth to four sons (Gen 29:32-5), and named them in a rather exultant manner, Rachel becomes envious of her (Gen 30:1), and demands children of Jacob. He replies to her demand, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" (Gen 30:1-2).

In desperation, Rachel negotiates with Leah in order to buy some mandrakes, roots used at that time as an aphrodisiac and fertility potion. Whatever may have been the sequel to that purchase, the narrator is careful to stress that, when Rachel finally bears a son (Gen 30:22), it is only because God has graciously remembered her.

⁷The verb k^cs denotes a situation in which one party is unjustly treated by another. See. Deut 32:19; Job 5:2;6:2, etc.

When the conflict story of Rachel and Leah is compared to 1 Sam 1:1-8, the major difference in the two narratives resides in the distinctive characters of Rachel and Hannah. In some way, Rachel is the stereotypical person who seeks human solutions for the incomprehensible aspects of human life. In demanding of Jacob a power beyond his control (Gen 30:1), and in her decision to use the mandrakes (Gen 30:16), Rachel (in her desperate "this worldliness") is very different from Hannah. Although Hannah's solution to her barrenness, her recourse to prayer, is not dealt with until vv.9-18, it can at least be noted here that Hannah (unlike Rachel) does not resort to extraordinary human means to solve her difficulties.

Imbedded within the conflict story of Hannah and Peninnah are two additional literary forms, a genealogy (1 Sam 1:1) and a rhetorical question (1 Sam 1:8).

The genealogy, which provides the geographical and ancestral background for Samuel's father, has two parallels in 1 Chronicles (1 Chr 6:26,34):

<u>1 Sam 1:1</u>	<u>1 Chr 6:26</u>	<u>1 Chr 6:34</u>
	Samuel	Samuel
Elkanah	Elkanah	Elkanah
Jeroham	Jeroham	Jeroham
Elihu	Eliab	Eliei

<u>1 Sam 1:1</u>	<u>1 Chr 6:26</u>	<u>1 Chr 6:34</u>
Tohu	Nahath	Toah
Zuph	Zophai	Zuph

Whereas the genealogy in 1 Sam 1:1 contains information concerning Elkanah's geographical and ancestral background, the genealogies in 1 Chr. 6 are concerned only with ancestral roots. Second, in a manner not uncommon to the OT, the three genealogies contain differences in regard to ancestral names (i.e., Tohu, Nahath, Toah). A more significant difference is the fact that, in Chronicles, Elkanah is numbered among the sons of Levi (1 Chr 6:1) which identifies him as a member of a priestly family. Since the plot of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a is built, not only upon Samuel's birth and call to prophecy, but also upon the demise of the Elides, it is significant that the priestly background of Elkanah is not stressed in 1 Sam 1:1.

1 Sam 1:8, Elkanah's question to Hannah, may be generically identified as a "rhetorical question," or as a question that is asked more for rhetorical effect than for an answer. The supposition in this subgenre is that the answer to the question is clearly known, and that the question itself makes a deeper impression on the hearer

than a statement.⁸ A more complete analysis of Elkanah's question in v.8 will be made under "Text and Intention."

Text and Intention

In this level of analysis, as has been previously noted, the emphasis is upon the narrator's manner of presentation as being the locus of the author's message. In order to respect the artistic integrity of 1 Sam 1:1-8, the analysis will proceed from the beginning of the sub-unit, and systematically call attention to, and reflect upon, the key words, motifs, and literary devices as they occur in vv.1-8.

In 1 Sam 1:1, one can detect the presence of a ring composition within Elkanah's genealogy. Elkanah is introduced as "a certain man from Ramathaim-zophim (šôpîm)

of the hill country of Ephraim,
whose name was Elkanah
son of Jeroham,
son of Elihu,
son of Tohu,
son of Zuph (šûp), an Ephraimite."

⁸For definitions of various literary forms including that of the rhetorical question, see the glossary in Roland E. Murphy, Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Esther, op. cit. pp. 172-85, esp. 181.

In regard to the ring composition, several points may be made relative to its borders, "zophim" and "Zuph." Grammatically, "zophim" may be understood as being in apposition with "Ramathaim,"⁹ a plural noun which can be translated as "the two heights." Preserving the same consonants, the word "zophim" may be read as "Zuphim," which would better correspond to "Zuph" at the end of the genealogy. That translation would render Elkanah's hometown as "the heights, those of the Zuphites." However, by simply following MT, "Ramathaim-zophim" can be translated as "the heights, those of the watchmen" ("zophim" being understood as the plural form of sôpēh). Five arguments can be given for opting for "those of the watchmen." First, the word "watchman" (sôpēh) functions in classical prophecy as a metaphor for prophetic figures who are charged with announcing divine chastisement for Israel. As "watchmen" these figures are the first to perceive impending divine judgement; consequently, their task is to call Israel to repentance in order to avoid national disaster.¹⁰ Second, Rabbinic literature has

⁹For that possibility, see Dominique Barthélemy, Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, 50/1, Editions Universitaires Fribourg/Suisse (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), pp. 137-38).

¹⁰See Jer 6:17; Ezek 3:16-21; 33:1-9; Isa 56:10, and especially Hos 9:8 where the prophet/watchman is identified with Ephraim.

traditionally identified "zophim" with the prophets.¹¹ Third, if "zophim" is translated as "watchmen," then one can detect the presence of the literary device of paranoia operative within 1 Sam 1:1; that is, in the recurrence of the words "zophim" and "Zuph," the same word-root is used in two different meanings, constituting a play on words. Fourth, if "zophim" is understood to mean "watchmen," then Elkanah's genealogy functions as foreshadowing of Samuel's call to prophecy in 1 Sam 3. That adumbrative style, as will be seen throughout this study, is a predominant characteristic of the author of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. And fifth, the word "watchmen" introduces a motif of vision/perception that will occur at key moments in the plot development of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. Often, this motif will function in an ironic manner to signal Eli's lack of spiritual insight relative to his leadership over Israel. The following are instances of the motif of vision/perception in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a:

- 1) the allusion to "watchmen" in Elkanah's genealogy;
- 2) Hannah's appeal to divine perception, or "seeing" in her vow, as a means of changing her situation of barrenness: "O Lord of Hosts, if seeing you see (ʔm-rʔh)

¹¹See Louis Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, Vol. VI (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947), p. 215.

tr^h) the affliction of your handmaid . . ." (1 Sam 1:11); 3) In 1 Sam 1:12-14 Eli fails to perceive Hannah's prayerfulness, and falsely accuses her of drunkenness; 4) When Hannah returns to the Shiloh temple with the young Samuel, Eli does not recognize her. She has to re-introduce herself to him (1 Sam 1:26-28); 5) Eli does not perceive the sinfulness of his sons, and only "hears" of it from others (1 Sam 2:22,23,24); 6) In spite of the sinfulness of his sons, the impending divine judgement against Eli's house has to be mediated to him by means of a "man of God" (1 Sam 2:27-36); 7) There is no frequent "vision" (hāzōn) in Israel (1 Sam 3:1); 8) Eli's eyes grow so dim that he cannot see (1 Sam 3:2); 9) Eli does not perceive Samuel's divine call to prophecy until the third call (1 Sam 3:4-6); 10) After responding to the divine call, Samuel is afraid to tell the "vision" (hammar ʔā) to Eli (1 Sam 3:15); 11) Divine judgement against Eli's house (1 Sam 3:11-14) has to be mediated to Eli a second time, that time by a child who possesses more insight than he does (1 Sam 3:18); 12) The Lord, through the mediation of the young Samuel, continues to "make himself seen" (leḥērāʔoh) at Shiloh (1 Sam 3:21). Thus, it may be concluded that the wordplay upon the root sph in v.1 is an artfully designed literary device. It serves both to introduce the motif of seeing/vision into

the pericope 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, and to prepare the reader for an account of the inbreaking of the institution of prophecy into Israel.

V.2 is characterized by a chiasm of characters:

v.2b The name of the one was Hannah;

v.2c the name of the other was Peninnah.

v.2d Peninnah had children;

v.2e Hannah had no children

The center of the chiasm places the emphasis upon Peninnah, stressing the fact that she has children whereas Hannah, the "first" and favored wife, is barren. In this sense v.2 contains a foreshadowing of the conflict between the two wives which will be revealed in vv.4-7.

In v.3a the regularity of Elkanah's worship at Shiloh (he went up "year by year from his city") is stressed by both alliteration (repetitions of *mēm* and *yōd*) and assonance (repetitions of *hireq* and *qameṣ*):
mē ċ îrô miyyâmîm yâmîmâ.

In v.3b it is significant that the stress falls upon Eli's sons rather than upon Eli himself: "There, the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord." As the plot of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a develops, it will become evident that it is the blatant sinfulness of Eli's sons, rather than the stumbling ineptitude of Eli,

that will bring down the house of Eli (1 Sam 2:12-17; 22-25). In this sense, v.3b once again signals the adumbrative style of the author.

Vv.4-7 are governed by the motif of conflict. Within that motif, the root kā'as (to vex) functions as a keyword. In v.6 Peninnah "vexes" (wēki'āsattā) Hannah "even with a vexation" (gam-ka'as); in v.7 Peninnah again "vexes" (tak'isennā) Hannah until she cries and will not eat. The motif of conflict is further developed by the narrator's characterization of Peninnah as a "rival" (śārātāh) in 1 Sam 1:6.

The reference in v.7 to Hannah's inability to eat initiates another major motif in the pericope 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, that of food and eating. As will be indicated throughout this study, the motif of food and eating, like that of perception/vision, will re-occur at key points in the plot development of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. In vv.1-8 there are two references to Hannah's inability to eat (1 Sam 1:7,8); the second sub-unit is framed by references to eating (1 Sam 1:9,18); in the third sub-unit (1 Sam 1:19-28) Hannah takes food with her to the Shiloh temple, when she fulfills her vow there (1 Sam 1:28); in the Canticle of Hannah, God intervenes in human history, reversing the fortunes of the "hungry" and the "satisfied" (1 Sam 2:5); the great sin of the Elides is

that they take the best of the sacrificial meat, and even use physical force to get it (1 Sam 2:12-17); in the Judgement Suit against the Elides (1 Sam 2:27-36) the accusation is specifically connected with the fact that the Elides have "fattened" themselves upon the best of the sacrificial food (1 Sam 2:29), and the judgement proper climaxes with the statement that the Elides will end their days begging for a morsel of bread to eat (1 Sam 2:36).

An analysis of Elkanah's questions to Hannah in v.8 reveals both his character and the depth of his love for Hannah. His questions follow the pattern of a triad plus a climactic fourth element:¹²

- v.8b "Hannah, why (lmh) are you crying?
- v.8c Why (lmh) are you not eating?
- v.8d Why (lmh) are you so miserable?
- v.8e Am I not (hlw>) more to you than ten sons?

¹²Johannes Schildenberger, in Literarische Arten Geschichtsschreibung im Alten Testament, Schweizerische Katholische Bibelbewegung. Neue Folge, 5 (Einsiedeln/Zurich/Cologne: Benziger Verlag, 1964), p. 12, lists numerous other examples of trislegomena (3+1 pattern) in the books of Samuel. He notes, for example, that in the Succession Narrative, "spielt die Dreizahl eine bedeutungsvolle Rolle." For other treatments of the 3+1 pattern, see Robert Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative, op. cit., pp. 96 ff.; Michael Fishbane, Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), p. 70, etc.

The first three questions are rhetorical questions directed to Hannah, and (since the answers to them are already known) do not require replies. The threefold repetition of "why" (lmh) introduces an element of humor into the situation by making Elkanah's questions evocative of OT "complaints," or pleas for deliverance. The fourth question, beginning with the interrogative hlw³, shifts the emphasis away from Hannah and back to Elkanah. In other words, the fourth question suggests, not the plight of Hannah, but the vulnerability of Elkanah, the loving husband who cannot remove the source of his wife's anguish. His last question, then, fulfills two functions: first, it reminds Hannah that, in spite of her barrenness, she has a husband who still loves her; and second, the question serves as a poignant request for feedback relative to Elkanah's sense of his own self-worth ("Am I not worth more . . . ?").

Finally, the last word of Elkanah's series of questions, "sons," concludes a minor motif relative to children that is operative in 1 Sam 1:1-8. The noun "children" occurs twice in v.2, and there are seven repetitions of the noun "son" in this sub-unit: v.1 (four times), vv.3b, 4c, and 8e. The use of a motif relative to children serves to highlight the source of Hannah's misery, her barrenness, and to bring an element of literary unity to vv.1-8.

1 Sam 1:9-18

⁹After they had eaten and drunk¹³ in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. ¹⁰She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord, and wept bitterly. ¹¹And she vowed a vow and said, "O Lord of Hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy maidservant, and remember me, and not forget thy maidservant, but wilt give to thy maidservant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head." ¹²As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard; therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. ¹⁴And Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunken? Put away your wine from you." ¹⁵But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman sorely troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. ¹⁶Do not regard your maidservant as a base woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation." ¹⁷Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have made to him." ¹⁸And she said, "Let your maidservant find favor in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate, and her countenance was no longer sad.

Delimitation of the Text

Unlike vv.1-8, which describe the pretemporal circumstances concerning the family background of Elkanah and Hannah, vv.9-18 are concerned with a specific historical incident in Hannah's life, her vow at Shiloh

¹³Following LXX "They had eaten and drunk" rather than MT's "she had eaten" (ʔhry ʔklh).

and her encounter with Eli the priest there. Second, there is a shift in characters. Vs.1-8 introduced the dramatis personae of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a; vv.9-18 are concerned solely with Hannah and Eli. Third, the third sub-unit of the birth narrative, vv.19-28, manifests an easily defined chiastic structure, a literary device which forms natural boundaries between the material preceding and following it. Fourth, the borders of this sub-unit (v.9 and v.18) form an inclusio, so that the sub-unit begins and ends with references to eating. And fifth, Hannah's situation of sadness at the beginning of the sub-unit (v.10) is transformed at the end of the sub-unit, when she leaves Eli and "her countenance is no longer sad" (1 Sam 1:18).

Text and Structure

- I. Exposition (vv.9-11): Narrative followed by discourse.
 - A. The setting (narrative)
 1. After the meal, Hannah goes to the temple (v.9a)
 2. Eli is sitting at the doorpost of the temple (v.9b)
 3. Hannah is distressed (v.10a)
 4. She prays (v.10b)
 5. She weeps (v.10c)

B. Hannah's vow: Discourse

1. Narrative introduction: "And she vowed a vow, and said . . . (v.11ab)
2. Vow formula
 - a. Direct address: "O Lord of Hosts . . ." (v.11c)
 - b. Condition
 - 1) Request: "If thou wilt indeed look upon . . ." (v.11c)
 - 2) Request: "and remember me . . ." (v.11d)
 - 3) Request: "and not forget me . . ." (v.11e)
 - 4) Request: "but wilt give to thy maidservant a son . . ." (v.11f)
 - c. Promise
 - 1) The return of all that has been given: "Then I will give him to the Lord . . ." (v.11g)
 - 2) The context of the return: consecration ("and no razor shall touch his head." (v.11h)

II. Complication (vv.12-16): Narrative followed by discourse

- A. Eli observes Hannah (v.12abc): Narrative
 1. She speaks in her heart (v.13a)
 2. Only her lips move (v.13b)
 3. Her voice is not heard (v.13c)
- B. Eli concludes: Hannah is drunk (v.13d)

C. Eli indicts: Discourse

1. Narrative introduction: "And Eli said to her . . ." (v.14a)
2. Eli's indictment:
 - a. Question: "How long will you be drunken?" (v.14b)
 - b. Command: "Put away your wine from you" (v.14c)

D. Hannah's self-defense: Discourse

1. Narrative introduction: "But Hannah answered and said . . ." (v.15ab)
2. Denial: "No, my lord . . ." (v.15c)
3. Defense: "I am a woman sorely troubled" (v.15d)
4. Denial: "I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink" (v.15e)
5. Defense: "But I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord" (v.15f)
6. Denial: "Do not regard your maidservant as a base woman . . ." (v.16a)
7. Defense: "For all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation." (v.16b)

III. Resolution (vv.17-18): Discourse followed by narrative

A. Eli's farewell

1. Narrative introduction: "Then Eli answered . . ." (v.17a)
2. Eli's dismissal: "Go in peace . . ." (v.17b)
3. Eli's prayer: "and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have made to him." (v.17c)

- B. Hannah's farewell: "Let your maidservant find favor in your eyes." (v.18ab)
- C. Hannah's departure: "Then the woman went her way . . ." (v.18c)
- D. Hannah's transformation
 - 1. She eats (v.18d)
 - 2. She is no longer sad (v.18e).

This sub-unit, like the previous one, follows a plot development consisting of an exposition, a complication and a resolution. But, in contrast to vv.1-8 which consist primarily of narrative, this sub-unit is characterized by an alternation of narrative and discourse. Section I, the exposition, consists of narrative (vv.9-10) followed by discourse (v.11). Section II, the complication, also consists of narrative (vv.12-13) followed by discourse (vv.14-16). The pattern is reversed in Section III which begins with discourse (vv.17-18b) and concludes with narrative.

The exposition situates Hannah and Eli within the temple precincts (v.9), describes Hannah's distress (v.10), and gives the reader access to the content of her vow (v.11).

The complication provides the reader with insights relative to Hannah's interiority (v.13abc) and Eli's mistaken conclusion that Hannah is drunk (v.13d).

The conflict proper consists of Eli's indictment of Hannah (v.14bc) and of Hannah's self-defense (vv.15-16).

The resolution consists of farewell exchanges between Eli (v.17) and Hannah (v.18abc), and of the description of Hannah's transformation.

Text and Genre

1 Sam 1:9-18 may be generically identified as a variation of a promise, or annunciation story. Other Old Testament annunciations of births are: Gen 16:7-15 (Ishmael); Gen 17:1-21; 18:1-15 (Isaac); Judg 13:2-24 (Samson); 2 Kgs 4:8-17 (the son of the Shunammite woman).

These stories all share, to greater or lesser degrees, the following elements.¹⁴

1. The appearance of an angel or divinely appointed messenger.
2. The person to whom the angel/messenger appears experiences fear or awe as a result of the extraordinary visitation.

¹⁴For the characteristics of Old Testament birth annunciations, see the chart in Raymond E. Brown, The Birth of the Messiah (New York: Doubleday, 1977) p. 156; see also X. Léon-Dufour, "L'annonce à Joseph," in Mélanges bibliques rédigés en l'honneur de André Robert (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1957), 39-97; and "Le juste Joseph," NRT 81 (1959), 225-31; James G. Williams, Women Recounted Narrative Thinking and the God of Israel, op. cit., p. 52.

3. The angel/messenger makes an announcement, or promise, which includes some or all of the following elements:
 - A. The woman is with child, or is about to be with child.
 - B. The child will be male.
 - C. The messenger indicates the name which is to be given to the child.
 - D. The etymology of the name is given.
 - E. The future accomplishments of the child are given.
4. The person visited by the angel/messenger objects, asks how this can happen, or asks for a sign.
5. A reassuring sign is given.
6. The woman eventually bears a son.

While, in fact, a number of these elements are present in 1 Sam 1:9-18, the generic uniqueness of this sub-unit resides in the fact that Hannah herself, without the mediation of an angel/messenger, initiates a change within her existential situation. Indeed, in Hannah's extraordinary vow, she seems to have "direct access" to the Lord of Hosts! As a result of the absence of a divinely appointed mediator in 1 Sam 1:9-18, the sub-unit becomes almost a "reversal" of the classic Old Testament annunciations of births. The "reversal" aspect of 1 Sam 1:9-18 emerges as one enters into dialogue with the other Old Testament annunciation stories in regard to several points:

Divinely Appointed Messengers. In all of the Old Testament annunciations of births, angels/messengers appear to persons, bearing a divine promise concerning the future birth of a son. Because of the nature of these messengers (angels, angelic representations of the Lord, or, as in 2 Kgs 4:8-17, a prophet), all of them possess either qualities of divine omniscience or extraordinary knowledge. When Hagar flees from Sarah's harshness, the angel finds her in the wilderness (Gen 16:7); later, Hagar, addresses the angel as a divine being: "Thou are a God of seeing" (Gen 16:13). The three mysterious strangers who visit Abraham and Sarah at Mamre possess a quality of divine omniscience. When Sarah, who is hidden from their view, laughs at their message, they are able to read her thoughts (Gen 18:13). The angel who visits Manoah's wife already knows that she is barren and that she will have a son (Judg 13:3). In 2 Kgs 4:16 Elisha the prophet knows that the Shunammite woman will bear a son the next spring. In 1 Sam 1:9-18, by way of contrast, there are no divinely appointed messengers. Whereas the other women in the annunciation stories all interact (at least implicitly) with messengers who have extraordinary insight into their existential situations, Hannah, ironically, interacts only with Eli. Not only

does Eli lack insight into Hannah's situation, but he totally misinterprets it (1 Sam 1:13,14).

The Future Accomplishments of the Child. In the stories of Ishmael and Samson, the messenger refers to the future accomplishments of the promised child. Ishmael will be a warrior (Gen 16:12); Samson will be a nazir (Judg 13:5,14). In 1 Sam 1:9-18, by way of reversal, Hannah herself assumes responsibility for the destiny of her child. He will be dedicated to the Lord forever as a nazir (1 Sam 1:11).

The Etymology of the Child's Name. The angel tells Hagar to name her son "Ishmael," "because the Lord has given heed to your affliction" (Gen 16:11). Abraham names his son "Isaac," (laughter) after he and Sarah have laughed at the possibility of a son being born to them in their old age (Gen 17:17; 18:13-15). Although the etymology of Samuel's name is not explicitly given in 1 Sam 1:9-18, Eli, in his farewell prayer, inadvertently begins the series of wordplays associated with Samuel's name (1 Sam 1:17, and see 1:20).

The Reassuring Sign. In Gen 17:17, 20-21 the sign of God's covenant with Abraham is that Sarah will bear a son. In the Samson story, the angel reappears as a sign, and reveals his extraordinary nature (Judg 13:9, 18-21). In 1 Sam 1:9-18 Eli's farewell prayer, at least

to some extent, can be considered as a reassuring sign. In any case, after Eli prays that Hannah's prayer will be answered, she leaves the temple in peace: "and her countenance was no longer sad" (1 Sam 1:17-18).¹⁵

Hannah's Vow

Hannah's vow (1 Sam 1:11) can be compared with the other three vows present in the Old Testament: Gen 28:20-22 (Jacob's vow); Judg 11:30-31 (Jephthah's vow); and 2 Sam 15:8 (Absalom's vow). All four vows follow the same structural pattern: a narrative introduction, a condition, and a promise. An analysis of the three vows, in relation to Hannah's vow, reveals some surprising elements.

Jacob's Vow (Gen 28:20-22)

Jacob's Vow	Hannah's Vow
<u>Narrative introduction:</u>	<u>Narrative introduction:</u>
Then Jacob made a vow, (wydr y ^c qb ndr)	And she vowed a vow (wt ^d r ndr)
saying (l ^j mr)	and said (wt ^j mr)
	"O Lord of Hosts!"

¹⁵For 1 Sam 1:18e MT reads wpnyh l^j-hyw-lh c^wd, "and her face was no longer (the same)."

Condition:

"If God will be with me,
(m-yhwh l^olhym 'mdy)

and will keep me in this
way that I go (wšmrny bdrk
hzh š^r šnky hwlk)

and will give me bread to
eat and clothing to wear
(wntn-ly lhm l^okl wbgd
llbš)

And if I come back safe
to my father's house,
(wšbty bšlwm šl-byt šby)

Promise:

then the Lord shall be
my God (whyh hywh ly
l^olhym)

and this stone, which I
have set up for a pillar
shall be God's house;

and of all that thou
givest me I will give
the tenth to thee.

Condition:

if thou wilt indeed look
on the affliction of thy
maidservant
(šm-r^oh tr^oh bšny šmtk)

and remember me
(wzkrtny)

and do not forget they
maidservant (wl^o-tškh
št-šmtk)

but wilt give to thy
maidservant a son,
(wntth l^omtk zrc ššym)

Promise:

then I will give him to
the Lord all the days of
his life (wnttyw lyhwh
kl-ymy hyyw)

and no razor shall touch
his head.

In comparing the two vows, one can see that Hannah's prayer gives evidence of a depth and interiority that is not found in the vow of Jacob. Whereas Jacob's relationship to the Lord is consequent upon the divine bestowal of protection, bread, clothing and guidance, Hannah's prayer immediately begins with a statement of faith: "O Lord of Hosts!"

Jacob's conditional "return" to the Lord is paltry. If the Lord grants him all he requests, then Jacob will dedicate a stone to him. And, out of the abundance of God's gifts to him, Jacob, in return, will bestow upon the Lord one-tenth of all that he has received.

In contrast, Hannah asks for one thing, a son. If she receives her one request, she, in return, will give her only son back to the Lord, "for all the days of his life." Moreover, in promising to raise her son as a nazir, she will return her "request" within a context of consecration.

Jephthah's Vow (Judg 11:30-31)

Jephthah's Vow

Narrative introduction:

And Jephthah made a vow,
to the Lord,

and said,

Condition:

"If thou wilt give the
Ammonites into my hand,

Hannah's Vow

Narrative introduction:

And she vowed a vow

and said,

"O Lord of Hosts!"

Condition:

"If thou wilt indeed look
on the affliction of thy
maidservant

and remember me

and do not forget thy
maidservant

but wilt give thy
maidservant a son,

Promise:

then whoever comes forth
from the doors of my house
to meet me, when I return
victorious from the
Ammonites, shall be the
Lord's and I will offer
him up for a burnt offering.

Promise:

I will give him to the
Lord all the days of his
life

Jephthah the Gileadite, an illegitimate son who has been cast out of his family by his brothers, makes his vow in order to gain entrance back into the family clan. If he successfully completes the task assigned to him by the leaders of his clan (victory over the Ammonites), he will be accepted as the head of the inhabitants of Gilead. Before engaging in battle with the Ammonites, Jephthah makes his indiscriminate vow, a vow that will result in the death of his only child (Judg 11:1ff).

Whereas Jephthah's vow results in death, Hannah's vow results in life. Jephthah's daughter, contrary to the Hebrew prohibition against child sacrifice, is offered to the Lord as a burnt offering. Hannah's son is offered to the Lord, not in death, but "for all the days of his life."

At this point, an examination of Absalom's vow (2 Sam 15:8), in relation to Hannah's vow can be made.

Absalom's VowNarrative introduction:

For your servant vowed a
vow while I dwelt at Geshur
in Aram,

and said,

Condition:

"if the Lord will indeed
bring me back to Jerusalem,

Promise:

then I will offer worship
(w^cbdty) to the Lord."

Hannah's VowNarrative introduction:

And she vowed a vow

and said,

"O Lord of Hosts!"

Condition:

if thou wilt indeed look
on the affliction of thy
maidservant and remember
me and do not forget thy
maidservant, but wilt
give to thy maidservant
a son,

Promise:

then I will give him to
the Lord all the days of
his life and no razor
shall touch his head.

Absalom's vow is a ploy, cloaked in religious language, for laying the groundwork of his conspiracy against his father. In the narrative introduction Absalom uses the somewhat obsequious language of the court ("your servant"), as well as the legal language of vassal-fealty, to refer to himself in the presence of David, his father. In the promise he uses the same deceptive language ("serve"), this time in relation to cultic observance.

Whereas Absalom makes his vow in the context of a conspiratorial seeking of power, Hannah makes her vow in the context of littleness and affliction. Whereas Absalom uses the language of fealty to cloak his plans for betrayal and revolt, Hannah uses the language of a servant to describe her authentic attitude of humility before the Lord.

Traces of a Prophetic Lawsuit

Eli's indictment of Hannah (1 Sam 1:14) may be considered as a fragment of a prophetic lawsuit, or Rîb-Pattern. The Rîb-Pattern,¹⁶ a construct which probably had its origin in international law, and which was appropriated by the prophets as a parenetic device to lead sinful Israel to repentance, generally assumes two forms. Either it is a lawsuit addressed to the whole nation, or, as in this case, it is a lawsuit addressed to an individual. Prophetic lawsuits, or judgements against individuals, are characterized by the following elements:¹⁷

¹⁶For a contemporary presentation of the history of criticism devoted to the prophetic lawsuit, see Kirsten Nielsen, Yahweh as Prosecutor and Judge: An Investigation of the Prophetic Lawsuit (Rîb-Pattern). Translated by Frederick Cryer. JSOT Supplementary Series, 9 (University of Sheffield: Fengraphic, 1978).

¹⁷Claus Westermann, Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech. Translated by Hugh Clayton White (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), p. 130.

1. Commissioning of the messenger
2. Summons to hear
3. Accusation
4. Messenger formula
5. Announcement.

To say that Eli's indictment of Hannah is a "fragment" or "trace" of a prophetic lawsuit against an individual is not to say that it is a corrupted remnant of an earlier complete lawsuit. Rather, the intention is to say that Eli's indictment of Hannah is issued in the spirit of a prophetic judgement. In that sense, Eli's indictment corresponds to the element of accusation in the Rib-Pattern.

Several reasons can be offered for connecting Eli's indictment with the prophetic lawsuit:

1. On the level of style, Eli's indictment of Hannah is characterized by ". . . verse-like parallelism which in its formality resembles the beginning of a prophetic denunciation."¹⁸

- 2) On the level of language, Eli's indictment calls upon the stock language of classical prophecy. The adverbial beginning of his question, "How long will you be drunk?" (cd-mty) echoes numerous prophetic rhetorical

¹⁸Robert Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative, op. cit., pp. 84-5.

questions addressed to sinful Israel, many of which begin with "How long?" (Jer 4:14, 21; 12:4; 23:26; 31:22; Hos 8:5, etc.). When Eli accuses Hannah of being drunk (1 Sam 1:14b), his words echo other prophetic denunciations of "drunken" Israel (Amos 6:6; Joel 1:5; Isa 28:7). Of particular interest is Isa 28:7, where it is the priest and prophet who are accused of drunkenness, and who (like Eli!) ". . . err in vision . . . stumble in giving judgement." The use of the imperative "Put away (hsyry) your wine" (v.14c) recalls other prophetic commands to "put away" sinful patterns of behavior (i.e., 1 Sam 7:3; Isa 1:16; Jer 4:4; Ezek 45:9; Zech 3:4, etc.).

3) On the level of context, the most significant indication that Eli's indictment carries the weight of a prophetic lawsuit is Hannah's highly developed self-defense in 1 Sam 1:15-16. Such an elaborate avowal of innocence would not be necessary outside of a legal context.

An Avowal of Innocence

An "avowal of innocence" may be defined as "a statement in which one denies wrongdoing or even affirms good behavior. The setting can be legal, as when the avowal is aimed at an unjust accuser and before a judge;

or it can be cultic, as in the avowals in Psalms 7, 17, 26 . . ."¹⁹

This literary form was first delineated by Gunkel and Begrich²⁰ who noted the avowal of innocence (Unschuldsbeteuerung) in psalms categorized as "laments of the individual." Within that group of psalms, the avowal of innocence was connected with laments made in the context of a false accusation. Later, Westermann²¹ interpreted Job 31 as an avowal of innocence which corresponded to the motifs of innocence found in Psalms 7, 17, and 26; and Roland Murphy understands Job 9:29-31 as an imitation of an avowal of innocence.²²

Hannah's avowal of innocence also corresponds to the motif of innocence present in Psalms 7, 17 and 26. However, it must be noted that the situation of the psalmists in Pss. 7, 17 and 26 is significantly more serious than the situation faced by Hannah in 1 Sam

¹⁹Roland E. Murphy, Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Esther, op. cit., p. 173.

²⁰Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, Einleitung in die Psalmen. Die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933), pp. 194, 251.

²¹Clause Westermann, The Structure of the Book of Job. Translated by Charles A. Muenchow (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 38ff.

²²Roland E. Murphy, Wisdom Literature . . ., op. cit., p. 28.

1:15-16. The situation in the three psalms presupposes an ordeal in the Jerusalem temple that is described in

1 Kgs 8:31-32:

If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath, and comes and swears his oath before thine altar in this house, then hear thou in heaven, and act, and judge thy servants, condemning the guilty by bringing his conduct upon his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness.

Because of the dire nature of their situation, the psalmists in Ps 7:4-6 and Ps 26:2-7 submit to an "oath of exculpation"²³ in order to prove their innocence. Although Hannah's three denials of improper behavior (1 Sam 1:15c and e; 16a) are similar in form to the "negative confessions" within the oaths of exculpation (Ps 7:3-4; Ps 17:4; Ps 26:4-5), and her three self-defenses are similar to the psalmic statements of righteousness (Ps 7:8; Ps 17:5; Ps 26:3, etc.), her situation in 1 Sam 1:14-16 is not of the same significance as a life and death trial in the temple precincts. In 1 Sam 1:14-16 an incompetent priest, lacking spiritual perception, has accused a good woman of drinking too much wine. In turn, Hannah uses the rubrics of a legal self-defense to exonerate herself. Consequently, Hannah's

²³Leopold Sabourin, S. J. The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning (New York: Alba House, 1974) 221-22; 231-32; Artur Weiser, The Psalms: A Commentary. Translated by Herbert Hartwell (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 136, 242.

self-defense, like Job 9:29-31, is an imitation of an avowal of innocence.

Text and Intention

As has been previously noted, 1 Sam 1:9a, with its reference to "eating," forms an inclusio with v.18d. Moreover, the reference to both "eating" and "drinking" in v.9a picks up the motif of food/eating, and signals to the reader that a key development in the plot of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a is imminent.

V.9b introduces the second of the two characters in this sub-unit, Eli the priest. The narrator carefully informs the reader that Eli is strategically seated in a place that provides him with visual access to what is occurring in the temple, that is, Eli is seated at the entrance, or doorpost, of the hēkal, the main room of the Shiloh temple.

V.10 consists of three verbal clauses which, on the level of content, form a chiastic structure:

"She was deeply distressed; (v.10a)

She prayed to the Lord; (v.10b)

She wept copiously (v.10c).

V.10a and 10c are in parallel relationship, since they both delineate Hannah's misery. The stress falls

upon v.10b, emphasizing the prayerfulness of Hannah. V.10b also introduces the reader to the Leitwort of prayer/legal arbitration (pll) that runs throughout 1 Sam 1-2 (1:10,12,26,27; 2:1, 25b,d). Since prayer, at least in some way,²⁴ is related to the presentation of a case before God as judge, the Leitwort pll reinforces the motif of judgement that is operative within 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a.²⁵

The narrative presentation of Hannah's prayerfulness is concretized by her articulation of her vow in 1 Sam 1:11. It is not by accident that Hannah's first recorded speech in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a consists of a prayer.

Hannah's vow is characterized by a ring composition. It begins with a direct address, "O Lord of Hosts," and ends with the promise to return her requested son to the Lord for "all of the days" of the boy's life.

The protasis of the vow, which is introduced by cm followed by an infinitive absolute, emphasizes the

²⁴See Sheldon H. Blank, "The Confessions of Jeremiah and the Meaning of Prayer," HUCA 21 (1948), p. 337.

²⁵The allusion to "watchmen" in 1 Sam 1:1 is evocative of divine judgement; Eli "judges" Hannah in 1 Sam 1:14; Hannah prays (wttpll) to the God who judges (1 Sam 2:1-10) Eli is concerned about legal arbitration for his sons in 1 Sam 2:25; there is a judgement suit against an individual in 1 Sam 2:27-36, and an oracular judgement suit against Eli's house in 1 Sam 3:11-14.

intensity of Hannah's prayer. The protasis consists of four requests, and is characterized by an alternating pattern of verbal and noun clauses: NC, VC, NC, VC.

A further analysis of the four clauses reveals that they constitute a 3+1 pattern, or a triad of requests followed by a climactic fourth request. The first three requests follow a similar pattern. Each of them entails a calling out to the Lord, or an attempt to focus divine attention upon Hannah's own existential situation (i.e., "Lord, look at me!):

v.11c If seeing-you-see the affliction of your
maidservant,

v.11d and you-remember me

v.11e and you-not-forget your maidservant

In the fourth climactic request the emphasis is shifted away from Hannah herself to another, to the son whom she so ardently desires:

v.11f and you-will-give a son (zera^c ʔānāšim^u) to
your maidservant.

It can also be noted here that the four requests, which begin and end with references to Hannah as a "maidservant" are also characterized by a ring composition (1 Sam 1:11c, f). Moreover, the threefold repetition of "maidservant" (1 Sam 11c,e,f) draws attention to the humble attitude of Hannah in the presence of the Lord.

The phrase used by Hannah to designate her desired son (zera' ʔānāšîm) is the only occurrence of that term in the Old Testament. That phrase (literally, "descent of men," or "posterity") may function as a foreshadowing of both the demise of the Elides and the divine elevation of a new line of leadership.²⁶

The apodosis of the vow (1 Sam 1:11g,h) consists of a verbal clause and a noun clause. The striking aspect of the first clause, Hannah's promise, is its radicality. Hannah promises to return to the Lord precisely what she has requested of him, her much desired son. Her return will be total, for she will give her son to the Lord for "all the days of his life."²⁷

Her radical promise is extended in v.11h. Not only will she return her son to the Lord forever, but she will return him within a context of consecration. By

²⁶As opposed, for example, to the Elidic line in 1 Sam 2:17: "Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord; for the men (hā ʔānāšîm) treated the offerings of the Lord with contempt," and especially, the judgement suit against the Elides, where in the accusation we read: "Behold, the days are coming, when I will cut off your strength (ʔt-zrck) and the strength (ʔt-zrck) of your father's house . . ." (1 Sam 3:31).

²⁷The radicality of Hannah's promise, particularly in light of v.11h, where she vows to raise her son as a nazir forever, assumes significance in relation to Num 6:13ff. Other nazirite figures apparently were bound by vow only for certain periods of their lives.

promising to raise her son as a nazir (the implicit understanding of "no razor shall touch his head"), she will enable him to begin the process of realizing his destiny as Israel's first prophet.

V.12, beginning the complication of this sub-unit, introduces an element of dramatic irony, a literary device which will govern both the complication and the resolution of 1 Sam 1:9-18. Because of its function in this sub-unit, a definition of dramatic irony is in order:

Dramatic irony involves a situation in a play or narrative in which the audience shares with the author knowledge of which a character is ignorant: the character acts in a way grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances or expects the opposite of what fate holds in store, or says something that anticipates the actual outcome, but not at all in the way he means it.²⁸

Thus, the power of irony as a literary device resides in the fact that the author, by allowing his reader access into authorial "omniscience" invites the reader into a kind of fellowship of knowledge. Together, author and reader begin to observe the words and actions of characters, comparing what the characters do and say with what the reader knows to be actually true. Enjoying, then, a certain complicity with the action, the

²⁸M. H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms (3rd. ed., New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), p. 80.

reader watches the powerlessness of a character who, unaware of the fate which awaits him, moves blindly toward a reversal in fortune.²⁹

Lest the literary device of irony appear to have only a negative function, it must be noted that the essential function of irony is to underline meaning. In a real sense, for the reader to gain entry into what a given reality is not, is for the reader to gain insight into what that reality might be. Irony, then, facilitates a movement on the part of the reader which proceeds from a negative reality to ". . . a leap towards new meaning, new insights, new perceptions, convictions."³⁰

In 1 Sam 1:12a, then, the narrator returns to the Leitwort of prayer/legal arbitration by indicating to the reader that Hannah was "praying very much" (kî hirbetâ l^ehitpallēl) before the Lord, and that Eli the priest, unaware of Hannah's interiority, is ironically only watching her mouth (v.12b).

²⁹See Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (2nd. ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983) pp. 300-08; Edwin M. Good, Irony in the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), pp. 13-38; Walter J. Ong, S. J., Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 286-95.

³⁰Wayne C. Booth, A Rhetoric of Irony (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 28.

In v.13 the narrator creates suspense and retards the action of the plot by continuing to stress Hannah's interior depth: she speaks in her heart (v.13a); only her lips move (v.13b); her voice is not heard (v.13c). In v.13d Eli, who unlike the narrator and the reader, does not have access to the reality of Hannah's prayerfulness, assumes that she is drunk.

The statement in 1 Sam 1:13d that Hannah "was speaking (m^edabberet) in her heart" introduces the primary Leitwort of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, dābār,³¹ and thus, in a subtle way, foreshadows the emergence of the prophetic word which will be mediated at the conclusion of the pericope (1 Sam 3:19-4:1a) by Samuel.

Dramatic irony reaches its height in 1 Sam 1:14. Eli, who is unable to rebuke his own sons, even when they are guilty of religious treason (1 Sam 2:22-25), and will later bear divine condemnation for not correcting them (1 Sam 3:13) inappropriately indicts Hannah for a misdemeanor she has not committed. As has been noted previously, Eli's indictment of Hannah parodies, in style, language and content, classical prophetic denunciations of Israel. In the issuing of a (misdirected) indictment

³¹The root dābār is repeated twenty-one times in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a: 1:13, 16, 23; 2:3, 23 (2x); 3:1, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17 (5x), 18, 19, 21; 4:1a.

of Hannah, then, Eli is presented to the reader as a "prophète manqué," a pseudo-prophet who ironically will later be indicted himself through the mediation of two creditable prophets (1 Sam 2:27-36; 3:11-14, 18).

As has been previously discussed, Hannah's response to Eli's indictment (vv.15-16) is an appropriate one for someone who has innocently been the object of a prophetic denunciation. She answers in the context of a legal process. In her avowal of innocence, Hannah respectfully addresses Eli as "my lord" (v.15c). At the same time, she makes it clear to Eli that she is not a base woman (literally, a "daughter of Belial"), using the same terminology that will condemn Eli's own sons in 1 Sam 2:22. Hannah's third statement of defense (v.16b), "I have been speaking (dibbartî) out of my great anxiety . . ." once again picks up the Leitwort of dābār.

In the resolution of this sub-unit (vv.17-18) the dramatic irony continues. Eli dismisses Hannah in a priestly fashion, "Go in peace" (v.17b). Although he has not heard the content of her vow (having only watched her mouth!), he utters a pious prayer, the fulfillment of which will bring about his own downfall. A close analysis of Eli's dismissal and prayer reveals two additional points. First, the prayer contains the first of nine repetitions of the Leitwort "request/grant" (šā ʔ al)

which is operative in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a: 1 Sam 1:18 (2x), 20, 27 (2x), 28 (2x), 2:20 (2x). Second, the dismissal and prayer, which are closer to poetry than prose, are characterized by sonant devices: sibilant alliteration through the repetition of initial and medial śîn and šîn (. . . lšlwm . . . yśrʔl . . . ʔt-šltk ʔšr š ʔlt); liquid alliteration through the repetition of initial, medial and final lamed (lky lšlwm . . . yśrʔl . . . ʔt-šltk . . . š ʔlt); assonance through the fivefold repetition of šērê (wēʔlōhê yîsrāʔel yîttēn ʔet-šēlātēk . . .) assonance through the repetition of ḥîreq (l^ekîy . . . yîsrāʔel yîttēn); and second, there is a wordplay centered upon the root śaʔal: ". . . the "request" (ʔt-šltk) which you have "requested" (ʔšr š ʔlt).

The literary techniques of alliteration and assonance have an aesthetic auditory value of their own, but they also have an "aesthetico-emphatic"³² value. In other words, the narrator's use of alliteration and assonance in v.17 calls attention, once again, to the ironic fact that the fulfillment of Eli's prayer will issue forth in the birth of the "requested" child/prophet who, entrusted with the dēbar yahweh, will reveal the divine words of condemnation concerning Eli's house.

³²See P. P. Saydon, "Assonance in Hebrew as a Means of Expressing Emphasis," Biblica 36 (1955) pp. 36-50; 287-304.

Hannah's farewell to Eli (v.18ab), which contains a wordplay upon her own name ("Let your maidservant find favor [hn] in your eyes") strikes a final blow of irony in this sub-unit. Her response to Eli's dismissal and prayer provides delightful hints of her own inner graciousness, a graciousness to which he had formerly been blind. The reference to Eli's eyes evokes the motif of the prophet/watchman, an office for which Eli has proved himself unqualified.

V.18d describes the transformation which has taken place in Hannah. The woman who had previously been overwhelmed with sadness (1 Sam 1:6-8; 10, 15), and who could not eat (1 Sam 1:7-8) now eats and is no longer sad (literally, "her countenance was no longer the same").

1 Sam 1:19-28

¹⁹They rose early in the morning and worshipped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her; ²⁰and in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the Lord." ²¹And the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and to pay his vow. ²²But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the Lord, and abide there forever." ²³Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him; only, may the Lord establish his word." So the woman remained and

nursed her son, until she weaned him. ²⁴And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine; and she brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh, and the child was young. ²⁵Then they slew the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. ²⁶And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. ²⁷For this child I prayed; and the Lord has granted me my petition which I made to him. ²⁸Therefore I have lent him to the Lord, as long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord." And they worshipped the Lord there.

Delimitation of the Text

The strongest argument for the delimitation of this sub-unit is the fact that the whole narrative forms a chiastic structure. In addition to that fact, several other points may be noted. First, there is a shift in characters. In 1 Sam 1:9-18 the action revolves totally around Hannah and Eli. In 1 Sam 1:19-28, by way of contrast, Elkanah and Hannah are the primary characters. Although 1 Sam 1:25b alludes to Eli, his role in this sub-unit is one of absolute passivity. When Hannah and Elkanah bring the young Samuel to him, Eli does not even comment about that event. Moreover, Eli's response to Hannah's statements in vv.26b-28b remains unknown. Second, the sub-unit begins (v.19b) and ends (v.28c) with references to "worship" (hwy), forming an inclusio. And third, the action in 1 Sam 1:9-18 takes place completely

in the Shiloh temple; in this sub-unit the narrative begins in Ramah and ends in Shiloh.

Text and Structure

I. The birth and naming of Samuel (vv. 19-20)

A. Narration of events

1. Elkanah and Hannah rise and worship (v.19ab)
2. They return to Ramah (v.19cd)
3. They have sexual relations (v.19e)
4. The Lord remembers Hannah (v.19f)
5. She conceives and bears a son (v.20abc)
6. She names him "Samuel." (v.20d)

B. Discourse: Hannah gives the significance of Samuel's name: "I have asked him of the Lord." (v.20c)

II. The weaning of Samuel (vv.21-23)

A. Narrative background

1. Elkanah and his household go up for the yearly sacrifice, and "to pay his vow" (v.21)
2. Hannah does not go (v.22a)

B. Discussion between Hannah and Elkanah:

1. Narrative introduction: "for she said to her husband" (v.22b)
2. Condition: "as soon as the child is weaned" (v.22c)

3. Promise: "I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the Lord" (v.22de)
4. Extension of promise: "and abide there forever" (v.22f)
5. Narrative introduction: "Elkanah her husband said to her" (v.23a)
6. Command: "Do what seems good to you" (v.23c)
7. Command: "Wait until you have weaned him" (v.23c)
8. Prayer: "Only, may the Lord establish his word." (v.23d)

C. Narrative conclusion

1. Hannah remains at home (v.23e)
2. She nurses her son until he is weaned (v.23f)

III. The dedication of Samuel (vv.24-28)

A. Narrative introduction

1. Hannah goes up to the temple, along with her offerings:
 - a) a three-year-old bull
 - b) an ephah of flour
 - c) a skin of wine
 - d) Samuel
2. Qualifying remark: "the boy was only a child!"
3. They slaughter the bull (v.25a)
4. They bring the child to Eli (v.25b)

B. Hannah's discourse

1. Narrative introduction: "And she said" (v.26a)
2. Greeting: "Oh, my lord!" (v.26b)
3. Exclamation: "As you live, my lord!" (v.26a)
4. Self-identification: "I am the woman who was standing here in your presence praying to the Lord." (v.26d)
5. Identification of the child: "For this child I prayed." (v.27a)
6. Recitation of divine activity: "The Lord has granted me the petition which I made to him" (v.27b)
7. Fulfillment of vow promise: "Therefore I have lent him to the Lord" (v.28a)
8. Fulfillment of the extension of the vow promise: "As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord" (v.28b)

C. Narrative conclusion: "And they worshipped the Lord there." (v.28c)

Based primarily upon content, 1 Sam 1:19-28 is structured according to three periods in the young Samuel's life. Section I (vv.19-20) is concerned with the birth and naming of Samuel. It consists of a narrative sequence of 10 verbal clauses, followed by a disjunctive noun clause. The noun clause, a statement made by Hannah, concludes the section.

Section II, the weaning of Samuel (vv.21-23), consists primarily of a dialogue between Hannah and

Elkanah (vv.22b-23d). Their dialogue is framed by a narrative introduction (vv.21-22a) and conclusion (v.23ef).

Section III, the dedication of Samuel in the Shiloh temple (vv.24-28), consists of a narrative introduction (v.24), a rather lengthy discourse by Hannah (vv.26-28b), and a narrative conclusion (v.28c).

On the level of style, however, the three sections are governed by a chiastic structure:

- A. Elkanah and Hannah rise in the morning, worship before the Lord (wyšthww l'pny yhwh), return to Ramah, and have sexual relations. (v.19abcd)
- B. The Lord remembers Hannah. She conceives, bears a son, and calls his name Samuel, "because I have asked him of the Lord" (ky myhwh š'lytw) (vv.19f-20)
- C. Elkanah and all his house go up to offer the Lord his yearly sacrifice, and to pay his vow (v.21)
- D. Hannah does not go up (l'p'lyth). She says to her husband, "not until the boy is weaned" (čd ygml). After that, she will bring him (whb'lytw), that he may appear in the presence of the Lord (š't-pny yhwh). (v.22)
- E. Elkanah says to his wife, "Do what seems best to you. Stay here" (šby) until you have weaned him" (čd-gmlk). (v.23abc)
- F. "Only, may the Lord establish his word." (v.23d)
- E¹. The woman stayed (wtšb), and she nursed him until she had weaned him (čd-gmlk). (v.23e)

D¹. And she went up with him (wtclhw) after he was weaned (gmltw), and presented him to the Lord (wtbphw byt-hywh) at Shiloh.

C¹. They slaughtered the bull, and took the boy to Eli. (v.25)

B¹. "This is the child I prayed for. The Lord granted to me the request (ʔt-šʔlty) that I asked for (ʔšr-šʔlty) from him. Now I, in turn, grant him (hšʔlthw) to the Lord. For all of his days he is granted (šʔwl) to the Lord. (vv.26-28b)³³

A¹. And they worshipped the Lord there (wyšthw šm lyhwh).

Since the discussion of chiastic structures necessarily entails the question of meaning, the significance of the above chiasm will be explored later, under "Text and Intention."

Text and Genre

The previous two sub-units (1 Sam 1:1-8; 9-18) were each characterized by systematic plot developments consisting of an exposition, a complication, and a resolution. In 1 Sam 1:19-28, by way of contrast, there is no evidence of a conflict in need of resolution. Consequently, 1 Sam:19-28 may be generically identified as a series of biographical "reports" of incidents in the young Samuel's life which have significance relative to his future destiny. In using the term "report"

³³In order to make the chiasm more explicit, the translation of vv.26-28b is my own.

(Bericht), the intention is to indicate a narrative ". . . that tells what happened without trying openly to arouse interest by creating tension looking to resolution."³⁴ In identifying this sub-unit as a series of "biographical" reports, the intention is to point to a form of history:

In the strict sense, biography is a form of history. Its subject is the history of the life of a particular person. However, biography usually deals with more than just the bare facts. It includes an evaluation of the achievements of a person, a description of the development of ideas and their bearing on the future, etc.

There is no biography as such in the Old Testament. However, as part of the prophetic tradition individual biographic narratives, or collections of such narratives are found that deal with events in the life of the prophet. But generally the intention is not biographical; the focus is not so much upon the person as upon what can be learned from what he experienced, how he acted, or what he said.³⁵

As a biographical report, or account, 1 Sam 1:19-28 may be compared with the account of Isaac's birth, naming, circumcision, and weaning in Gen 21:1-8. A comparison of the two narratives helps to uncover the generic uniqueness of 1 Sam 1:19-28:

1) In both narratives a barren woman, through divine intervention, gives birth to a son. The Lord

³⁴See the Glossary of Terms in Roland E. Murphy, Wisdom Literatures . . ., op. cit., p. 181. For all practical purposes, a "report" is synonymous with an "account."

³⁵See the Glossary of Terms in Roland E. Murphy, Wisdom Literature . . ., op. cit., pp. 173-74.

"visits" (pqd) Sarah (Gen 21:1); in reply to the conditional aspect of Hannah's vow (1 Sam 1:11d), in which she asks for divine remembrance, the Lord "remembers" (wyzkrh) her in 1 Sam 1:19f.³⁶

2) Abraham names Isaac (Gen 21:3); Hannah names Samuel (1 Sam 1:20).

3) Whereas Abraham circumcises Isaac (Gen 21:4), the generic uniqueness of 1 Sam 1:19-28 resides primarily in the absence of an account of Samuel's circumcision. Since the absence of fixed elements in type-scenes serves to effect different nuances of meaning,³⁷ several questions may legitimately be posed relative to the dedication of Samuel. Is the absence of a circumcision account in 1 Sam 1:19-28 founded in a prophetic-like critique of the cult?³⁸ Is the absence of a circumcision

³⁶But see 1 Sam 2:21, where the Lord "visits" (ky pqd) Hannah.

³⁷See, for example, Robert Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative, ch. 3, "Biblical Type-Scenes and the Use of Convention," pp. 47-52, especially p. 51 and James G. Williams, Women Recounted: Narrative Thinking and the God of Israel, pp. 39-41.

³⁸That possibility is in keeping with the negative view of the cult that is presented in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. See 1 Sam 2:12-17; 22-25; 27-36 and especially the climax of the divine oracle of judgement (3:11-14) where it is explicitly stated that the sinfulness of Eli's house will never be expiated by cultic practices (1 Sam 3:14).

account really an eloquent plea, in the spirit of the prophets, for the circumcision of the human heart?³⁹

4) And finally, on the occasion of Isaac's weaning Abraham, in keeping with ancient Semitic custom, held a great feast (Gen 21:8). By way of contrast, after Samuel's weaning his parents, in fulfillment of Hannah's vow, dedicate him to the Lord forever (1 Sam 1:24-28).

Text and Intention

Earlier in this study, under "Text and Structure," attention was drawn to the fact that 1 Sam 1:19-28 is characterized by its intricately developed chiastic structure. Since "Text and Intention" focuses upon the author's manner of presentation as being the locus of meaning in the text, the inquiry will now shift to the meaning inherent in the chiastic structure of 1 Sam 1:19-28. First, attention will be directed to the structure of the unit as a whole, and second, attention will be systematically concentrated upon each verse in the unit, in order to explore the minor literary techniques employed by the author throughout 1 Sam 1:19-28.

³⁹See, for example, Lev 26:41; Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 4:4; 6:10; 9:25; Ezek 44:6-7.

First, it can be noted that the chiastic structure of 1 Sam 1:19-28, with its balanced, symmetrical elements of the text, introduces a variation of style into 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, and thus enhances the aesthetic quality of the whole narrative. Moreover, the conscious repetition of words and phrases in the panels of the chiasm retards the movement of the text, and thus allows the center and crucial part of the chiasm, "Only, may the Lord establish his word" to stand out in brilliant clarity.

The five panels preceding and following the center of the chiasm mark the main aspects of the account: the authentic piety of Elkanah and Hannah, and their attitude of worship (A and A¹); the birth and dedication of the "requested" child (B and B¹); the fidelity of Elkanah's household to the yearly sacrifice (C and C¹); the weaning and presentation of the child Samuel (D and D¹); and the keeping of the child at home until he was weaned (E and E¹).

The center of the chiasm, Elkanah's statement concerning the establishment of the d^ebar yahweh, has no corresponding counterpart, and consequently serves as the focal point of the narrative. In other words, in this sub-unit the center of the chiasm deflects our attention away from the admittedly awesome fact that, through

divine intervention, a previously barren woman has given birth to a son. Instead, the chiastic center introduces an even more wondrous notion into the mind of the reader, the establishment of God's word in human history. In a real way, then, the center of the chiasm shifts the focus away from the birth of a child to the more significant birth of the divine institution of prophecy.

In v.19, the allusion to "morning," or a new day, quietly foreshadows the in-breaking of "newness" into human history. V.19 is also characterized by a ring composition: the new day that begins in humble worship of the Lord ends in remembrance by the Lord. The reference to "worship" (wyšthww) in this verse forms an inclusio with the same verb in 1 Sam 1:28 (wyšthw).

In v.20, the phrase "in due time" (ltqpwt hyymym), in its unusual plural form ("the turnings of the days") functions on several levels of meaning.

First, it calls to mind "the turn of the year" (tqwpt hšnh) in Exod 34:22, thus connecting Samuel's birth with the Feast of Tabernacles.⁴⁰ By situating

⁴⁰Relative to this point, see Paul Dhorme, Les Livres de Samuel, p. 22; R. S. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913) 16; William McKane, I and II Samuel: Introduction and Commentary (London: SCM Press, 1949) 34; Julius Wellhausen, Der Text der Bücher Samuelis (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1872), pp. 39-40.

Samuel's birth in that feast, which in the autumn calendar coincides with the New Year festival, the author is introducing two ideas into the mind of the reader. First, the allusion to the New Year, like "morning" in 1 Sam 1:19, signals the beginning of a new era in Israel. Second, since the New Year festival was characterized by the recitation of texts concerned with the judgement and kingship of Yahweh,⁴¹ the author is reinforcing the motif of judgement which is operative throughout 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a.

At the same time, it must be noted that hayyamim in v.20 is one of 15 occurrences of the noun "day(s)" in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a (1:3,4,11,20,21,28; 2:16,19 [3x], 31,32,34,35; 3:1,2,12), and that, together with references to "morning" (1:19; 3:15) and the allusion to night (3:3), it constitutes a major motif of "time" in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. It is significant that the allusions to "time" in relationship to Elkanah and Hannah are connected with "sacred" time, that is, with their celebrations of liturgical feasts (1 Sam 1:3,4,20,21; 2:19). In regard to Samuel, the motif of time occurs in regard to his destiny. Samuel is consecrated as a nazir "for all of his days" (1 Sam 1:11,28); there are references to

⁴¹J. L. McKenzie, Dictionary of the Bible (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 613-615, 863-64.

"morning" on the day of his conception (1:19) and on the day in which he first exercises his prophetic role (3:15). By way of contrast, the time references connected with the Elides are all allusions to, foreshadowings, or announcements of an impending day of judgement (1 Sam 2:31,32,34,35; 3:1,2,12). The sole exception to this pattern is 1 Sam 2:16 where, in the account of cultic abuse (2:12-17), a pious worshipper asks the Elides if the sacrifice could be carried out "as usual" (kayyom),⁴² that is, in the former, more respectful manner.

Having established in the reader's mind that a decisive moment in human history has taken place (v.20a), the author records in a staccato-like style the consequences of divine activity in Hannah's life: she is pregnant (v.20b); she bears a son (v.20c); she names him Samuel (v.20d).

V.20d, the climax of the account of Samuel's birth and naming, switches from narrative to discourse, and provides the significance of Samuel's name. In naming her "requested" child "Samuel" (šmw ʔl), Hannah

⁴²See F. M. Cross, "Epigraphic Notes on Hebrew Documents of the Eight-Sixth Centuries B.C.: II. The Murabba at Papyrus and Letter Found near Yabneh-yam," BASOR 165 (1962), p. 45, n.44, and P. Kyle McCarter, I Samuel, p. 83, n.16.

bestows upon him a name which, in its initial and final consonants, is evocative of her "request" (šʔl).⁴³ The wordplays upon the root šʔl in v.20d serve two functions. First, they connect Hannah's naming of her child with Eli's ironic prayer in 1 Sam 1:17-18. And second, since the syntactical emphasis in v.20d falls upon the prepositional phrase "from Yahweh" (myhwh), the wordplays upon šʔl highlight the fact that Samuel's very existence is a living proof of Yahweh's gracious response to the "request" of a woman in anguish and distress.

V.21, which begins the account of Samuel's weaning (1 Sam 1:21-23), reintroduces the motif of time by stating that Elkanah and his household went up for the "yearly sacrifice" (ʔt-zbh hyymym). In this same verse the author indicates that, in keeping with Num 30:6-7, Elkanah has appropriated Hannah's vow.

V.22, which states that Hannah did not accompany Elkanah to the yearly sacrifice, lays the foundation for their verbal exchange in 1 Sam 1:22b-23d. In a highly

⁴³For the whole spectrum of interpretations relative to the meaning of Samuel's name, see Peter R. A. Ackroyd, The First Book of Samuel: A Commentary (Cambridge: The University Press, 1971), p. 26; Paul Dhorme, Les Livres de Samuel, pp. 21-22; R. S. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel, pp. 16-19; H. W. Hertzberg, I & II Samuel: A Commentary, pp. 25-26; William McKane, I & II Samuel: Introduction and Commentary, p. 35; P. Kyle McCarter, I Samuel, p. 62, etc.

artistic manner, Hannah's statement to Elkanah echoes the structure of the vow formula in 1 Sam 1:11, thus reinforcing the significance of Hannah's vow. Both 1 Sam 1:22bcdef and 1 Sam 1:11 follow the pattern of a narrative introduction, a condition, a promise, and an extension of the promise:

1 Sam 1:11

Narrative introduction:

"And she vowed a vow, and said,

Condition:

If thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy maidservant,

and remember me,

and not forget thy maidservant

but will give thy maidservant a son,

Promise:

I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life,

Extension of promise:

and no razor shall touch his head."

1 Sam 1:22bcdef

Narrative introduction:

"For she said to her husband,

Condition:

As soon as the child is weaned,

Promise:

I will bring him that he may appear in the presence of the Lord,

Extension of promise:

and abide there forever."

Not only is there a structural similarity in vv.1:11 and 1:22, but there are correspondences on the level of content. In her vow Hannah appealed to divine

vision, or insight (ḡm-rḡh trḡh); in v.22 she promises that Samuel will be seen (wnrḡh) in the presence of the Lord. In her vow Hannah promised that Samuel would be given to the Lord "all the days of his life"; in v.22 she promises to bring him to the temple "forever" (ḡd-ḡwlm).

Elkanah's reply to Hannah (1 Sam 1:23bcd), in the form of two commands and a prayer, curiously echoes Eli's speeches to Hannah in 1 Sam 1:9-18. Indeed, in 1 Sam 1 there is a parallel relationship between the speeches of Eli and those of Elkanah. Both men ask Hannah a question: Elkanah's rhetorical question in 1 Sam 1:8, and Eli's accusatory question in 1 Sam 1:14b. Both Eli and Elkanah issue two commands to Hannah: Eli's command, "Put away your wine from you" in 1 Sam 1:14c, and his dismissal, "Go in peace" in 1 Sam 1:17b; Elkanah's two commands in 1 Sam 1:23c,d: "Do what seems good to you," and "Wait until you have weaned him." Both Eli and Elkanah offer a prayer: Eli's prayer in 1 Sam 1:17b, and Elkanah's prayer in 1 Sam 1:23d.

Elkanah's command in 1 Sam 1:23b, "Do what seems good to you" translates literally as "Do what is good in your eyes." His command functions in two ways. First, it shows that, unlike Eli, Elkanah has a basic trust in Hannah's perception of what is to be done. Second, in the reference to "eyes" (bḡynyk), an allusion to Hannah's

insight, the author is, through the recurrence of the prophet/watchman motif, reminding the reader that the Elides (unlike Samuel's family) lack the necessary perception for authentic religious leadership.

Elkanah's second command (v.23c) picks up the keyword which governs 1 Sam 1:21-23; that of "weaning" (1 Sam 1:22c; 23c and f).

As has been previously indicated, Elkanah's prayer in 1 Sam 1:23d, "Only, may the Lord establish his word" is the center of the chiastic structure and focal point of 1 Sam 1:19-28. The reference to the "word" of the Lord in v.23d functions in two ways. First, by foreshadowing Samuel's future prophetic mediation of the "word of the Lord," it once again signals the adumbrative style of the author. Second, the word dbw picks up and extends the primary Leitwort of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, that of dābār.

Finally, with reference to 1 Sam 1:23d, it can be noted that, unlike Eli's prayer in 1 Sam 1:17b, which was governed by wordplays and sonant devices to stress Eli's ironic incomprehension of his own words, Elkanah's prayer is astonishingly direct and unadorned. It is a prayer that literally speaks for itself.

1 Sam 1:24-28, the account of Samuel's dedication, begins with a listing of the gifts which Hannah

brings with her to the temple. In v.24 the author once again employs the pattern of a triad followed by a climactic fourth element. As Hannah goes to the temple, she takes with her three gifts: a three-year-old bull,⁴⁴ an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. Her climactic fourth gift is her only child, the young Samuel. One can also note that Hannah's four gifts represent the whole range of created reality: animal life, plant life, "civilized" life (wine), and climactically, human life.

In v.24c, "and the boy was young (whncr ncr), the author "breaks into" the narrative, sharing a personal assessment of the situation. Not only is the author sharing with the reader a personal sense of awe relative to Hannah's radical gift of her son ("and the boy was just a boy!"), but the author is introducing a major keyword (na^car) in 1 Sam 1:24-28 (1 Sam 1:24 (2x), 25,27).

V.25 delineates the offering of two valuable gifts: Elkanah and Hannah slaughter the bull, and they bring the boy to Eli. Hannah shares in the slaughtering of the bull (wy^yšhtw) in the way that Elkanah shares in the difficult fulfillment of Hannah's vow.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Reading bpr m^ylš with LXX (en moschoi trietizonti).

⁴⁵See 1 Sam 1:21.

The account of Samuel's dedication climaxes with Hannah's discourse (1 Sam 1:26-28b). Once again, as in her avowal of innocence (1 Sam 1:15), Hannah respectfully addresses Eli as "my lord" (v.26bc). That Hannah has to identify herself to Eli (v.26d) again draws attention to Eli's lack of perceptiveness. Hannah identifies both herself and the child (ʔl-hnʕr) in terms of her prayerfulness (vv.26d;27a), thus continuing the motif of prayer/legal arbitration that is operative in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a.

As Hannah tells Eli about the divine intervention in her life, she repeats the wordplays and sonant devices that had characterized Eli's non-comprehending prayer in 1 Sam 1:17: Yahweh has given her the request (ʔet-šě-ʔēlātî) which she had asked from him (ʔašer ša ʔalti mē-cimmo). Now, in turn, she grants (hišʔiltîhû) her son to the Lord. For all the days of his life, Samuel is granted (šaʔul) to the Lord.

It can be noted here that Hannah's dedication of Samuel (v.28ab) corresponds to the statement she previously has made to Elkanah in 1 Sam 1:22def, that is, on the level of structure, her dedication of Samuel (1 Sam 1:28ab) corresponds to the promise and the extension of the promise she had made at the time of the child's weaning:

1 Sam 1:22Promise:

"I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the Lord,

Extension of the promise:

and abide there forever."

1 Sam 1:28Promise:

"Therefore I have lent him to the Lord.

Extension of the promise:

As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord.

Structurally, therefore, the account of Samuel's dedication in the temple, in which Hannah fulfills her vow, forcefully draws attention to the significance of the vow itself.

The reference to "worship"⁴⁶ in v.28c allows the sub-unit 1 Sam 1:19-28 to end in the manner in which it began, that is, in a humble spirit of adoration.

⁴⁶Following RSV, MT "he worshipped" is emended to correspond to the plural "they worshipped" in 1 Sam 1:19.

CHAPTER FOUR

1 SAM 2: A FORM-CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1 Sam 2:1-11

¹Hannah also prayed and said,

"My heart exults in the Lord;
my strength is exalted in the Lord.
My mouth derides my enemies,
because I rejoice in thy salvation.

²"There is none holy like the Lord,
there is none besides thee;
there is no rock like our God.

³Talk no more so very proudly,
let not arrogance come from your mouth
for the Lord is a God of knowledge,
and by him actions are weighed.

⁴The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble gird on strength.

⁵Those who were full have hired
themselves out for bread,
but those who were hungry have
ceased to hunger.
The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.

⁶The Lord kills and brings to life;
He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

⁷The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low, he also exalts.

⁸He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap,

to make them sit with princes
 and inherit a seat of honor.
 For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,
 and on them he has set the world.

⁹"He will guard the feet of his faithful ones;
 but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;
 for not by might shall a man prevail.

¹⁰The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to
 pieces; against them he will thunder in
 heaven.
 The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth;
 he will give strength to his king,
 and exalt the power of his anointed."

¹¹Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy
 ministered to the Lord, in the presence of
 Eli, the priest.

Delimitation of the Text

Since the Canticle of Hannah, a poetic unit, is
 situated within a narrative complex, the extent of the
 unit 1 Sam 2:1-11 is readily perceivable.

The Canticle is framed by narrative statements.
 1 Sam 2:1a serves as an introduction to the Canticle, and
 1 Sam 2:11 concludes the story of Samuel's dedication in
 the temple. The following unit, 1 Sam 2:12-17, is con-
 cerned with Eli's sons, not with the family of Samuel.

Text and Structure

I. Introduction (personal prayer)

A. Personal praise

1. My heart exults in the Lord (1b)
2. My strength (qrny) is exalted (rmh) in the Lord (1c)
3. My mouth derides my enemies (1d)

B. Motive

1. Because (kî) I rejoice in thy salvation (1e)
2. There is none holy like the Lord (2a)
3. There is none besides thee (2b)
4. There is no rock like our God (2c)

II. Body

A. Accusation

1. Talk no more so very proudly (3a)
2. Let not arrogance come from your mouth (3b)

B. Motive

1. For (kî) the Lord is a God of knowledge (3c)
2. and by him actions are weighed (3d)

C. The reversals of human fortune (vv.4-5)

1. The bows of the mighty are broken (4a)
2. but the feeble gird on strength (4b)

3. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread (5a)
 4. but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger (5b)
 5. The barren has borne seven (5c)
 6. but she who has many is forlorn (5d)
- D. The actions of the Lord in history (vv.6-8)
1. The Lord kills and brings to life (6a)
 2. He brings down to Sheol and raises up (6b)
 3. The Lord makes poor and makes rich (7a)
 4. He brings low, He also exalts (7b)
 5. He raises up the poor from the dust (8a)
 6. He lifts the needy from the ash heap (8b)
 - a) to make them sit with princes (8c)
 - b) and inherit a seat of honor (8d)
- E. Motive
1. For (kî) the pillars of the earth are the Lord's (8e)
 2. On them he has set the world. (8f)
- F. Judgement
1. He will guard the feet of his faithful ones (9a)
 2. but the wicked will be cut off in darkness (9b)
- G. Motive
1. For (kî) not by might shall a man prevail (9c)

2. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces (10a)
3. Against them he will thunder in heaven (10b)
4. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth (10c)

III. Conclusion (prayer for a king)

- A. May he give strength to his king (10d)
- B. and exalt (wyrm) the power (qrm) of his anointed (10e)

The Canticle of Hannah, a song strongly influenced by the spirit and language of a legal process, is composed of three main sections:

1) An introduction consisting of personal praise (2:1bcd), which is followed by the motive for that praise (2:1e, 2abc);

2) The body of the canticle which consists of two stanzas. The first stanza (2:4-5) describes various reversals in human destinies; the second (2:6-8d) describes divine interventions in human history. The two stanzas of the body are framed by traces of a prophetic lawsuit: an accusation (2:3ab), and a judgement (2:9ab). Both the accusation and the judgement are followed by motives (2:3cd and 2:9c-10c).

3) The conclusion of the canticle, like the introduction, consists of a prayer.

The idea of "motive," as indicated by four deictic $\hat{k}i$ clauses (2:1e,3c,8e,9c), plays a crucial role in the structure of the canticle. As will be developed under "Text and Intention," the four deictic clauses, along with the accusation and the judgement, provide argumentation for the legal process at hand.

It can also be tentatively noted here that, based upon the four deictic clauses, the Canticle of Hannah is structured according to a chiastic pattern. The following is a simplified schema of that structure:

- A. Introduction: personal prayer (1bcd)
- B. Motive, introduced by $\hat{k}i$ (1e-2c)
- C. Accusation (3ab)
- D. Motive, introduced by $\hat{k}i$ (3cd)
 - 1) The reversals of human destiny (4-5)
 - 2) Divine actions in human history (6-8d)
- D¹. Motive, introduced by $\hat{k}i$ (8ef)
- C¹. Judgement (9ab)
- B¹. Motive, introduced by $\hat{k}i$ (9c-10c)
- A¹. Conclusion: prayer for a king (10de)

The structure proposed here, which closely follows MT, differs significantly from structures

proposed by exegetes such as G. Bressan,¹ David Noel Freedman,² Ralph W. Klein,³ or A. David Ritterspach.⁴

According to Bressan,⁵ the Canticle of Hannah is structured in the following manner:

Introduction:	(vv.1-2)	Exultation and praise for benefits received from God.
Stanza I	(vv.3-5)	The wisdom of God manifested in the ordinances of his providence
Stanza II	(vv.6-8)	The omnipotence of God in his disposition of human destinies
Stanza III	(vv.9-10)	The complete victory of God and his just ones in the coming of the Messiah

¹G. Bressan, "Il Cantico di Anna," Biblica 32 (1951), pp. 503-521; 33 (1952), pp. 67-89.

²David Noel Freedman, "Psalm 113 and the Song of Hannah," in Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1980), pp. 241-261.

³Ralph W. Klein, "The Song of Hannah," Concordia Theological Monthly 41 (1970), pp. 674-684.

⁴A. David Ritterspach, "Rhetorical Criticism and the Song of Hannah," in Jared J. Jackson and Martin Kessler (eds), Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1973), pp. 68-74.

⁵G. Bressan, "Il Cantico di Anna," pp. 512-513.

Freedman⁶ has reconstructed the text of the Canticle ". . . on the basis of the best available readings of MT, LXX, and 4Q Sam^a." In 1 Sam 2:1c he substitutes b³lhy for byhwh;⁷ in v.2b he deletes the clause "there is none besides thee"; in v.3a he deletes one occurrence of gbhh; following LXX and 4Q Sam^a, he reconstructs v.8 by adding the bicola "who gives to the vower his vow/ and blesses the righteous with years."⁸

The structure of Freedman's reconstructed canticle, based primarily upon meter, or syllable count, is:⁹

Opening:	(vv.1a-2b)
Divider I:	(v.3cd)
Stanza I:	(vv.4-5)
Main Divider:	(vv.6-7)
Stanza II:	(v.8a-f)
Divider III:	(v.8gh)
Closing:	(vv.9-10)

⁶David Noel Freedman, "Psalm 113 and the Song of Hannah," p. 251.

⁷Freedman's 1 Sam 2:1a corresponds to MT 1 Sam 2:1b; his 2:1b corresponds to MT 2:1c, etc.

⁸David Noel Freedman, "Psalm 113 and the Song of Hannah," pp. 255-260.

⁹David Noel Freedman, "Psalm 113 and the Song of Hannah," pp. 252-253.

Ralph W. Klein's structural schema is simple:
Introduction (v.1); Body (vv.2-9); Conclusion:
(v.10).¹⁰

Ritterspach¹¹ uses thematic consideration as a basis for the structure of Hannah's canticle. He divides 1 Sam 2:1-10 into three main strophes:

vv.1-3: "Salvation of the Faithful"

vv.4-8: "Yahweh's Actions"

vv.9-10: "Yahweh's Judgement"

None of the above exegetes (probably because they have analyzed the canticle without reference to its context within 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a) draws attention to the elements of a prophetic lawsuit present within the canticle (the accusation in v.3ab and the judgement in v.9ab). Moreover, with the exception of Ritterspach and Freedman,¹² they have not dealt with the structural implications of the particle kî (v.1e; v.3c; v.8e; v.9c).

¹⁰Ralph W. Klein, "The Song of Hannah," pp. 677-678.

¹¹A. David Ritterspach, "Rhetorical Criticism and the Song of Hannah," pp. 70-71.

¹²According to Ritterspach's structural schema, strophes I and II each climax with exhortative kî (v.3 and v.8); Freedman's Divider I (v.3cd) and Divider III (v.8gh) each begin with kî.

Text and Genre

The complexity of the Canticle of Hannah is reflected in the scholarly attempt to classify it generically. For the majority of scholars, it is a hymn of praise.¹³ According to Ritterspach¹⁴ and Klein,¹⁵ the canticle has the characteristics of both a hymn and a song of thanksgiving. For many scholars, it is a royal psalm.¹⁶ For John T. Willis, who has re-evaluated the canticle in view of information we now have relative to

¹³See, for example, G. B. Caird, "The First and Second Books of Samuel." Vol. II of The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), p. 882; S. Goldman, Samuel. Hebrew Text & English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary (London: Soncino Press, 1949), p. 8; H. W. Hertzberg, I & II Samuel, p. 31; Leopold Sabourin, S. J., The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning (New York: Alba House, 1974), p. 176; H. P. Smith, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel, p. 14; James C. Turro, "1-2 Samuel," in The Jerome Biblical Commentary (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 165; Claus Westermann, The Praise of God in Psalms, trans. Keith R. Crim (Richmond: John Knox, 1961), p. 122, etc.

¹⁴A. David Ritterspach, "Rhetorical Criticism and the Song of Hannah, p. 72.

¹⁵Ralph W. Klein, "The Song of Hannah," p. 676.

¹⁶p. R. Ackroyd, The First Book of Samuel. CBC (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), p. 30; A. Bentzen, Introduction to the Old Testament, Vol. II (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 7th ed., 1967), p. 95; Paul Dhorme, Les Livres de Samuel, p. 33; I. Engnell, "Samuelsböckerna," Svenskt Bibliskt Uppslagsverk (2nd ed.: Stockholm, Nordiska Uppslagsböcker, 1962), p. 2; etc.

Ugaritic epics and early Hebrew poetry,¹⁷ it is a variation of a royal psalm. More specifically, Willis believes that it is a song of victory similar to other royal psalms like Exod 15:1-18; Deut 32:1-43; 33; Judg 5; 2 Sam 22; Hab 3; and Ps 68. Like Willis, A. E. Zannoni¹⁸ classifies the Canticle of Hannah as a royal victory song.

In their attempt to understand the background in which the canticle originated, Willis¹⁹ and Freedman²⁰ stress the antiquity of 1 Sam 2:1-10. Both date the canticle somewhere between the 13th and 10th centuries B.C. Since that time period predates the institution of Davidic monarchy, Willis surmises that the reference in the canticle to the "king" in 1 Sam 2:10 may refer to a possible Israelite appropriation of the Canaanite practice of selecting a king for a city-state or a

¹⁷John T. Willis, "The Song of Hannah and Psalm 113," CBQ 35 (1973), pp. 139-154.

¹⁸A. E. Zannoni, An Investigation of the Call and Dedication of the Prophet Samuel: 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, pp. 97-100. Without proper citation, Zannoni repeats, in a verbatim manner, John T. Willis, "The Song of Hannah and Psalm 113," pp. 139-140; 142-143. Unfortunately, this is a consistent pattern in Zannoni's dissertation.

¹⁹John T. Willis, "The Song of Hannah and Psalm 113," p. 141.

²⁰David Noel Freedman, "Psalm 113 and the Song of Hannah," pp. 243-261.

tribe.²¹ Freedman does not generically identify 1 Sam 2:1-10. According to him, the style and the language of the canticle reflect the earliest phase of Yahwistic poetry (12th century B.C.). However, because of the explicit mention of "the king, the anointed one" and because of divine titles which are typical of later periods, Freedman believes that the canticle has been adapted to the interests of the monarchy.²²

Certainly, in order to deal with the question of genre relative to 1 Sam 2:1-10, one has to take note of the royal language inherent within the canticle. While some exegetes have concluded that v.10de (with its parallel phrases "his king" and "his anointed") is a later addition,²³ it must be noted that v.10de is related to the whole canticle in several ways. First, it is related to the introduction of the canticle by way of the inclusio (repetitions of "horn" and "exalted" in v.1c and v.10e); second, both the introduction (v.1bcd) and the conclusion of the canticle are prayers (v.10de understood

²¹John T. Willis, "The Song of Hannah and Psalm 113," p. 149.

²²David Noel Freedman, "Psalm 113 and the Song of Hannah," p. 241 and p. 261.

²³See Paul Dhorme, Les Livres de Samuel, p. 30 where he lists exegetes such as Bickell, Klostermann, Grimm, and Schlögl who held that position.

as jussives, following MT pointing); third, the body of the canticle (vv.4-8) climaxes with allusions to kingship: the divine exaltation of kings (v.8b);²⁴ the relationship of the king to other royal leaders (v.8c); and the inheritance of a throne (v.8d).

Although Willis and Freedman have concentrated upon the relationship between Psalm 113, a hymn of praise, and the Canticle of Hannah (based on the doublet in Ps 113:7-8 and 1 Sam 2:8a-d, and the similarity between Ps 113:9 and 1 Sam 2:5cd), it is Ritterspach who perceptively notes that the closest parallel to the Song of Hannah is Psalm 75.²⁵ Both Ps 75 and 1 Sam 2:1-10 begin with a prayer (thanksgiving in Ps 75:1, and praise in 1 Sam 2:1bcd); both allude to the saving deeds of the Lord in the past (Ps 75:1d and 1 Sam 2:1e); both contain

²⁴See, for example, 1 Kgs 16:2 where, in a prophetic lawsuit, it is a king who is exalted from the dust: "Since I exalted you out of the dust and made you leader over my people Israel." See also 1 Kgs 14:7, Ps 89:19 and 2 Sam 7:8. In all of these cases a king, as the result of divine election, is exalted from lowly circumstances for the purpose of royal leadership. More specifically in regard to 1 Sam 2:8b, "He lifts the needy from the ash heap" it must also be noted that v.8b is in parallel relationship to v.8c and d, both of which contain royal allusions.

²⁵A. David Ritterspach, "Rhetorical Criticism and the Song of Hannah," p. 72. So also, in an indirect way, R. Tournay, O.P., "Recherches sur la chronologie des Psaumes," Revue Biblique 65 (1958), p. 322. On the basis of similar religious terminology, Tournay dates Ps 75 and the Canticle of Hannah to the postexilic period.

an indictment against arrogance (Ps 75:4 and 1 Sam 2:3); both portray God as a Judge (Ps 75:2,7-8; 1 Sam 2:3, 9-10); in both psalms the fate of the wicked is contrasted with the fate of the just (Ps 75:7, 10; 1 Sam 2:9); in both psalms the God who judges is also the God of creation (Ps 75:2-3; 1 Sam 2:8ef); and finally, in both psalms the "horns" of the righteous are exalted (Ps 75:10; 1 Sam 2:1c,10e).

However, Ritterspach does not note the prophetic influence present in both Ps 75²⁶ and 1 Sam 2:1-10. Here again it may be postulated that an analysis of a poetic song, carried out without reference to its context within a narrative complex (1 Sam 1:1-4:1a), may result in an inattentiveness to motifs running throughout the whole pericope. More specifically, since the reader has already encountered elements of a prophetic lawsuit in Eli's accusation of Hannah (1 Sam 1:14), and is also aware of a motif of prophetic judgement running throughout the pericope, then the reader can more quickly recognize the prophetic influence present in Hannah's

²⁶L. Sabourin generically classifies Psalm 75 as a "prophetic exhortation." Following Gunkel, he writes that a prophetic judgement is the central feature of Ps 75. See Leopold Sabourin, The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning, p. 401. So also, in a similar manner, Pius Drijvers, The Psalms: Their Structure and Meaning (London: Burns & Oates, 1967), p. 252.

Canticle. Not only does 1 Sam 2:1-10 contain elements of a prophetic lawsuit (the accusation in 1 Sam 2:3ab and the judgement in 1 Sam 2:9ab), but the theological thrust of the canticle bears witness to classical prophetic themes: divine salvation (1 Sam 2:1e);²⁷ divine holiness (1 Sam 2:2a);²⁸ the futility of human arrogance (1 Sam 2:3ab);²⁹ the divine concern for justice, especially in regard to the lowly (1 Sam 2:3d,4,5);³⁰ and the precariousness of human strength (1 Sam 2:9c).³¹ For these reasons, then, Hannah's Canticle (in spite of its royal language) may be more properly identified generically as a prophetic exhortation.³²

It can also be noted at this time that the Canticle of Hannah has contacts with the prophetically influenced "Song of Moses" in Deut 32:1-43. Whereas

²⁷See Isa 17:10; 45:8,17; 46:13; 51:5; 61:10; 62:11; 63:5; Jer 3:23; Mic 7:7; Hab 3:13; Zech 9:9, etc.

²⁸See Isa 5:16; 6:3; 57:15; 65:5.

²⁹See Isa 2:17; 10:12; 13:11; Jer 48:29.

³⁰See Isa 1:17; 3:14-15; Jer 7:5; 22:3, 15-16; Amos 4:1, etc.

³¹See Isa 10:13-14; Jer 23:10; Mic 7:16; Hab 1:11; 2:13; Zech 4:6, etc.

³²L. Sabourin, in The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning, p. 394 characterizes "prophetic exhortations" as psalms having in common a tonality and some "prophetic" literary elements such as the oracle and exhortative speech, promises and threats, etc.

Hannah's Canticle contains only some aspects of the prophetic lawsuit pattern, G. Ernest Wright³³ has decisively shown that Deut 32:1-43 gives evidence of many elements of the prophetic lawsuit: the introductory statement of the case at hand (Deut 32:4-6); the recital of the benevolent acts of the Suzerain (Deut 32:7-14); the indictment (Deut 32:15-18); and the sentence (Deut 32:19-29).

There are also thematic similarities in both the Song of Moses and the Song of Hannah. The divine epithet "Rock" is found in each canticle (Deut 32:4,15,18,30,31 and 1 Sam 2:2); in both songs God is portrayed as Judge (Deut 32:19-29 and 1 Sam 3:3,10) and Creator (Deut 32:6,18 and 1 Sam 2:8); in both songs Yahweh is portrayed as being Lord over life and death (Deut 32:39 and 1 Sam 2:6); in both songs Yahweh is a God of salvation (Deut 32:15 and 1 Sam 2:1e) and brings about defeat over enemies (Deut 32:41-43 and 1 Sam 2:4,9-10); finally, both songs stress the absolute uniqueness of God (Deut 32:39 and 1 Sam 2:2).

It is significant that the lawsuit in the Song of Moses is directed to the people of Israel and thus

³³G. Ernest Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32," in B. W. Anderson and W. Harrelson (eds), Israel's Prophetic Heritage (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), pp. 26-67.

implicates all of Israel in legal guilt. By way of contrast, within the context of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a the canticle's accusation and the judgement, which come from Hannah's mouth,³⁴ can be understood as being directed to Eli. Since in 1 Sam 1:14 Eli has, in an inappropriate prophetic-like manner, falsely indicted Hannah, it is fitting (especially after the Lord has answered her vow) that Hannah should issue a prophetic-like warning to him: "Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth!" Similarly, the judgement (especially v.9b, "The wicked shall be cut off in darkness") can be considered as a foreshadowing and "prophecy" of Eli's eventual blindness in 1 Sam 3:2.

Thus, within the context of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, the Canticle of Hannah contains within it a critique of the Elidic line. At the same time, in view of its royal language (1 Sam 2:8abcd and 10de), the canticle contains allusions to kingship. Consequently, Hannah's Canticle, understood as a prophetic exhortation, functions proleptically within the opening pages of the books of Samuel as a prophetic critique of the institutions of priesthood and kingship.

³⁴1 Sam 2:1a,d.

Text and Intention

On this level of investigation, a level concerned with the meaning of the text, concentration will first be focused upon Hannah's canticle as a whole, and then attention will be systematically drawn to each verse of the canticle.

First, something can be said about the chiastic structure of the canticle:

- A. Introduction: personal prayer (1bcd)
- B. Motive, introduced by $\hat{k}i$ (1e-2c)
- C. Accusation (3ab)
- D. Motive, introduced by $\hat{k}i$ (3cd)
- E. The body of the canticle:
 - 1. The reversals of human destiny (4-5)
 - 2. Divine actions in human history (6-8d)
- D¹. Motive, introduced by $\hat{k}i$ (8ef)
- C¹. Judgement (9ab)
- B¹. Motive, introduced by $\hat{k}i$ (9c-10c)
- A¹. Conclusion, prayer for a king (10de)

As has been mentioned under "Text and Structure," the four $\hat{k}i$ clauses (2:1e, 3c, 8e, 9c) play a crucial role in the structure of the canticle. In his study of the linguistic and rhetorical uses of the Hebrew particle $\hat{k}i$,

Muilenburg³⁵ refers to Hebrew particles, in general, as "vocal gestures." They are devices which call the hearer/reader to attention; they are designed to give emphasis, or force, to statements; they bid the reader to heed, "giving him notice or warning, or stirring him to action."³⁶ Muilenburg also shows that the lawsuit pattern, indeed, the whole realm of Israel's legal existence, is influenced by the force of the particle kî.³⁷

In the Canticle of Hannah, therefore, the four deictic kî clauses serve as argumentation for the legal process at hand, and also emphasize in a dramatic way, what is actually happening in human history. The kî clauses provide reasons for prayer (1e-2c), and reasons why Israel stands in need of accusation (3ab) and judgment (9ab). Most important of all, pointing to the center and crucial part of the chiasm, the particle kî gives reasons why God enters, in a revolutionary way, into human history reversing destinies and claiming Lordship over life and death: he is the God of creation, the God who has power over all of created reality

³⁵James Muilenburg, "The Linguistic and Rhetorical Usages of the Particle כִּי in the Old Testament," HUCA 22 (1961), pp. 135-160.

³⁶Ibid., p. 135.

³⁷Ibid., p. 158.

(v.8ef). In that sense, the panels of the chiasm point directly to the power of God over human life and destiny. A and A¹ suggest the attitudes of humans toward the God of creation: praise (1bcd) and petition (10de).³⁸ The four motive panels (B and B¹; D and D¹), in providing argumentation for both prayer and the lawsuit, function in a parenetic or exhortative manner, calling attention to the dialectic relationship that is operative between God and humans.

Moreover, an analysis of the four kî[^] clauses in the canticle uncovers a variation of the 3+1 pattern. As has been noted previously, the 3+1 pattern consists of a triad of elements followed by a climactic fourth element. In the case of the four kî[^] clauses in Hannah's canticle, the pattern is ironically reversed. The first three kî[^] clauses deal with the divine attributes of God: he is a God of salvation (v.1e); he is a God of knowledge (v.3c); he is a God of creation (v.8ef). The fourth (anti-climactic!) element of the pattern is concerned, not with the divine attributes of God, but with the precariousness of human might (v.9c).

³⁸The attitude of petition is certainly in keeping with the spirit of Hannah's vow (1:11), and especially with the keyword of š³l operative throughout 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a.

Second, also reflecting upon the meaning of the Canticle of Hannah as a whole, it bears noting that the canticle, like 1 Sam 1:9-18, is characterized by the author's use of the literary technique of irony. It is an irony that is humorous (as in the 3+1 pattern in the canticle), but it is also an irony that is profoundly serious, particularly in regard to the author's reflections upon the meaning of power. Not only does the author ridicule "human" power, as in v.9c, but the author draws our attention to the fact that, through an exercise of divine power, human circumstances are subject to dramatic and ironic reversals. Those who seem to possess power, i.e., the mighty (v.4a), the satiated (v.5a), the fertile (v.5c), through divine intervention, can be supplanted by the "losers," or the powerless of the earth: the "stumbers" (nkšlym) in v.4b, the hungry (v.5b), and the barren (v.5c). And ironically, the poorest people of the earth (those who dwell in dirt and ash heaps), through divine election, can be elevated to positions of power (v.8a-d). Certainly, in this sense, the Canticle of Hannah functions as a foreshadowing of both the demise of the powerful Elides³⁹ (1 Sam 2:27-36;

³⁹See a Sam 2:16 where the Elides misuse their power by threatening to take the sacrificial offerings "by force."

3:11-14), and of the divine exaltation of the powerless child, Samuel (1 Sam 2:11,21,26).

Finally, still in relation to the Canticle of Hannah as a whole, something more can be said relative to the prophetic aspects of the canticle. Since the author of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a has placed a prophetic exhortation in the mouth of Hannah,⁴⁰ then, in a real way, Hannah functions in the pericope as a prophetess.⁴¹ That fact implies a view of prophecy similar to the one found in the book of Hosea, where prophets are understood to be "Yahweh's instruments in fashioning the future; their

⁴⁰1 Sam 2:1a,d.

⁴¹The idea of Hannah being a prophetess is consistent with rabbinic, inter-testamental, and patristic exegesis. In the targum to the Song of Songs, which begins with a reflection upon the ten songs sung in the history of Israel, we read: "The seventh song was sung by Hannah, when a son was granted her by heaven, as scripture testifies, 'And Hannah prayed (in prophecy) and said . . .'" See The Targum to the Five Megilloth (New York: Hermon Press, 1973), pp. 178-179. Philo of Alexandria also assumed that Hannah was a prophetess. In his "On Dreams, That They are God-Sent" he writes: "What I say is vouched for by that prophetess and mother of a prophet, Hannah, whose name in our tongue 'Grace'." See Philo. The Loeb Classical Library in 11 volumes (London: William Heinemann, 1949-1962, vol. 5), p. 429. St. Augustine, the The City of God, XVII, iv, writes: "Moreover, Samuel's mother Hannah, who had first been barren and was afterwards enriched with fertility, is clearly seen to prophesy exactly this . . ." Finally, since most NT scholars see the account of Samuel's dedication in the temple as being a proto-type of the Lukan account of the presentation of Jesus in the temple, one wonders if the prophetess Anna (Lk 2: 36-38) is not a NT version of Hannah, the prophetess.

actions and words have creative (or destructive) power."⁴² In this sense, then, Hannah not only determines Samuel's destiny by the promise in her vow (1 Sam 1:11) but she also, at least in some way, prophetically sets into motion the future establishment of the institution of the monarchy. Significantly, it will be her son Samuel who will legitimate that institution through his anointing of Saul, Israel's first king.

Having reflected upon the meaning inherent within the canticle as a whole, attention can now be turned to the individual verses of the Cantic of Hannah.

The narrative introduction to the cantic, "And Hannah prayed (wttpll) and said" picks up and extends the root pll which functions as a Leitwort in 1 Sam 1-2 (1:10,12,26,27; 2:1, 25b,d). As has been noted previously, the root pll seems to have a basic meaning related to the presentation of a case before God as Judge.⁴³ Consequently, 1 Sam 2:1a serves as a foreshadowing of the elements of a prophetic lawsuit present within the Cantic of Hannah (v.3ab and v.9ab), and once again signals the adumbrative style of the author.

⁴²A. R. Johnson, The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1962), p. 44.

⁴³Following Sheldon H. Blank, "The Confessions of Jeremiah and the Meaning of Prayer," *HUCA* 21 (1948), p. 337.

The introduction to the canticle consists of a tricola of personal praise (2:1bcd), followed by the motive for that praise (2:1e,2abc).

The tricola of praise consists of three verbal clauses which follow the same word order:

	<u>verb</u>	<u>noun+1st person sing. suffix</u>	<u>prep. phrase</u>
(2:1b) exults		my heart	in the Lord
(2:1c) exalted		my horn	in the Lord
(2:1d) opens		my mouth	against my enemies

The three synonymous clauses of the tricola of praise encompass the whole range of human potential: the heart, the center of love and intelligence; the horn, a metaphor for strength, as power for human action; the mouth, as capacity for human speech. The reference to Hannah's "heart" in v.1b reinforces the author's earlier portrayal of Hannah's interiority and her "prayer of the heart" in 1 Sam 1:13. The reference to "horn," or strength, in v.1c introduces the reader to the theme of power and powerlessness that will be operative throughout the canticle. Since the context of the canticle is that of a legal process, it is significant that Hannah "opens her mouth," or speaks, to her "enemies" (l-~~ā~~wyby). The motif of "enemies" will re-occur in the judgement of the canticle (2:9b) with the word "wicked" (rš'c ym), and in

the motive for judgement (2:10a) in the reference to the "adversaries" (mrybw) of God. In the third clause of the tricola, then, Hannah places herself in an adversary relationship with those who stand against her. In the counterplay between v.1d and v.10a, the enemies of Hannah become the adversaries of God.

The motive for praise is given explicitly in v.1e, "because (kî) I rejoice in thy salvation," and is extended by means of a second tricola (2:2abc) which, through the three-fold repetition of the negative ᵑyn, stresses the absolute uniqueness of God. The three synonymous noun clauses follow a similar word order:

	<u>negative substantive</u>	<u>pred. nominative</u>	<u>prep. phrase</u>
(2a)	There is none (<u>ᵑyn</u>)	holy	like the Lord
(2b) (ki)	There is none (<u>ᵑyn</u>)		besides thee
(2c)	There is no (<u>ᵑyn</u>)	rock	like our God

In v.2b the introductory kî is not deictic, but emphatic, giving the clause the meaning, "Indeed, there is none besides thee!" This center clause of the tricola, which does not contain a predicate nominative, is framed by two clauses which describe the absolute uniqueness of God by means of two divine attributes, holiness and strength.

In the three clauses of the tricola there is a subtle movement from the somewhat formal third person,

"like the Lord," in v.2a, to the more immediate second person, "besides thee" in v.2b, which serves to intensify the attitude of prayer and the sense of divine presence. In the third clause there is an additional movement, in the switch to the first person plural "our God," adding a universal and communitarian aspect to the motive for praise. It is interesting to note that, whereas Hannah has previously set up an adversary relationship with her opponents (2:1d), in this verse (2:2c) they stand together before the God of everyone!

There is also a progression of thought relative to the divine attributes presented in the tricola (2:2abc). There is a movement from absolute transcendence in v.2a, to absolute uniqueness in v.2b, to an imminent God who becomes involved in the plight of humankind in v.2c. The noun "rock" (šwr) normally refers to a rocky cliff or promontory (i.e., Exod 17:6; Deut 32:13; Judg 6:21; Isa 48:21, etc.). When it is used as a divine epithet, it is often an indication of the divine capacity and desire to defend God's people (i.e., Deut 32:4,14; 2 Sam 22:2,3; Isa 17:10; 30:29, etc.). Hannah's final motive for praise, then, is her certainty that God will defend her cause.⁴⁴

⁴⁴For the insight that the divine title "Rock" is connected with the idea of defense, I am indebted to J.

V.3ab, the accusation, is issued as a direct address: "Talk no more so very proudly; let not arrogance come from your mouth!" The first clause of the accusation, consisting of thirteen syllables, is the longest clause in the canticle. The word "proudly" (gbhh), which is reduplicated in v.3a, is usually deleted as a dittography.⁴⁵ However, it can be noted that v.3a is characterized by internal rhyming and assonance: ṣal-tarbû tēdabberû gēbôhāh gēbôhāh. Therefore (particularly in view of Eli's inappropriate indictment of Hannah in 1 Sam 1:14) one wonders, in Hannah's accusation, if the word is not reduplicated precisely in order to emphasize the foolishness and pomposity of arrogant speech.

The motive for not speaking arrogantly is that (kî) "the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions

Kenneth Kuntz, "The Contribution of Rhetorical Criticism to Understanding Isaiah 51:1-16," in David J. A. Clines, David M. Gunn and Alan J. Hauser (eds), Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature, JSOT Supplement Series 19 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), p. 153.

⁴⁵See, for example, G. Bressan, "Il Cantico di Anna," p. 505; F. M. Cross, Jr., "A New Qumran Fragment Related to the Original Hebrew Underlying the Septuagint," BASOR 132 (1953), p. 26; David Noel Freedman, "Psalm 113 and the Song of Hannah," p. 256; P. Kyle McCarter, I Samuel, p. 69, etc. J. T. Willis, in "The Song of Hannah and Psalm 113," p. 145, accepts the reduplication as an authentic part of the canticle because such repetition is frequently present in Ugaritic and early Hebrew prose.

are weighed" (v.3cd).⁴⁶ The categorization of the Lord as a God of knowledge (ʕl dwt), through the use of a plural of intensity, draws attention to the root yādaʕ, a technical term having its roots in Hittite and Akkadian treaty formulas.⁴⁷ Such "knowledge" involves mutual legal recognition on the part suzerain and vassal, a relationship re-expressed in the OT (usually in prophetic literature) in terms of the covenant bond. Within that context, it is on the basis of covenant stipulations that Yahweh judges, or "weighs the actions" of human beings. In this verse, as in other parts of the OT,⁴⁸ God's knowledge of humankind and humankind's knowledge of God, is the basis for divine judgement. For those who are faithful to the covenant stipulations, divine judgement results in salvation (v.1c); for the unfaithful, judgement issues in condemnation (v.9b).

V.4 begins a series of six noun clauses. The six clauses constitute three bicolae. The second clause of

⁴⁶Here, rather than following the Kēthib (wlʕ), the RSV translation follows the Qēreʾ (wlw), giving the clause an instrumental meaning: "By him actions are weighed."

⁴⁷See Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Treaty Background of Hebrew YADAʕ," BASOR 181 (1966), pp. 31-37; and "A Further Note on the Treaty Background of Hebrew YADAʕ," BASOR 184 (1966), pp. 36-38; John L. McKenzie, "Knowledge of God in Hosea," JBL 74 (1955), pp. 22-27.

⁴⁸Ps 73:11; Hos 4:1,6; 5:3,4; 9:3, etc.

each bicola begins with wāw to introduce an antithetical statement. Each bicola, then, is characterized by antithetical parallelism. As a result, in each bicola there is an unexpected reversal in human destiny which bears witness to the revolutionary activity of God in human history. In his study of Hebrew poetry, Kugel⁴⁹ notes that the second line in parallel verses has an emphatic character, and usually presents a progression of thought, i.e., "Such is the case, and even more, such is the case." That theory, applied to the three bicolae in vv.4-6, serves to underline the irony entailed in divinely orchestrated reversals in human history:

The bows of the mighty are broken; (v.4a)
 (And even more!) the feeble gird on strength. (v.4b)

Those who were full have hired themselves out for
 bread; (v.5a)
 (And even more) those who were hungry have ceased to
 hunger. (v.5b)

The barren has borne seven; (v.5c)
 (And even more) she who has many children is forlorn.
 (v.5d)

V.4ab, with its reference to the "mighty" (gbrym) and the "feeble" (literally "stumblers": nkšlym) reintroduces the motif of the powerful and powerless which is operative in the canticle, and once more underlines the precariousness of earthly power.

⁴⁹James L. Kugel, The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 1-58, especially pp. 8-9.

V.5 introduces a second group of humans, those people who are separated from one another because of the presence or absence of food. As has been previously noted, the motif of food/eating recurs at key moments in the plot development of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. In v.5a the reference to the fact that some people will "have to hire themselves out for bread" serves as a powerful foreshadowing of the plight of the Elides, after they have experienced divine judgement: "And every one who is left in your house shall come to implore him (i.e., the new "faithful" priest whom God will raise up) for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread, and shall say, 'Put me, I pray you, in one of the priest's places, that I may eat a morsel of bread'" (1 Sam 2:36).

In MT v.5b does not contain the verb "to hunger." Following D. Winton Thomas⁵⁰ and Philip Calderone,⁵¹ who have concluded that the verb which RSV has translated as "ceased" (hdl) is really derived from another Semitic root which means "to grow fat," the ironic nature of v.5b becomes clearer: "Those who were full have hired

⁵⁰D. Winton Thomas, "Some Observations on the Hebrew Root שׁטן," Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, IV (1957), pp. 8-16.

⁵¹Philip Calderone, "HDL-II in Poetic Texts," CBQ 23 (1961), pp. 451-460.

themselves out for bread; (and even more) those who were hungry grow fat again."

In v.5cd there is a reversal in the parallel structure of the bicola. Whereas in vv. 4ab and 5ab the strong preceded the weak (the mighty, followed by the feeble; the full, followed by the hungry), v.5cd, for emphasis, begins with the weak (the barren) and concludes with the strong (the fertile). Within the context of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, v.5cd reflects back to the conflict between Hannah and Peninnah (1 Sam 1:1-8), and to the divine resolution of that conflict as brought about through the birth of Samuel (1 Sam 1:19-20).

In vv.6-8 the emphasis moves away from divinely orchestrated reversals in human history to a description of activities which can only be predicated of God.

Whereas vv.4-5 consisted of six consecutive noun clauses, in vv.6-8 there is an alternating pattern of noun and verbal clauses:

- v.6a noun clause
- v.6b verbal clause
- v.7a noun clause
- v.7b verbal clause
- v.8a verbal clause
- v.8b noun clause

v.8c verbal clause

v.8d noun clause.

Within this pattern, the emphasis in vv.6-8d falls upon vv.7b-8a, verses which are concerned with the major theme of the canticle, the power of God to exalt and to humble.

An analysis of vv.6-8d reveals the presence of three bicola (vv.6-8b) which are concerned with divine actions upon all of humankind. In the fourth (climactic?) bicola (v.8cd) the language becomes less universal and more explicitly royal.

Whereas the three bicola in vv.4-5 were characterized by antithetical parallelism, vv.6-8 are characterized by synonymous parallelism:

The Lord kills	and brings to life; (v.6a)
He brings down to Sheol	and raises up. (v.6b)

The Lord makes poor	and makes rich; (v.7a)
He brings low,	he also exalts. (v.7b)

He raises up the poor from the dust; (v.8a)
He lifts the needy from the ash heap. (v.8b)

To make them sit with princes (v.8c)
and inherit a seat of honor (v.8d)

While synonymous parallelism governs vv.6-7, those verses contain seemingly antithetical word pairs: kills/brings to life; brings down/raises up; makes poor/makes rich; brings low/exalts.

Stanley Gevirtz,⁵² in his study of poetic patterns in Hebrew literature, notes that the combination of certain opposite word pairs is not fortuitous. The use of two opposite poles in poetry can express, not simply the extremes in a given situation, but the entire range of intermediate possibilities within the two poles. In that sense, v.6ab suggests that Yahweh is even more than the author of life and death; He is creatively present in the whole unfolding of human life, from the moment of birth until the moment of death. In the same sense, in v.7ab Yahweh is present in, and controlling in a revolutionary way, all of the ranges of poverty and wealth, and all of the ranges of exaltation and humiliation.

V.8ab returns to the idea of the divine concern for the dispossessed: He raises the poor from the dust; and even more, he lifts the needy from the ash heap (the dung hills outside of the city walls). Because of the royal language present in v.8cd ("princes" and "seat of honor," or "throne": kîssē) v.8 functions as a subtle indication of the divine revolutionary involvement in the political life of Israel. In this sense, then, it must

⁵²Stanley Gevirtz, Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 140-161.

be noted that the body of the canticle (vv.4-8) culminates in allusions to divinely appointed royal leadership.

The motive for the activity of God in human history (v.8ef) is rooted in the creative power of God: "For (kî) the pillars of the earth are the Lord's; on them he has set the world."⁵³

The ideas of the "pillars of the earth" stems from Israel's understanding that God has established the world on pillars rising out of Sheol, or sub-terranean waters (Job 38; Ps 75:3; Prov 8:28-29, etc.). McCarter⁵⁴ identifies the "pillars" (mšgy) as "straits" or "narrows," and associates them with the area of swift-running waters where accused persons underwent an ordeal in place of judgement and interrogation.⁵⁵ If McCarter's theory is correct (that is, if Israel appropriated

⁵³The relationship of v.8abcd with 8ef is intriguing, and seems to suggest traces of Judean royal ideology. In the south, the gradual re-shaping and mythologizing of the patriarchal covenant traditions culminated in a view of kingship which was rooted in creation and fixed in eternity. For a discussion of this idea, see F. M. Cross, Jr., Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 260-261. In this context, the Canticle of Hannah has contacts with Ps 89:20-38.

⁵⁴p. Kyle McCarter, I Samuel, p. 73, and especially "The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature," Harvard Theological Review 66 (1973), pp. 403-412.

⁵⁵Kyle McCarter, "The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature," p. 408.

elements of the Canaanite practice of judgement by water), then the God of creation portrayed in v.8ef is also the God of judgement. Certainly, the idea of judgement is a crucial one in the canticle.

There is also an element of universalism in v.8ef. The creative power of the Lord extends from the "earth" (ʾrṣ), signifying the physical aspects of the universe (v.8e), to the "world" (ṭbl), the inhabited or humanly civilized aspect of the universe (v.8f).

In v.9ab, the judgement of the canticle, the way of the faithful⁵⁶ will be protected, because God will guard their feet. The faithful (ḥsydym), as A. R. Johnson has demonstrated,⁵⁷ are those persons in Israel who have been loyal to Yahweh, particularly in regard to covenantal observance. In contrast, the disloyal, or the wicked will perish in darkness.

V.9c, the motive for judgement, points to the futility of human power when it functions independently from God's designs for humankind. As has been previously noted, within the structure of the canticle, this verse serves as an ironic counterpart to the authentic power of

⁵⁶Following the Qĕrê, ḥsydyw rather than the Kĕthib's singular ḥsydw.

⁵⁷Aubrey R. Johnson, "Hesid and Hasid," Interpretationes ad Vetus Testamentum (Mowinckel Festschrift) (Oslo: Fabritius and Sonner, 1955), pp. 100-112.

the God of salvation (v.1e), knowledge (v.3c), and creation (v.8ef). Consequently, v.9c functions as a parenesis relative to the source of authentic power. At the same time, this verse serves as a foreshadowing of the account of the Elidic misuse of power in 1 Sam 2:16, when the sons of Eli threaten to take the sacrificial offerings of a pious worshipper "by force."

The motive for judgement is extended in v.10abc, where the language of the canticle becomes explicitly the terminology of the Rib-pattern, or prophetic lawsuit. In the same way that the bows of the mighty were broken (htym) in v.4a, so now the adversaries (mrybw) of the Lord will be broken (yhtw). And once again, the Lord who judges his adversaries is described in terms of creation: "Against them he will thunder in heaven" (v.10b). In v.10c divine judgement is imbued with a universal dimension: "The Lord will judge the ends of the earth."

Following MT pointing, v.10de may be read as jussives. The two clauses are related through synonymous parallelism:

(May) he give strength to his anointed; (v.10d)
 (May) he exalt the power of his king.

Through the repetition of the words "exalt" (wyrm) and "strength," or "horn" (qrn) the canticle ends

by forming an inclusio with v.1c. More significantly, the canticle ends by relating power to its authentic source, the God who saves, who knows, and who continues to relate with humankind in a just and creative manner.

V.11 functions as the narrative conclusion to this unit. After the dedication of the boy Samuel in the Shiloh temple, Elkanah, after having made an irrevocable gift of his son, returns to his home in Ramah. V.11b, with its poignant reference to the "boy" (n̄r) Samuel ministering to the Lord under Eli, extends the theme of "littleness" operative in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a (1 Sam 1:22, 24 [2x], 25, 27; 2:11, 18, 21, 26). This reference to a "powerless" child is a fitting conclusion for a canticle structured in such a way that it pinpoints the precarious power of a "man" in 1 Sam 2:9c (ky-1² bk̄h ygbr-³yš). At the same time, it foreshadows the divine capacity to both "bring low" the powerful Elides, and to exalt a humble child.

1 Sam 2:12-17

¹²Now the sons of Eli were worthless men; they had no regard for the Lord. ¹³The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, ¹⁴and he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or cauldron, or pot;

all that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. So they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. ¹⁵Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast; for he will not accept boiled meat from you, but raw." ¹⁶And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish," he would say, "No, you must give it to me now; and if not, I will take it by force." ¹⁷Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord; for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt.

Delimitation of the Text

It is relatively easy to determine the delimitation of this unit because of two major factors. First, the material preceding 1 Sam 2:12-17 (the Canticle of Hannah) is poetry rather than prose narrative. Second, in this unit there is a shift in dramatis personae. The material preceding and following 1 Sam 2:12-17 is concerned with Samuel and his parents. In contrast, 1 Sam 2:12-17 deals exclusively with the sinful behavior of Eli's sons.

Text and Structure

- I. Authorial evaluation (v.12)
 - A. Condemnation: The sons of Eli were worthless men (v.12a)
 - B. Condemnation: They had no regard for the Lord. (v.12b)
- II. An account of the Elides customary behavior (vv.13-14c)
 - A. Behavior: Whenever someone came to offer sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, fork in hand, while the meat was still boiling. (V.13abc)
 - B. Behavior: Thrusting his fork into a wide range of utensils, he would take whatever the fork brought up for the priest. (v.14ab)
 - C. Resume: This is what they did to anyone coming to Shiloh. (v.14c)
- III. An account of a typical dialogue between the priest's servant and a worshipper (vv.15-16)
 - A. The context of the dialogue (v.15ab)
 - 1. Even before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come, (v.15a)
 - 2. and say to the worshipper (v.15b)
 - B. The dialogue (vv.15c-16i)
 - 1. Servant's command: "Give meat for the priest to roast." (v.15c)
 - 2. Reason for the command: "He will not accept boiled meat, but only raw." (v.15d)
 - 3. Worshippers Request: "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish." (v.16abcd)

4. Servant's reply

- a. Negation: "No." (v.16f)
- b. Command: "You must give it now."
(v.16g)
- c. Threat: "If not, I will take it by
force." (v.16hi)

IV. Authorial evaluation (v.17)

- A. Condemnation: Thus, the sin of the young men
was very great. (v.17a)
- B. Reason for condemnation: For (kî) the men
treated the offering of the Lord with con-
tempt. (v.17b)

Text and Genre

This passage, which is framed by authorial evaluations of the sons of Eli, consists of an account of the customary behavior of the Elides (vv.13-14c), and a report of a typical conversation between the priest's servant and worshippers at the Shiloh sanctuary (vv.15-16).

Since the narrative does not unfold in terms of a conflict and the resolution of that conflict, 1 Sam 2:12-17 can be generically classified as a "report," or Bericht. However, in view of the wealth of detail in this passage (i.e., the description of the servant's fork, the names of the various utensils, the lively

report of the conversation, etc.), one wonders if the passage is more properly an example of the Memorable, a generic form described by A. Jolles.⁵⁸ The salient characteristic of the Memorable, according to Jolles, is the use of vivid detail in order to create a sense of concreteness and reality.

Text and Intention

In the first authorial evaluation, in which the composer of the text shares his privileged knowledge with the reader, the author condemns the Elides on two counts: they are worthless men ("sons of Belial"), and they do not know the Lord.

In v.12a, through the literary device of paranoia, or punning, the author draws attention to the corruption of the Elides: The sons of Eli (bny ʿly) are sons of Belial (bny blyʿl).⁵⁹

⁵⁸A. Jolles, Einfache Formen (4th ed., Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1968), pp. 200-217.

⁵⁹The term "sons of Belial" is found throughout the OT: Deut 13:14;15:9; Judg 19:22;20:13; 1 Sam 1:16; 2:12;10:27;25:17,25;30:22; 2 Sam 20:1; 1 Kgs 21:10,13; 2 Chr 13:7; Prov 6:12; etc. Except for the general idea that the term is a synonym for wickedness, or corruption, it is difficult to arrive at its precise meaning. Paul Dhorme (Les Livres de Samuel), pp. 21-22 breaks the word "Belial" into two elements, bly and yʿl, and surmises that it means "qui ne laisse remonter." He connects the

In v.12b the author makes a further indictment of the Elides, in saying that they do not "know" (l²yd^cw) the Lord. As has been mentioned previously, in regard to 1 Sam 2:3c, the verb yāda^c is a technical term relative to the mutual recognition of covenant partners. In saying that the sons of Eli do not "know" the Lord, the author is expressly saying that they are in violation of the covenant bond.⁶⁰

Hebrew "Belial" with the name of the Babylonian goddess of the underworld, "Belili." Paul Jouon, in "Belial," Biblica 5 (1924), pp. 178-183, concludes that "Belial" is not an abstract noun, but a proper name like "Satan." Joseph A. Fitzmyer, in "Qumran and the Interpolated Paragraph in 2 cor 6, 14-17,1," CBQ 23 (1961), pp. 271-280 gives an overview of the occurrence of the word "Belial" in Qumran literature and in Jewish intertestamental literature. In LQM 13, 1-14 Belial is understood to be the leader of hostile forces set over against the God of Israel in the final, eschatological conflict. In many other Qumran texts, "Belial" is understood to be a demon, or personified force of evil. In the Jewish intertestamental composition Levi 19,1 light and darkness are in a parallel relationship with the Lord and Belial. In a similar manner, in 2 Cor 6:15 there are three parallel terms: righteousness, lawlessness; light/darkness; and Christ/Belial.

Although the meaning of "Belial" can hardly be argued from its later meaning, the possibility that "the sons of Belial" might be connected with the idea of "darkness" is intriguing in regard to the role of Eli's sons in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. Are Eli's sons of "darkness" counterparts for the prophet/watchman?

⁶⁰See Hos 4:6 for an indictment of priests based upon their lack of "knowledge": "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me."

The account of the customary behavior of the Elides at Shiloh (vv.13-14c) is structured chiastically in order to emphasize the all-consuming greed of the sons of Eli:

- A. The custom of the priests with the people (ʔt-h^cm) was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come (wb^ʔ) while the meat was boiling, (v.13ab)
- B. with a three-pronged fork (whmzlg) in his hand (v.13c)
- C. and he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or cauldron, or pot. (v.14a)
- B¹. All that the fork (hmzlg) brought up, the priest would take for himself. (.14b)
- A¹. So they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites (lkl-yśr^ʔl) who came (hb^ʔym) there. (v.14c)

This account of (un)priestly behavior once again signals the ironic humor of the author of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. The outer panels of the chiasm (A and A¹) focus upon the pious people of Israel who come to sacrifice at Shiloh. These pious people (in B and B¹) have to deal with a priest's servant who is anxiously waiting with a three-pronged fork to spear as much meat as possible for the priests.⁶¹ The center and focal point of the chiasm, (C), emphasizes the enormous greed of the Elides by

⁶¹According to Deut 18:3 the priest was allowed to take only the shoulder, jowls and stomach of a sacrificed animal.

providing the reader with an almost ridiculous list of cooking vessels: pans, kettles, cauldrons and pots!

V.15ab, the introduction to the typical dialogue at Shiloh, begins with the emphatic particle gm, evidencing the author's personal sense of shock relative to the sinfulness of the Elides: "Even before the fat was burned,⁶² the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing . . ."

The conversation between the pious worshipper and the priest's servant is also chiastically structured, this time to show that the sin of the Elides has assumed proportions of divine disrespect, or blasphemy:

- A. "Give (tnh) meat for the priest to roast; (v.15c)
- B. He will not take (wl³-yqh) boiled meat from you, only raw." (v.15d)
- C. "Let them burn the fat first; (v.16b)
- B¹. and then take (wqh-lk) as much as you want." (v.16cd)
- A¹. "No! You must give (ttn) it now! If not, I will take it by force!" (v.16e-i).

Here, too, the irony of the author is at work. The outer panels of the chiasm, A and A¹, signal the

⁶²See Lev 3:16-17; 7:31; 17:6; Num 18:17, etc. According to Hebrew cultic regulations, the priests were supposed to burn the fat of the animal to be sacrificed, so that the smoke from the fat would rise "as a pleasant odor to the Lord." In contrast, the Elides take the meat for themselves before the fat can be burned.

Elidic misuse of power, a misuse of power that has already been foreshadowed in the Canticle of Hannah (1 Sam 2:9c). B and B¹, with the repetitions of the verb "take," emphasizes the grasping greed of the sons of Eli. The center of the chiasm, C, focuses upon the helpless plight of the pious worshippers who come to Shiloh in order to praise God through the offering of sacrifices.

The two clauses of the concluding authorial evaluation of the Elides are in parallel relationship, and climax with the most serious sin of the sons of Eli, that of blasphemy:

Thus the sin (h̄tā) of the young men was very great
in the eyes of the Lord; (v.17a)

For the men treated the offerings of the Lord with
contempt. (v.17b)

In v.17a the author's careful use of the term "h̄tā" for "sin"⁶³ indicates the religious nature of the offense perpetrated by Eli's sons; in v.17b the author describes that sin specifically in terms of blasphemy.

Two additional remarks may be made relative to 1 Sam 2:12-17. First, in keeping with the author's extensive use of irony, the primary Leitwort of the unit is "priest" (1 Sam 2:13a,b; 14b; 15a,c). Second, the

⁶³See TDNT, vol. 1, p. 270, and Piet Schoonenberg, S. J., Man and Sin, translated by Joseph Donceel, S. J. (London and Melbourne: Sheed and Ward, 1965), pp. 1-2, for a discussion of h̄tā as a rebellion against God.

motif of food/eating, which has been present in each of the four previous units, functions in 1 Sam 2:12-17 in a dramatic way. Not only do the greedy Elides take as much food as they can (1 Sam 2:14a), but they even blasphemously misuse food designated for sacrificial offerings.

1 Sam 2:18-21

¹⁸Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy girded with a linen ephod. ¹⁹And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year, when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. ²⁰Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "The Lord give you children by this woman for the loan which she lent to the Lord"; so then they would return to their home. ²¹And the Lord visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord.

Delimitation of the Text

Two major reasons can be given for the delimitation of this unit. First, there is a shift in dramatis personae. The units preceding (1 Sam 2:12-17) and following (1 Sam 2:22-26) the passage are concerned with the Elides rather than with Samuel's family. Second, as will be shown under "Text and Intention," 1 Sam 2:18-21 is governed by a chiastic structure.

Text and Structure

- I. The status of Samuel: Samuel ministers in the presence of the Lord.
- II. The Blessing
 - A. The yearly trip to Shiloh
 - B. The Blessing
 - C. The fulfillment of the blessing
- III. The status of Samuel: Samuel grows in the presence of the Lord.

Text and Genre

This unit, which does not unfold systematically in terms of an exposition, a conflict, and a resolution of the conflict, may be generically identified as a "report" (Bericht). Since the focal point of the passage is the account of Eli's blessing (1 Sam 2:20), 1 Sam 2:18-21 may be more properly classified as a "blessing report."

Text and Intention

1 Sam 2:18-21 is governed by a chiastic structure:

- A. Samuel was ministering before the Lord (ṣ-pny-yhwh),
a boy (nʿr) girded by a linen ephod. (v.18)
- B. And his mother used to make for him a little
robe, and take it to him each year when she went
up with her husband to offer the yearly sacri-
fice. (v.19)
- C. Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife,
and say, "The Lord give you children by this
woman for the loan which she lent to the
Lord." So then they would return to their
home. (v.20)
- B¹. And the Lord visited Hannah, and she conceived,
and bore three sons and two daughters. (v.21abc)
- A¹. And the boy (nʿr) Samuel grew in the presence of the
Lord (ʿm-yhwh). (v.21d)

The outer panels of the chiasm (A and A¹) stress both the youthfulness of Samuel and the Lord's divine presence with him. B and B¹ focus primarily upon Hannah: her visits with Samuel when she and Elkanah go up for the yearly sacrifice, and the Lord's powerful "visitation" in her life. These panels retard the action in the passage, and point to its center and focal point: Eli's blessing of Elkanah and Hannah.

V.18 ties this unit to the previous one (1 Sam 2:12-17) through the technique of a contrast schema. This schema artfully makes use of irony relative to the double meaning of the noun naʿar. In the previous unit the noun naʿar was used twice (1 Sam 2:13,15) to designate the priest's "servant" (naʿar hkhn). By way of contrast, in this unit the noun naʿar refers to the

littleness and vulnerability of a child (In v.19 Hannah makes a "little" robe for Samuel). Whereas in 1 Sam 2:12-17 the priests, because of their clerical status, are able to employ a "servant" (na^car) to do their work, in 1 Sam 2:18 the "boy" (na^car) Samuel is portrayed as authentically "ministering" (mšrt).⁶⁴ Moreover, while not titularly ascribing priesthood of Samuel, the author in v.18, symbolically clothes him in priestly garb, the "linen ephod."⁶⁵ Thus, while not entering into the historical question of Samuel's office (i.e., Was he a priest? a prophet? a seer? a judge?),⁶⁶ it can be said that in v.18 Samuel, without having the title of "priest," nevertheless embodies in his humble, childlike service "before the Lord," the essence of the faithful

⁶⁴Although the verb šrt is usually connected with sacerdotal ministry, in its participial form (mšrt) it almost always refers to the humble service of one person rendered to another. See Exod 24:13; 33:11; Num 11:28; Josh 1:1; 2 Sam 13:17, 18; 1 Kgs 10:5; 2 Kgs 4:35; 6:15; 1 Chr 27:1; 28:1; 2 Chr 17:19; 22:28; Neh 10:37; Esth 1:10, etc.

⁶⁵See N. L. Tidwell, "The Linen Ephod: 1 Sam II 18 and 2 Sam VI 14," Vetus Testamentum 24 (1974), pp. 505-507.

⁶⁶For a tradition-historical approach to the question of Samuel's office, see John L. McKenzie, "The Four Samuels," Biblical Research 7 (1962), pp. 3-18.

priest according to the Lord's own heart.⁶⁷ Thus, v.18 functions as a foreshadowing of 1 Sam 2:35.

V.19 describes Hannah's love and concern for the child she has dedicated to the Lord. Each year she makes Samuel a "little robe" (m^clyl qtn), probably because (as a growing child) he has outgrown the last one. Tidwell, while defending the priestly nature of the ephod, suggests that the "robe" is simply an outer garment placed over the ephod for warmth.⁶⁸

Eli's blessing in v.20, the focal part of the chiasm, picks up and continues the wordplays upon the root š'p (1 Sam 1:18 [2x], 20, 27 [2x], 28 [2x]). Here again, in order to emphasize both the power of intercessory prayer (to "ask") and the extraordinary "grant" which Hannah has made to the Lord in fulfillment of her vow, the blessing is characterized by sonant devices: sibilant alliteration through the repetition of initial and medial śîn and šîn: (ysm . . . mn-h'šh . . . hš'lh š'p); and repetitions of yōd (ysm ywhh). Moreover, because the blessing begins and ends with the divine name

⁶⁷1 Sam 2:35: "And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind; and I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever."

⁶⁸N. L. Tidwell, op. cit., p. 506.

"Yahweh," it is characterized by the literary device of the ring composition.

In v.20d the author tells us that, after the blessing, Hannah and Elkanah return to Elkanah's home (literally, "his place": lmqmw), and thus begins a play on that phrase which will recur in 1 Sam 3:2,9.⁶⁹ Consequently, the use of the phrase lmqmw in v.20d foreshadows the fact that Eli will be supplanted by the young Samuel.

V.21 begins with emphatic kî: "How the Lord visited (ky-pqd) Hannah!" Gunnel André⁷⁰ has recently completed an in-depth study of the root pqd, and concludes, after a case-grammatical analysis of that root, that pqd has two basic syntactical settings. Either pqd expresses the activity of God as judge, or it is connected with the activity of a military or cultic leader. In both cases, the basic meaning of pqd is to determine someone's destiny. Andre also situates the Sitz im Leben of the contexts employing pqd in the annual New Year Festival. In view of Andre's research, then, it would

⁶⁹In 1 Sam 3:2 Eli is described as being "in his place" (bmqmw); after Samuel's divine call to prophecy, the author reports that Samuel goes "in his place" (bmqmw) in v. 9.

⁷⁰Gunnel André, Determining the Destiny. PQD in the Old Testament. ConBOT 16 (Lund: Gleerup, 1980). Reviewed by H. Van Dyke in JBL 101 (1982), pp. 430-431.

seem as if the use of pqd in v.21 (with Yahweh as subject) functions in several different ways. First, it connects 1 Sam 2:21 with 1 Sam 1:20 ("at the turn of the year," which, as has been previously noted, refers to the New Year Festival). As a consequence, it can then be established that the "yearly sacrifice" celebrated by Elkanah and his family is in connection with the New Year Festival, a celebration which focused upon God as creator and judge. Second, since "visitation" is an activity of the God who judges, then the root pqd in 1 Sam 2:21 extends the motif of judgement operative in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a.⁷¹ Finally, relative to the root pqd, something can be said in connection with the destiny of Hannah. Willis,⁷² in reflecting upon the theological significance of Hannah, wonders if she, along with the mothers of Abimelech (Judg 9:1-4, 18) and Samson (Judg 13), is not a proto-type of the queen mother in Judean and Israelite royalty. However, since neither of those women is

⁷¹Eli's inappropriate "lawsuit" in 1 Sam 1:14; 1 Sam 2:1, when Hannah "presents her case" (wttpl1) to the Lord; the references to the God who judges in the Canticle of Hannah; the authorial condemnation of the Elides in 1 Sam 2:12,17; Eli's concern for legal arbitration for his sons in 1 Sam 2:22-25; the judgement suit against an individual in 2:27-36; the divine oracle of judgement in 3:11-14.

⁷²John T. Willis, "Cultic Elements in the Story of Samuel's Birth and Dedication," p. 31 and pp. 57-61.

presented in a manner that is comparable to the idealized portrayal of Hannah in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, one wonders if the divinely determined destiny of Hannah does not reside simply in the fact that she is Israel's "mother of prophecy." At the same time, in v.21 Hannah's destiny is determined through the inherent power released in Eli's blessing (v.20), the fulfillment of which allows her to conceive and bear more children.

V.21d shifts the focus back to Samuel, the young and vulnerable child who lives in the midst of divine presence. That the powerless child "grows" (wygd1) re-introduces the major theme of the Canticle of Hannah, the divine exaltation of the powerless (1 Sam 2:4-8).

1 Sam 2:22-26

²²Now Eli was very old, and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. ²³And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. ²⁴No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad. ²⁵If a man sins against a man, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him? But they would not listen to the voice of their father; for it was the will of the Lord to slay them. ²⁶Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men.

Delimitation of the Text

The delimitation of this unit is based upon two major reasons. First, there is a shift of characters in this unit. In the preceding unit (1 Sam 2:18-21) the main characters were members of Samuel's family; by way of contrast, this unit is primarily concerned with Eli and his sons. Second, in the passage which follows this unit (1 Sam 2:27-36), there is a shift in genre. That genre, a prophetic lawsuit, has its own inherent structure and thus forms a natural boundary which separates it from 1 Sam 2:22-26.

Text and Structure

- I. Eli hears about the behavior of his sons (v.22)
 - A. When Eli was very old, he heard all that his sons were doing, (v.22ab)
 - B. and how they were sleeping with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting (v.22b).
- II. Eli rebukes his sons
 - A. Question: "Why do you do such things as these that I have been hearing from all the people? (v.23)
 - B. Rebuke: "No, my sons. It is no good report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad." (v.24abc)

- C. Question: "If a man sins against a man, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against God, who will intercede for him?" (v.25abcd)

III. Author's report

- A. But they would not listen to their father's voice: (v.25e)
- B. For (ki) it was the will of the Lord to slay them. (v.25f)

- IV. Epilogue: Now the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men. (v.26)

This passage, with its narrative introduction and conclusion, is structured so that the focus falls upon Eli's response to the sinfulness of his sons. The core of his response, his rebuke, is framed by two questions.

Text and Genre

1 Sam 2:22-26 may be generically identified as "a warning against religious treason." The passage is generically related to Deut 13, a chapter which contains a series of similar warnings. This genre, which is also called "the law of death,"⁷³ has its roots in similar warnings encountered in Hittite, Aramean, and neo-Assyrian political treaties which deal with the problem

⁷³Herman Schultz, "Das Todesrecht im Alten Testament," BZAW 114 (1969), pp. 5-84.

of political sedition.⁷⁴ In Deut 13 this genre is characterized by the following elements:⁷⁵

1. A person holds an office of divine authority. (Deut 13:2-6)
2. A relative or friend (Deut 13:7-12), or a group of citizens (Deut 13:13-19) incites an Israelite or group of Israelites to worship foreign gods;
3. The idolatrous suggestion is made secretly. (Deut 13:7)
4. Knowledge of it spreads by rumor (Deut 13:13).
5. It is to be verified by judicial investigation. (cf. Deut 17:4)
6. The Israelite to whom the suggestion is made is required to disclose the provocateur. He is to have no compassion for him, even if he is a relative or the most intimate of friends. (Deut 13:7).
7. The penalty for treason involves capital punishment.

The corresponding relationship between Deut 13 and 1 Sam 2:22-25 may be seen in the following areas:

- 1) In Deut 13 the incitement to false worship spreads by rumor, or "hearsay" (Deut 13:12-13); in 1 Sam 2:24 Eli refers to the "hearsay" (hšm[√]w) that he has "heard" (šm[√]), a double use of the primary keyword of this passage, šm[√] (1 Sam 2:22, 23, 24 [2x], 26).

⁷⁴Moshe Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 92.

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 91-92.

2) Like the prophets and "dreamers of dreams" of Deut 13:2-6, Eli, as a priest, holds an office of divine authority.

3) Like the "sons of Belial" who led the inhabitants of the city astray through false worship (Deut 13:12ff.), so also the sons of Eli scandalized Israel through cultic abuse.⁷⁶

4) In Deut 13:13 the men who lead Israel astray are labeled as "sons of Belial," the same name given to Eli's sons in 1 Sam 2:12.

5) In Deut 13:7ff. loyal Israelites are encouraged to have no compassion on the guilty, even if those persons are blood relatives. This is precisely the situation of Eli in regard to his own sons. If he is to be a loyal Israelite, he must act decisively to defend "all Israel" from the corrupting influence of his sons, even when the prescribed penalty will involve capital punishment.

6) The statement, in v.25f, that "it was the will of the Lord to slay them," is in keeping with the judicial requirements for political/religious sedition.

For the above reasons, then, 1 Sam 2:22-26 may be generically classified as "a warning against treason."

⁷⁶v.22, with the statement that the sons of Eli slept with the women serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting, may be an allusion to cultic prostitution. See Peter R. Ackroyd, The First Book of Samuel, p. 36.

Text and Intention

V.22 begins with a statement concerning Eli's old age, and continues, at least implicitly, with a remark that hints of his growing lack of perception and effectiveness as a spiritual leader: although he is a co-priest with his sons at Shiloh, Eli ironically only "hears" (šm^c) of what his sons are doing to "all Israel." In three instances in this unit (2:22,23,24) the verb "to hear" (šm^c) signals, in an ironic manner, situations which Eli should have "seen," and only learns about through hearsay. In this sense, once again Eli is presented to the reader as an ineffective "watchman" for Israel.

The adjective "all" (kl) is repeated twice in v.22, and is part of a three-fold repetition schema in this unit (2:22 [2x], 23c). The three repetitions of "all" emphasize both the degree and the far-reaching consequences of the sinfulness of Eli's sons.

The explicit crime which Eli "hears of" in v.22 is the fact that his sons have been sleeping "with the women who served at the entrance of the tent of

meeting,"⁷⁷ an action which manifests the complete corruption of the Elides. Not only do they introduce pagan rites into Israel's cultic life, but they violate the women who perform religious service at the sanctuary.

Eli's first question to his sons (v.23) is grammatically awkward: "Why do you do such things (kdbrym) as these, which I have been hearing, (that is) your evil deeds (dbrykm r^cym)?" According to S. Talmon,⁷⁸ the awkwardness may stem from a conflation of texts. However, in view of the significant role played by the root db in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, one wonders if the double occurrence of that root is not meant to function in two ways. First, the repetition highlights the sinful deeds of the Elides; and second, the double use of the root db serves as a foreshadowing of the emergence of the prophetic word in 1 Sam 3.

In comparison with Eli's rebuke of Hannah in 1 Sam 1:14, his rebuke of his son in 2:24 is amazingly "compassionate."⁷⁹ Whereas Eli has (inappropriately) commanded Hannah to change her behavior ("Put away your

⁷⁷For references to service performed at the entrance to the temple, see Exod 38:8; Num 4:23; 8:24.

⁷⁸S. Talmon, "Double Readings in the Massoretic Text," Textus 1 (Jerusalem: Magnus Press, 1960), p. 180.

⁷⁹Deut 13:6-9 counsels against such misdirected compassion for the guilty parties.

wine from you!"), he does not explicitly ask the same thing from his sons: "No my sons, it is no good report that I hear . . ." In view of the serious nature of "warnings against religious treason," it would appear that Eli's inability to rebuke his sons in this verse is the ultimate cause of his downfall.⁸⁰

In spite of Eli's ineffective rebuke of his sons in v.24, his question in v.25 touches upon the serious consequences of his sons' behavior. In keeping with the procedure for dealing with dangerous "hearsay," as evidenced both in Deut 13 and in Ancient Near Eastern treaties, in which rumors must be verified by judicial investigation, the language in Eli's question has strong legal overtones.⁸¹ Since his sons have grievously sinned against both "men" (i.e., 2:13, "whenever any man offered sacrifice . . ." and 2:15-16, "the man" offering sacrifice) and God (2:16-17), there will be absolutely no

⁸⁰The core of the divine oracle against Eli's house proves this point: "And I tell him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them." (3:13).

⁸¹For discussions of the legal implications of this verse, see Sheldon H. Blank, "Jeremiah and the Meaning of prayer," p. 337; Eileen F. DeWard, "Eli's Rhetorical Question: 1 Sam 2:25," Journal of Jewish Studies 27 (1976), pp. 117-137, and "Superstition and Judgement: Archaic Methods of Finding a Verdict," ZAW 89 (1977), pp. 1-19.

one to secure an acquittal for them in the course of the judicial process.

The final clauses of v.25 constitute the author's report of the Elide's behavior. The statement in v.25e that "they would not listen to their father's voice" reiterates both Eli's ineffectiveness and the sinfulness of his sons.

In v.25f the author, in a nearly incomprehensible way, provides the reason (kî) for the sinfulness of the Elides: "For it was the will of the Lord to slay them!" In commenting upon this verse, M. Tsevat⁸² sees in it a profound reflection upon human freedom. Tsevat notes that Israel's worldview was, by and large, rational and optimistic; consequently, it is inconceivable that those who have the power to "choose life" or to "choose death" would consciously misbehave and thus bring about their own destruction. He writes:

Comparatively minor transgressions pose no problem, nor do unforeseeable catastrophes. But there are grave sins, persistent obduracy, and they weigh all the more heavily when the inescapable catastrophic consequences have been predicted or the perpetrator has been warned; they defy explanation in human terms, common-sense, rational explanation. If one nevertheless wants to account for them, he can trace them only to one cause: God. For whenever one meets trans-human phenomena in the physical or psychic world, there Power manifests itself.

⁸²Matitiah Tsevat, "The Death of the Sons of Eli," Journal of Bible and Religion 32 (1964), pp. 355-358, especially p. 356.

On another level, the God "who kills and brings to life" (1 Sam 2:6) is, in the context of "a warning against treason," the Suzerain/Judge who proscribes and carries out capital punishment (Deut 13:9). In the final analysis, the harsh sentence is really a protection for "all Israel." In the words of Deut 13:11: "And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and never again do any such wickedness as this among you."

V.26, the epilogue, ends the unit by setting up a perfect contrast schema between Samuel and the Elides: "Now the boy (whn<r) Samuel continued (hlk) to grow in stature (wgd1) and in favor (wtwb) with the Lord (c-m-yhwh) and with men." Whereas, in v.22 Eli is described as being "very old," Samuel is portrayed here as a young boy; whereas the Elides are sinful, Samuel (at least implicitly) "walks" (hlk) with the Lord; whereas the Lord decides to kill the Elides, Samuel is "with the Lord" and grows in stature; and finally, whereas Eli hears that his sons are doing evil things, Samuel is here described as being "good."

1 Sam 2:27-36

27And there came a man of God to Eli, and said to him, "Thus the Lord has said, 'I revealed myself to the house of your father when they were in

Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh. ²⁸And I chose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me; and I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. ²⁹Why then look with greedy eye at my sacrifices and my offerings which I commanded, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves upon the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?' ³⁰Therefore the Lord the God of Israel declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever' but now the Lord declares: 'Far be it from me; for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. ³¹Behold, the days are coming, when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. ³²Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity which shall be bestowed upon Israel; and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. ³³The man of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep out his eyes and grieve his heart; and all the increase of your house shall die by the sword of men. ³⁴And this which shall befall your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. ³⁵And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind; and I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before me anointed forever. ³⁶And every one who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread, and shall say, "Put me, I pray you in one of the priest's places, that I may eat a morsel of bread."

Delimitation of the Text

The delimitation of this unit can be established for two reasons. First, there is a shift in genre. The

previous unit, 1 Sam 2:22-26 is "a warning against religious treason;" by way of contrast, 1 Sam 2:27-36 is an easily recognizable prophetic "judgement suit against an individual." Second, there is a change of characters. 1 Sam 2:22-26 was concerned with Eli and his sons; in this unit a new character, an unnamed "man of God" enters the scene in order to judge Eli and his house.

Text and Structure

I. Messenger formula

- A. Introduction: "There came a man of God to Eli . . . (v.27ab)
- B. Messenger formula: "Thus says the Lord (kh ʾmr yhw) . . . (v.27c)

II. Historical Prologue

- A. Statement of past benefits: "I revealed myself to the house of your father . . ." (v.27d)
- B. Statement of past benefits: "I chose him out of all the tribes of Israel . . ." (v.28a)
- C. Statement of past benefits: "And I gave to the house of your father all my offerings . . ." (v.28b)

III. Accusation

- A. Question: "Why then look with greedy eye at my sacrifices . . .?" (v.29a)
- B. Question: "And honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves . . .?" (v.29b)

IV. Announcement of judgement and recall of past benefits

- A. Announcement formula: Therefore (lkn), the Lord the God of Israel declares (n³m-yhwh 3lhy ysr³l) (v.30a)
- B. Restatement of past benefits: "I promised that your house and the house of your father . . ." (v.30bc)
- C. Announcement formula: "But now the Lord declares . . ." (w^cth n³m-yhwh) (v.30d)

V. Judgement

- A. Preliminary (general) judgement
 - 1. Exclamation: "Far be it from me!" (v.30e)
 - 2. Statement of intention: "Those who honor me I will honor;" (v.30f)
 - 3. Statement of intention: "Those who despise me will be lightly esteemed." (v.30g)
- B. The (specific) judgement against Eli and his house
 - 1. "I will cut off your strength so that there will be no old man in your house." (v.31)
 - 2. "You will look with an envious eye upon all the prosperity that comes to Israel." (v.32a)
 - 3. "There will never (kl-hymym) be an old man in your house." (v.32b)
 - 4. "The survivor in your house will weep out his eyes and grieve his heart." (v.33a)
 - 5. "The increase of your house will die by the sword of men." (v.33b)
 - 6. "As a sign, Hophni and Phinehas will die on the same day." (v.34ab)

- C. Promise: "I will raise up for myself a faithful priest . . ." (v.35)
- D. Relation of the surviving Elides to the faithful priest: those who are left will have to beg for a priestly function in order to have bread to eat. (v.36)

The structure of 1 Sam 2:27-36, as will be discussed in greater detail under "Text and Genre," is in keeping with the structural schemas of prophetic judgement suits against individuals.

Text and Genre

1 Sam 2:27-36 has previously been generically identified as a prophetic lawsuit by both Claus Westermann⁸³ and Julien Harvey.⁸⁴ Westermann distinguishes between judgement suits addressed to individuals and those which are addressed to the nation of Israel. In regard to judgement suits addressed to individuals (like 1 Sam 2:27-36), Westermann proposes the following schema:⁸⁵

⁸³Claus Westermann, Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech, p. 137.

⁸⁴Julien Harvey, Le plaidoyer prophétique contre Israël après la rupture de l'alliance. *Studia 22* (Montreal: Les Editions Bellarmin, 1967), pp. 72-74.

⁸⁵Claus Westermann, op.cit., p. 130.

- Commissioning of the messenger
- Summons to hear
- The accusation
- Messenger formula
- Announcement of judgement

Harvey makes a distinction only between "complete" and "incomplete" lawsuits, and proposes the following schematic form:⁸⁶

- Appeal to heaven and earth, and everyone, to listen
- Declaration of the righteousness of the conduct of Yahweh
- Accusation against the people of God, who have been unfaithful to the covenant
- Cross-examination, without waiting for a response
- Accusatory address, generally historical, which recalls the benevolence of Yahweh and the ingratitude of Israel
- Declaration of the powerlessness of foreign gods, and of the inability of rites in regard to re-establishing the broken relationship.
- Declaration of the guilt of Israel
- Threats of destruction (type A);
Specification of what is needed in order to re-establish the relationship (type B)

According to Harvey, the Sitz im Leben of the lawsuit was international law, as we now know it from

⁸⁶Julien Harvey, op.cit., p. 53.

Hittite vassal and suzerainty treaties.⁸⁷ By "international law" Harvey means the legal system which was operative in the Middle East during the second millenium. That system of rules included both covenant treaties and letters which were sent by a suzerain to a vassal, especially in the event of that vassal's treachery.⁸⁸

The prophets, according to Harvey, borrowed the lawsuit pattern from the arena of international law, and used it in times of national disaster to explain to Israel the justice and righteousness of a God which allows catastrophe to fall upon a covenanted, but unfaithful people. Harvey also stressed the fact that, while the lawsuit entails the accusation and judgement of a guilty people, its purpose was primarily parenetic. That is, the prophets used the lawsuit pattern to awaken Israel to repentance.⁸⁹

Harvey, who classifies 1 Sam 2:27-36 as an "incomplete lawsuit," proposes the following structural schema:⁹⁰

⁸⁷Julien Harvey, op.cit., pp. 117-143

⁸⁸Julien Harvey, "Le 'Rîb-Pattern' réquisitoire prophétique sur la rupture de l'alliance," Biblica 43 (1962), pp. 172-196.

⁸⁹Julien Harvey, Le plaidoyer prophétique, p. 165ff.

⁹⁰Julien Harvey, Le plaidoyer prophétique, p. 72.

- I. Recall of the past benefits of Yahweh (vv.27-28)
- II. Accusatory question (v.29)
- III. Recall of Yahweh's former commitment to the house of Eli (v.30a)
- IV. Condemnation and threats (vv.30b-36).

Whereas Harvey's research served to situate the Sitz im Leben of the lawsuit within the sphere of international law, Westermann's research has focused primarily upon the form-critical aspects of the prophetic lawsuit. In his analysis of "judgement suits against an individual," Westermann lists several formal characteristics of them:⁹¹

1. The presupposition behind the utterance of a judgement suit against an individual is that an individual has sinned seriously, and no one has intervened to correct the situation.

2. Judgement suits against an individual, like those directed against a nation, consist of two main parts, the accusation and the judgement. God's word, in the proper sense, resides only in the judgement.

3. The judgement consists in one sentence which contains an announcement of a future catastrophic event. The announcement is introduced by a messenger formula in

⁹¹Claus Westermann, Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech, pp. 132-133.

order to stress the fact that the words of the announcement are not those of the messenger, but those of God.

4. The announcement of judgement is based upon the accusation. Brevity is characteristic of both the accusation and the judgement.

5. Because the announcement of judgement is directly related to the accusation, there is no need for a linguistic connection such as "because." The accusation and the announcement of judgement are able to stand next to each other, unconnected.

1 Sam 2:27-36 embodies most of the above characteristics of the judgement suit against an individual. The message from the "man of God" in v.27 is specifically directed to Eli. The accusation (v.29), which follows the historical prologue (v.28), consists of one question having two parts, and is concerned with both the cultic abuse of the Elides and the fact that Eli has inappropriately "honored" his sons more than the Lord. The announcement of judgement (vv.31-36), because of its length, departs from the classical lawsuit pattern.⁹²

⁹²The unusual lengthiness of the announcement of judgement in 1 Sam 2:27-36 (even excluding the "general" judgement in v.30ef) has raised historical-critical questions. Most scholars view vv.34-36 as a later, pro-Zadokite editorial expansion. See R. S. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel, p. 56; H. W. Hertzberg, I & II Samuel, pp. 38-39; John Mauchline, 1 and 2 Samuel, p. 56; Patrick D. Miller, Jr.

Nevertheless, the announcement of judgement is directly related to the accusation: because of their cultic abuse and because Eli has honored" and protected his sons from judgement (2:22-26), the whole Elidic line will suffer from premature death⁹³ and, through divine "raising up" of a "faithful priest" (v.35), they will suffer from exclusion from cultic offices.

Text and Intention

It can be mentioned, first of all, that the author's use of a highly stylized prophetic formula, the lawsuit, is, in itself, already a communication of meaning. The metaphoric and evocative power of the rubrics of the lawsuit, i.e., the messenger formula, the historical prologue, the accusation, and the announcement

and J. J. M. Roberts, The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the "Ark Narrative" of 1 Samuel (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), pp. 30-31; H. P. Smith, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel, pp. 23-24; M. Tsevat, "Studies in the Book of Samuel, I," HUCA 32 (1961), pp. 191-209, especially p. 195; Julius Wellhausen, Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bucher des Alten Testaments, p. 237, etc.

⁹³M. Tsevat, op.cit., interprets what he believes to be the historical core of 1 Sam 2:27-36 (vv.27-33) from the standpoint of biblical and talmudic kareth. Within that perspective, Eli's punishment, which stems from the cultic abuse of his sons, is that of premature death.

of judgement, immediately places the reader within the sphere of legal/religious guilt and judgement. Consequently, the literary form of the lawsuit itself signals to the reader the imminence of a powerful and decisive divine intervention into human history. Within that perspective, attention can now be turned towards the individual verses of 1 Sam 2:27-36.

In the introduction to the lawsuit (v.27) a "man of God," or divinely appointed mediator,⁹⁴ comes to Eli in order to bring him a message from God, and introduces that message with the prophetic formula, "Thus says the Lord" (kh ʔmr yhwh). The introduction is characterized by sonant devices: alliteration by means of six initial guttural consonants (ʔyš- ʔlhym ʔl- ʕly . . . ʔlyw . . . ʔmr) and assonance through three repetitions of hōlem (wybʔ . . . ʔlhym . . . kh) and three repetitions of hireq (ʔyš . . . ʔlhym . . . ʕly).

The historical prologue (vv.27d-28b), which furnishes Eli with a reminder of the past benevolency of

⁹⁴It is interesting to recall here 1 Sam 1:9-18, a unit which was generically identified as an OT announcement of birth. The generic uniqueness of that unit resided in the fact that Hannah, unlike other OT barren women who eventually gave birth to a son destined to alter Israel's future, did not have access to a divinely appointed mediator. The "man of God" in v.27, then, already signals a new moment of divine intervention in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a.

Yahweh towards the Elidic line, is characterized by a chiastic structure:

- A. I revealed myself to the house of your father (ʔl-byt ʔbyk) when they were in Egypt subject to the house (lbyt) of Pharaoh. (V.27d)
- B. And I chose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me. (v.28a)
- A¹. And I gave to the house of your father (lbyt ʔbyk) all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. (v.28b)

The outer panels of the chiasm (A and A¹), through the repetition of "the house of your father," emphasize the priestly dynasty of the Elides. V.27d contains two occurrences of the word "house," thus allowing the threefold repetition of the word byt to function as the keyword of the historical prologue. Moreover, by situating the Lord's self-disclosure to Eli's progenitor in the context of Israel's period of slavery in Egypt, the prologue evokes the humble condition of the Elides before their divine election.

V.28a, the center of the chiasm, places the emphasis upon the divine election of the Elides. In this verse the three repetitions of the first person singular pronominal suffix ("my" priest; "my" altar; before "me") suggest that priestly identity and service are co-extensive with a personal relationship with the Lord. It is significant that this same relationship of service to

priesthood was foreshadowed in 1 Sam 2:18, where the boy Samuel, girded with a linen ephod, humbly "ministered" (mšrt^v) in the presence of the Lord.

The reference in v.28b to the "offerings by fire" which God had entrusted to the house of Eli, looks back retrospectively in 1 Sam 2:12-17, where the sons of Eli took the sacrificial meat for themselves, even before the fat was burned (2:16).

In summarizing vv.27d-28b it can be noted once again that the historical prologue has enumerated the past benevolence of Yahweh to the house of Eli. The recollection of past divine actions, which should have been the basis of trust for the Elides, now, in view of their sinfulness, is a source of shame for them. Moreover, within the context of the lawsuit at hand, the historical prologue has served to emphasize the absolute righteousness of Yahweh, the divine prosecutor and judge.

The accusation (v.29) is marked by a certain fluidity between singular and plural forms of address. Eli is first addressed in the singular: "Why then look⁹⁵ with greedy eye⁹⁶ at my sacrifices and my offerings which I commanded, and honor your sons above me. . . ."

⁹⁵Reading tbyt with LXX and 4Q Sam^a.

⁹⁶Reading m^cwn as m^cwyn, a poel denominative from yn, "to eye greedily."

However, at the end of the accusation, probably because Eli stands within a dynastic line, he and his sons are jointly accused of fattening themselves (lhbry³km) upon the choicest parts of the sacrificial offerings. The accusation concerning the misuse of sacrificial offerings specifically implies that Eli is being held accountable for his sons' cultic abuses, and refers to 1 Sam 2:12-17;22-25.

In keeping with the author's heavy use of irony throughout 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, the accusation is also marked by an ironic sense. Eli, who has consistently been portrayed as a person who is blind to the reality around him, and who indeed has been artfully described in terms of being an "anti-watchman," is now accused of using his "eyes" to look greedily upon the sacrificial offerings!

In congruency with the lawsuit pattern, there is a relationship between the accusation and the judgement. Since the Elides have "looked upon" the sacrifices of Israel with "greedy eyes" (v.29), then they will have to "look upon" Israel's prosperity with an "envious eye" (v.32).

The introductory "therefore" (lākēn) in v.30 marks both the end of the accusation and the formal beginning of the announcement of judgement. In order to emphasize the fact that the announcement of judgement is

really the word of God (and not the word of the messenger), v.30abcd is framed by the awesome phrase n'm yhwh.⁹⁷ V.30bc begins with the forceful infinitive absolute, ʔāmôr ʔamārtî: Yahweh "has indeed said" that the house of Eli would walk in his presence forever! The recollection of that promise, as in the historical prologue, is marked by language which is evocative of a divine call to a personal relationship: "I" promised that "your house" . . . should walk before "me" forever.

V.30d, which begins with wāw conversive, prepares the reader for the momentous reversal of that divine promise. In v.30e the reversal begins dramatically with the divine aversive exclamation hālîlâ, "Far be it from me!" The divine intention is to honor only those who honor God, and to have little concern for those who despise him.

In vv. 31-34 the announcement of judgement moves away from a revocation of a past promise to a series of gradually heightening punishments that will transpire in the future.

The first punishment (v.31) involves the divine removal of the blessing of old age from Eli's descendants:

⁹⁷The phrase n'm yhwh (oracle, or "whisper" of the Lord) is rarely used in the OT. When it does occur, it seems to indicate that a message of momentous significance is to follow. See 2 Sam 23:1; Isa 1:24; 56:8; Ps 110:1, etc.

"Behold the days are coming when I will cut off your strength (ʔt-zrʕk) and the strength (wʔt-zrʕ) of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house."⁹⁸

V.31 once again picks up the motif of "time" operative throughout 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. The "days" (ymym) which are coming for the Elides are days of divine judgement.

The author's use of the noun "strength" (zrʕ) continues the motif of power/powerlessness which functioned extensively throughout the Canticle of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1c, 4-5, 9c) and extended into 1 Sam 2:16. The powerful Elides who threatened to take the sacrificial meat by force (2:16) now themselves, by means of the prophetic judgement suit, experience the precariousness of human might that was portrayed in the Canticle of Hannah.

Moreover, the author's careful choice of the noun "strength" (zrʕ) in v.31 functions on the level of paranomasia. The proximity in sound between "your strength" (ʔet-zērō ʕākā) and "your descendants" (ʔet-zarʕākā) empowers the verse to carry the weight of a double divine

⁹⁸In regard to 1 Sam 2:31, P. Kyle McCarter, I Samuel, p. 86 and H. P. Smith, Samuel, p. 23 follow LXX's vocalization ʔet-zarʕākā: ". . . I will cut off your descendants . . ."

judgement. That is, v.31 suggests that the divine cutting off of Elidic strength entails a diminishment of Eli's dynastic line. In this sense, v.31 links the lawsuit with Hannah's prayer for "descendants" ("the seed of men") in 1 Sam 1:11 and signals not only the demise of the Elides, but the divine elevation of a new line of leadership.

In v.32 the punishment intensifies. The motif of "time," signifying divine judgement for the Elides, continues and becomes dramatically more explicit; there will never (kl-hymym) be an elder in Eli's house. In addition, the motif of "vision" which is operative throughout 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a reoccurs in this verse relative to Eli. Because of his failure as a perceptive "watchman" for Israel, Eli is condemned to "wear out his eyes" in envy and distress.

In v.33 the lack of vision and vitality that characterized Eli's life is passed on, even to the one who will survive in the Elidic line. The survivor not "cut off" by pre-mature death will, like Eli, "wear out his eyes and use up his strength." However, the increase of Eli's house will die, not in the honor accorded to Israel's elders, but violently by the sword.⁹⁹

⁹⁹Following LXX, RSV has emended v.33 in these ways: the second person cynyk and npšk are necessarily changed to third person cynyw and npšw; "by the sword," omitted in LXX, is added.

The announcement of judgement climaxes in v.34 with the prediction of the joint deaths of Eli's sons. That tragic event is to be, for Eli, a sign that the other disasters foretold in the lawsuit will come to pass.

V.35 refers to the supplanting of the Elides by the divinely elevated "faithful priest." That reality, within the framework of the lawsuit pattern, allows the Rîb[^] to end on a positive note. That Yahweh still wishes to build "a sure priestly house" suggests that He, as Judge, still feels that it is possible to re-establish a covenant relationship with Israel through the mediation of the priestly office. That mediation, carried out by the one who "shall go in and out" before the Lord's anointed, will be exercised within the framework of humble obedience.

V.36 shifts the emphasis back to the Elides. The house of Eli, which in the accusation (v.29) was indicted for greediness and for fattening itself upon the offerings of Israel, is now proleptically described in terms of hunger and subservience. The negative use of the root hwy ("to implore," or even "to writhe"),¹⁰⁰ a

¹⁰⁰For a contemporary understanding of the root hwy, see Jean Lévêque, Job et son Dieu (Paris: Gabalda, 1970), pp. 198-99.

keyword which framed the account of Samuel's birth and dedication (1 Sam 1:19,28), serves to link the judgement suit against the Elides with 1 Sam 1:19-28. Moreover, the recurrence of this root (hwy) serves to contrast the authentic humility of Samuel and his parents with the self-assumed arrogance and power of the Elides. The divine reversal of the status of the Elides recalls v.5 of Hannah's prophetic exhortation: "Those who were full have hired themselves out for food."

CHAPTER FIVE

1 SAM 3:1-4:1a: A FORM-CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Preliminary Reflection

Although no comprehensive form-critical analysis has been undertaken in regard to the pericope 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, considerable research has been done in the last 20 years relative to 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a.¹ Only part of this

¹The following is a chronology of the recent research devoted to 1 Sam 3. Murray Newman, "The Prophetic Call of Samuel," in B. W. Anderson and W. Harrelson (eds.), Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), pp. 86-97; Alan W. Jenks, The Elohist and North Israelite Traditions, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard Divinity School, 1965. Later published in SBL Monograph Series 22 (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 89-91; A. David Ritterspach, The Samuel Traditions: An Analysis of the Anti-Monarchical Source in 1 Sam 1-15. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate Theological Union and the San Francisco Theological Seminary, 1967, pp. 233-241; Walter Vogels, Le prophète. Un homme de Dieu (Paris and Montreal: Bellarmin, 1973), pp. 39-44; A. E. Zannoni, An Investigation of the Call and Dedication of the Prophet Samuel: 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Marquette University, 1976; Rene Peter-Contesse, "La Structure de 1 Sam 1-3," The Bible Translator 27 (1976), pp. 312-314; Robert Gnuse, "A Reconsideration of the Form-Critical Structure in 1 Sam 3: An Ancient Near Eastern Dream Theophany," ZAW 94 (1982), pp. 379-390; Michael Fishbane, "1 Sam 3: Historical Narrative and Narrative Poetics," in Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis (ed), Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives (Nashville: Abindgon, 1982), pp. 191-203.

research has been explicitly form-critical in nature, and where the focal point of 1 Sam 3 has been form criticism, the research has been carried out almost in exclusion of the entire pericope 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. Because, on the level of form criticism, a structural schema and generic identification are proposed in this chapter which differ significantly from those proposed by other scholars, a preliminary synthesis of their contributions is in order.

Since the ideas of Murray Newman were picked up by and built upon by both Jenks and Ritterspach, this synthesis of the research devoted to 1 Sam 3 necessarily must allude to him. Newman's approach to 1 Sam 3 was primarily tradition-historical, rather than form critical in nature.² However, because he compared the call of Samuel to the call of Moses,³ that idea will be incorporated into the work of Jenks, and eventually it will find expression in Ritterspach's form-critical analysis of 1 Sam 3.

In his research Jenks, like Newman, was not primarily concerned with form-critical questions. Rather, he was concerned with demonstrating that the E traditions comprise the fragments of an originally continuous epic

²For a synthesis of Newman's ideas relative to 1 Sam 3, see Chapter 1 of this dissertation, pp. 26-29.

³Murray Newman, op. cit., p. 94.

tradition. He dates the Elohist epic to the time of the division of the Solomonic empire, around 922 B.C., and sees it as an expression of the religious views of the northern kingdom.⁴ He views the anti-monarchical sections of the books of Samuel as being part of the Elohist epic,⁵ and it is within that perspective that he analyzes 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a.

According to Jenks, "the narrative of Samuel's call displays remarkable affinities with similar traditions in E, particularly the story of Moses' call, Exod 3:1, 4b, 9-13, 15."⁶ Both narratives, according to Jenks, have a similar call pattern:

<u>Exod 3:4</u>	<u>1 Sam 3:4</u>
. . . God called him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!"	Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!"
and he said, "Here I am."	and he said, "Here I am."

In addition, according to Jenks, both Moses and Samuel are called to exercise leadership over the people (Exod 3:10; 1 Sam 3:19-4:1a); both Moses and Samuel save their people from oppression (Exod 3:9; 1 Sam 3:11-14); the calls of both Moses and Samuel stress auditory rather

⁴Alan W. Jenks, op. cit., p. 1.

⁵Alan W. Jenks, op. cit., p. 83ff.

⁶Alan W. Jenks, op. cit., p. 89.

than visual phenomena; and finally, both calls emphasize the importance of the spoken word.⁷

In his doctoral dissertation, A. David Ritterspach,⁸ following the ideas of Newman and Jenks, also compares the call of Samuel in 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a to the call of Moses in Exod 3:1-12. However, Ritterspach presents his form-critical analysis of 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a in a way that closely follows the ideas of N. Habel,⁹ who previously had analyzed prophetic call narratives from the perspective of a six-rubric pattern: divine confrontation; introductory word; commission; objection; reassurance and sign.

Ritterspach notes that while the call of Moses corresponds exactly to Habel's six elements of the prophetic call pattern, 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a corresponds to only some of those elements. Ritterspach's proposed analysis of 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a is as follows:

⁷Alan W. Jenks, Ibid., p. 89.

⁸A. David Ritterspach, The Samuel Traditions . . ., op. cit., pp. 233-241.

⁹N. Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," ZAW 77 (1965), pp. 297-323. It is significant that Habel, who form-critically analyzes the prophetic call narratives of Gideon, Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezechiel, and 2nd Isaiah does not include 1 Sam 1:3-4:1a in his study.

1. Divine confrontation: 1 Sam 3:1-4.

Ritterspach makes this judgement on the basis of the following elements of the text: the cultic setting; the rareness of the word of God; Eli's old age; and the Lord's first call to Samuel.¹⁰

2. Introductory word: 1 Sam 3:5-14. Here

Ritterspach stresses the motif of summons and response; the auditory character of the call; and the divine oracle.¹¹

3. Prophet's objection: 1 Sam 3:15. For this

point Ritterspach bases his argument on Samuel's hesitation to tell the vision to Eli.¹²

4. Reassurance: 1 Sam 3:16-18. For

Ritterspach, the reassurance comes from Eli, who asks Samuel to tell him what the Lord has said.¹³

5. Sign: 1 Sam 3:19-4:1a. Here Ritterspach

sees the following as signs: the establishment of Samuel as a prophet; the return to the word of God to Israel; and the demise of the Elides.¹⁴

¹⁰A. David Ritterspach, *The Samuel Traditions*, . . . op. cit., pp. 235-237.

¹¹A. David Ritterspach, Ibid., pp. 237-238.

¹²A. David Ritterspach, Ibid., pp. 238.

¹³A. David Ritterspach, Ibid., pp. 238-239.

¹⁴A. David Ritterspach, Ibid., pp. 239-240.

A. E. Zannoni,¹⁵ in his form-critical analysis of 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a, presents the ideas of Ritterspach.

Recently, Robert Gnuse¹⁶ has raised serious objections to Ritterspach's (and consequently Zannoni's) application of Habel's six formal elements relative to prophetic call narratives to 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a. First, he notes that, as Ritterspach himself admits, there is the absence of the crucial prophetic commission in 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a. Second, Gnuse objects to the fact that Ritterspach construes Samuel's reluctance to tell Eli the divine message as his "prophetic objection." And third, he objects to the "reassurance" being mediated to Samuel through Eli. The primary basis for Gnuse's objections resides in the fact that he perceives the prophetic call as being essentially an encounter between God and man:

The objection of the prophet and the divine reassurance occur in that very encounter, because this is the testimony to the fact that the prophet has been called by divine initiative and not his own desire. Transferral of these categories to a human-to-human dialogue loses that theological emphasis.¹⁷

¹⁵A. E. Zannoni, op. cit., pp. 116-123. Without proper citation, Zannoni's pp. 116-123 repeat Ritterspach's pp. 223-240.

¹⁶Robert Gnuse, "A Reconsideration of the Form-Critical Structure of 1 Sam 3: An Ancient Near Eastern Dream Theophany," op. cit., p. 387.

¹⁷Robert Gnuse, Ibid., p. 387.

In his analysis of 1 Sam 3, Walter Vogels¹⁸ characterizes the call of Samuel as a "Master-Disciple" type.¹⁹ The following is the structure which Vogels proposes for the call of Samuel:

- I. The first misunderstood call (vv. 4-5)
 1. The call (v.4a)
 2. Samuel's response (v.4b)
 3. Samuel's conduct (v.5a)
 4. Eli's discharge of Samuel (v.5b)
- II. The second misunderstood call (vv.6-7)
 1. The call (v.6a)
 2. Samuel's conduct (v.6b)
 3. Eli's discharge of Samuel (v.6c)
- III. The third misunderstood call (vv. 8-9)
- IV. The decisive call (vv. 10-14)
 1. Apparition of God and call (v.10a)
 2. Samuel's response (v.10b)
 3. Commission: "You will announce to him (vv. 11-14)
 4. Samuel's execution of the divine order (vv. 15-16)

¹⁸Walter Vogels, Le prophète, un homme de Dieu (Paris and Montreal: Bellarmin, 1973), pp. 39-44.

¹⁹Other types of prophetic calls presented by Vogels are: the "Military Officer" type (Jonas, Amos, Hosea and Elijah); the "Master-Servant, or Ambassador" type (Jeremiah and Ezechiel); and the "King-Counselor" type (Micaiah and Isaiah).

In responding to the analysis of 1 Sam 3 as proposed by W. Vogels, it may be pointed out that he bases his prophetic "commission" (l'ordre de mission)²⁰ on de Vaux's conjectural emendation of whgdy ("I will announce") to whgdt ("You will announce") in 1 Sam 3:13.²¹ In MT, all of the principal verbs in 1 Sam 3:11-14 are in the first person singular: "I am about to do" (ʕnky ʕśh) in v. 11; "I will fulfill" (ʕqym) . . . all that I have said" (dbrty) in v. 12; "I announce to him (whgdy lw) . . . I am doing justice" (ky-špt ʕny) in v.13; and "I swear" (nšb ʕty) in v. 14.

According to the text itself, then, the emphasis in 1 Sam 3:11-14 is upon the Lord, not upon Samuel. The passage that Vogels proposes as a prophetic commission is, in reality, part of a divine oracle in which the Lord, through divine power, establishes judgement in Israel.

In his analysis of 1 Sam 3, Robert Gnuse first directs attention to those scholars who have raised the question of whether or not 1 Sam 3 can actually be

²⁰Walter Vogels, Ibid., p. 42.

²¹R. de Vaux, Samuel, B. J., (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1961), p. 35. In his emendation of the text, de Vaux is following Klostermann and P. Dhorme. See P. Dhorme, Les Livres de Samuel, p. 44.

classified as a "call narrative."²² Then, Gnuse offers an alternative form-critical analysis of that passage. He bases his analysis on a comparison of 1 Sam 3 with A. L. Oppenheim's²³ perception of the form-critical structure of the auditory message dream report, a literary device used in the ancient Near East for recording dream theophanies of kings and priests.²⁴ According to Oppenheim, the message dream report embodies the following elements:

²²Gnuse cites, for example, W. Richter Die sogenannten vorprophetischen Berufsberichte: Eine literaturwissenschaftliche Studie zu 1 Sam 9. 1-10, 16, Ex 3f. und Ri 6, 11b-17. Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 101 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970, pp. 174-175; T. Veijola, Die ewige Dynastie: David und die Entstehung seiner Dynastie nach der deuteronomistischen Darstellung (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, Ser. B, Tom 193; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1975), p. 38; K. Budde, Die Bücher Samuel, op. cit., p. 25; E. Ehrlich Der Traum im Alten Testament. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 73 (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann Verlag, 1953), p. 417; G. Ch. Macholz, Untersuchungen zu Geschichte der Samuel-Überlieferung, Th.D. dissertation, Heidelberg, 1966, pp. 91-92.

²³A. L. Oppenheim, The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, N.S. Vol. 46, Part 3 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1956), pp. 179-373; "Mantic Dreams in the Ancient Near East" in The Dream and Human Societies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 341-350; "New Fragments of the Assyrian Dream-Book," Iraq 31 (1969), pp. 153-165.

²⁴Robert Gnuse, op. cit., p. 380.

- I. Setting
 - A. Who - the recipient of the dream
 - B. When - the time of the dream
 - C. Where - the site, usually a shrine
 - D. What conditions - circumstances surrounding the reception of the dream
- II. Dream Content - a report of the visual imagery of a symbolic message dream or the spoken message of an auditory message dream
- III. Termination of the dream - usually a statement that the dreamer awoke and perceived his experience to be a dream
- IV. Fulfillment of the dream - an account of how the word of the deity came true, which may not always be included in dream reports.

Using the basic structure proposed by Oppenheim, Gnuse analyzes 1 Sam 3 in the following manner:²⁵

- Vv. 1-4a: the setting. Samuel, at Shiloh, just before dawn, in the presence of Eli . . .
- Vv. 4b-10: the coming of the deity to the recipient
- Vv. 11-14: the message of the deity
- V. 15a: the termination of the theophany.²⁶

The correspondence which Gnuse outlines between 1 Sam 3 and ancient Near Eastern auditory message dream reports is dramatically striking, and one has to admit

²⁵Robert Gnuse, op. cit., pp. 381-385.

²⁶Interestingly enough, Gnuse does not include 1 Sam 3:16-4:1a in his form-critical analysis.

the influence of that literary genre upon the story of Samuel's call.

At the same time, in keeping with the methodology employed in this study,²⁷ several questions relative to genre may again be raised at this point. Is a genre a statically fixed pattern, or may a genre be constituted by a diversity of typicalities? Does the fact that a narrative is patterned according to the structure of a particular genre always mean that the text belongs to that genre? May the external structure of a given genre be employed by a biblical author simply as a rhetorical device?²⁸

In the form-critical analysis of 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a proposed in this dissertation, the above questions are

²⁷See Chapter 2 of this study, especially pp. 44-45; 52-54, and Rolf P. Knierim, "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered," op. cit., pp. 435-468.

²⁸In regard to that possibility, see Dennis J. McCarthy, Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament (AnBib 21; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1978). McCarthy shows how the covenant form, which originally belonged to a legal or cultic setting, was employed by Dtr simply as a rhetorical device. In a similar way, Helen Ann Kenik has demonstrated how Dtr employed the Königsnovelle genre relative to Solomon's dream (1 Kgs 3:4-15). According to Kenik, Dtr used the genre of the Königsnovelle in a rhetorical way to promote a Deuteronomistic design for kingship. See Helen Ann Kenik, The Design for Kingship in I Kings 3:4-15: A Study in the Deuteronomistic Narrative Technique and Theology of Kingship. Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1983, pp. 312-326.

taken seriously. The contention of this study is that the account of Samuel's call, as accurately demonstrated by Gnuse, is patterned upon ancient Near Eastern auditory dream reports. However, it is proposed here that the external structure of the dream report has been appropriated by the author of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a only for rhetorical purposes. Moreover, in keeping with the motifs of judgement²⁹ and the divine word³⁰ which are operative throughout the pericope, it is suggested in this study that the call of Samuel plays a secondary, not a primary role in 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a. The emphasis in 1 Sam 3 is primarily upon the word of God, not upon Samuel.

Recently, Burke O. Long³¹ has dealt with the need for describing narrative genres as they actually appear in the Old Testament. In his analysis of certain stories in the books of Kings (1 Kgs 17:8-16; 2 Kgs 2:19-22;

²⁹Eli's "lawsuit" against Hannah in 1 Sam 1:14; the prophetic accusation and judgement in Hannah's Canticle (1 Sam 2:3,9); the accounts of the sinfulness of Eli's sons, demonstrating the need for judgement (1 Sam 2:12-17; 22-25); the prophetic judgement suit (1 Sam 2:27-36); the divine oracle of judgement in 1 Sam 3:11-14.

³⁰The root dbr is repeated 21 times in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a: 1 Sam 1:13, 16, 23; 2:3, 23 (2x); 3:1, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17(5x), 18, 19, 21; 4:1a.

³¹Burke O. Long, "2 Kings III and Genres of Prophetic Narrative," Vetus Testamentum 23 (1973), pp. 237-348, especially p. 346.

4:42-44) Long proposes the term "oracle actualization narrative" as the genre which best describes those stories. Each of those narratives follow a common pattern: situation/crisis; divine oracle; fulfillment/resolution of the crisis. Moreover, they

. . . make a common demonstration--the correspondence between word and event. Not veneration of the prophet, not remembrance of history, but demonstrative theology is the key to their form and function.³²

It is the contention of this study that 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a may also be included in the genre which is identified by Burke as the "oracle actualization narrative." Within that pattern which, incidentally, has structural affinities with the auditory message dream report, 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a is structured in the following manner:

- I. Situation/Crisis (1 Sam 3:1-7)
- II. The divine oracle and the circumstances of it being perceived as such (1 Sam 3:8-18)
- III. Fulfillment/Resolution of the crisis (1 Sam 3:19-4:1a)

In the pages that follow, the structure, genre, and intention of 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a will be explored in greater detail.

³²Burke O. Long, Ibid., p. 347.

Situation/Crisis (1 Sam 3:1-7)

¹Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. ²At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim, so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place; ³the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down within the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. ⁴Then the Lord called, "Samuel!"³³ and he said "Here I am!" ⁵and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶And the Lord called again, "Samuel!" And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." ⁷Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

Delimitation of the Text

Several points may be made relative to the boundaries of this sub-unit. First, since this passage follows the judgement suit against the Elides (1 Sam 2:27-36), a genre with a well-defined literary structure of its own, it remains only to establish a boundary of this passage relative to the rest of 1 Sam 3. Second, since a generic identification of 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a has

³³In regard to 1 Sam 3:4, RSV follows LXX which repeats the vocative "Samuel!" twice. For literary reasons, discussed under "Text and Intention," I have retained MT's single vocative.

already been made, the present task is only to defend the position that 1 Sam 3:1-7 corresponds to the "Situation/Crisis" of an oracle actualizing narrative. That defense can be made on several levels. First, on the level of content, 1 Sam 3:1-7 describes a real crisis situation: the word of the Lord was rare in those days (v.1b); there was no frequent vision (v.1c); and, not only is Eli physically blind (v.2), but he is spiritually blind to two divine interventions (v.4a and v.6a). Second, vv. 1-7 are separated from vv. 8-18 by means of a temporal shift. Vv. 1-7 describe the situation in Shiloh before the word of God has been revealed to Samuel (note the repetition of "before" [ṭrm] in v.7); beginning with v.8, in which Eli finally perceives that the Lord is calling Samuel, that section of the narrative provides the details of the divine revelation to Samuel by means of an oracle of judgement. And third, on the level of style, it can be noted that this passage is framed by the phrase "word of the Lord" (dbr-yhwh) in v.1 and in v.7. Thus, the literary device of the inclusio provides further argumentation for the de-limitation of this part of 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a, the crisis situation aspect of an oracle actualizing narrative.

Text and Structure

I. Situation/Crisis (1 Sam 3:1-7)

A. Narrative introduction (vv.1-3)

1. Who: Samuel ministers under Eli (v.1a)
2. Condition:
 - a. The rareness of the word of God (v.1b)
 - b. The infrequency of vision (v.1c)
 - c. The blindness of Eli (v.2)
3. Time: the lamp of God has not yet gone out (dawn) (v.3a)
4. Place: Samuel is sleeping in the temple, near the Ark of God (v.3b)

B. Situation: the first non-perceived call (vv. 4-5)

1. The Lord calls (v.4a)
2. Samuel responds (v.4bc)
3. Samuel goes to Eli (v.5a)
4. Samuel addresses Eli (v.5bcd)
5. Eli replies (v.5fgh)
6. Samuel returns and sleeps (v.5ij)

C. Situation: the second non-perceived call (v.6)

1. The Lord calls (v.6a)
2. Samuel goes to Eli (v.6bc)
3. Samuel addresses Eli (v.6def)
4. Eli replies (v.6ghij)

D. Narrative conclusion (v.7)

1. That was before (trm) Samuel knew the Lord (v.7a)
2. And before (trm) the word of the Lord had been revealed to him (v.7b)

The structure of 1 Sam 3:1-7, heavily influenced by the structure of auditory message dream reports, outlines the crisis situation existing in Israel, under the ineffective leadership of Eli the priest. Vv. 1-3, the narrative introduction, provide the reader with details of the crisis: Samuel's ministry under Eli (v.1a); the rareness of the word of the Lord and the infrequency of vision (v.1bc); Eli's blindness (v.2); and the particular circumstances of time and place (v.3ab). Vv. 4-6, consisting of both narrative and discourse, provide the reader with two additional dramatic examples of Eli's ineffective leadership, his inability to perceive divine interventions in human history. V. 7, the narrative conclusion of this sub-unit, reaffirms, through the repetition of "before" (trm), that "this is the way things were" at Shiloh.

Text and Genre

It has already been proposed that 1 Sam 3:1-7 corresponds to the aspect of "situation/crisis" within an

"oracle actualization narrative." When these verses are compared to the crisis situations in other examples of this genre (1 Kgs 17:8-16; 2 Kgs 2:19-22; 4:42-44) several differences emerge. First, in 1 Kgs 17:8-16; 2 Kgs 2:19-22; and 4:42-44 prophetic leadership is already operative through the lives of Elijah (1 Kgs 17:8-16) and Elisha (2 Kgs 2:19-22; 4:42-44). In 1 Sam 3:1-7, by way of contrast, the crisis itself is caused by the lack of prophetic leadership in Israel. Second, the crises faced by Elijah and Elisha are specific human needs relative to the scarcity of food and water (1 Kgs 17:10-12; 2 Kgs 2:19; 4:42-43). By way of contrast, the crisis in 1 Sam 3:1-7 is spiritual, and consequently more dire. Israel's impoverishment, under Elidic leadership, is caused by the scarcity of the word of God, of vision, and of perceptive leadership.

Text and Intention

First of all, something may be said, in general, relative to the author's careful employment of a specific genre, that is, the author's use of an "oracle actualization narrative" in 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a. In view of the dramatic events which will unfold in 1 Sam 3, one can speculate that the genre itself is meant to function as

demonstrative theology.³⁴ Within that framework, both the divine humiliation of the Elides (1 Sam 3:11-14) and the divine exaltation of Samuel as a prophet (1 Sam 3:20) provide the reader with clear demonstrations of the power of God's word. Not only is God's word of judgement spoken in regard to the Elides (1 Sam 3:11-14), but, as the Elides "disappear" from the pericope,³⁵ the oracle itself is actualized. Moreover, the crisis in Israel due to the absence of the divine word at the beginning of the narrative is resolved when, through the prophetic mediation of Samuel, divine revelation occurs "by the word of the Lord" (1 Sam 3:21) at the end of the narrative.

Second, something may also be said relative to the fact that, within an "oracle actualization narrative," the author has incorporated a structure which is highly evocative of an auditory message dream report.³⁶ It has already been proposed that the author has incorporated such a structure into the larger narrative purely for rhetorical purposes. Since, in the ancient Near East,

³⁴See Burke O. Long, "2 Kings III and Genres of Prophetic Narrative," op. cit., p. 347.

³⁵Eli disappears from the narrative after 1 Sam 3:18.

³⁶Strangely enough, the word "dream" (hlwm) never occurs in the pericope.

dream theophanies served as vehicles for divine communication, the author's intention, through the appropriation of structural elements of a dream report, seems to be that of introducing an element of mystery and expectancy into the narrative. Moreover, in keeping with the adumbrative style of the author, the rubrics of a dream report serve as a foreshadowing of the divine communication that will take place between the Lord and Samuel in 1 Sam 3:10-14.

With these ideas as a background for 1 Sam 3, attention can now be turned towards the individual verses of 1 Sam 3:1-7.

1 Sam 3:1a, with its reference to the "boy" (n̄r) Samuel "ministering" (mšrt) under Eli, immediately calls to mind the contrast schema which the author has previously established in regard to the sons of Eli and Samuel. Whereas, in 1 Sam 2:12-17; 22-25 the sons of Eli have been portrayed as greedy and blasphemous men who misuse priestly power, Samuel, by way of contrast, has been consistently portrayed as an innocent and vulnerable child, a child who finds favor with God and people through the humble performance of service (1 Sam 2:18, 21, 26). It is not by accident that the author opens the oracle actualization narrative with a reference to this powerless child who, through divine power, will mediate

revelation to all Israel, through "the word of the Lord" at the end of the narrative (1 Sam 3:21-4:1a).

V.1bc begins to delineate the crisis situation in Israel. These two clauses are in parallel relationship:

and the word of the Lord was rare in those days;
vision was not widespread.

The parallel relationship of the terms "word of the Lord" and "vision" explicitly establishes, for the first time in the pericope, the relationship between perceptiveness, or vision, and the divine word. In addition, the phrase "word of the Lord" in v.1b picks up the Leitwort dbr which runs throughout 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a; in relation to dbr-yhwh in 1 Sam 3:7b, 1 Sam 3:1b constitutes an inclusio framing this sub-unit.*

The reference to "in those days" (byymym hhm) in v.1b picks up the motif of "days of judgement" relative to the Elides, and serves as a foreshadowing of 1 Sam 3:11-14.

V.1c, beginning with the negative substantive for emphasis, stresses the infrequency of revelatory experiences in Israel under the leadership of Eli. It bears noting that v.1c, through the literary devices of both metonymy and punning, is related to v.2: the lack of spiritual vision in v.1c corresponds to the physical failure of Eli's eyes in v.2cd; the negative substantive

ṣyn in v.1c corresponds, in sound, to the Hebrew noun for Eli's eyes (wṣynw) in v.2c.

The author's use of three parallel clauses in v.2bcd serves to highlight Eli's failure of vision:

One day Eli was sleeping in his place;
his eyes had begun to grown dim
he was not able to see.³⁷

This concentrated attention upon Eli's lack of vision picks up the motif of the prophet/watchman which was introduced in 1 Sam 1:1, and which has functioned in a negative manner at crucial developments in the plot of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a.³⁸ Here again, in this sub-unit, the author's sense of irony predominates. In contrast to the authentic "watchman" in Israel, that is, the prophetic figure who is the first to perceive impending divine judgement, Eli, in these verses is portrayed as a "failed watchman." Through his personal lack of vision, he is unable to perceive impending divine judgement, even when it will pertain to his own family.

V.3, which describes Samuel sleeping in the temple "before the lamp of God had been extinguished,"

³⁷My translation, for emphasis.

³⁸See 1 Sam 1:14, where Eli fails to perceive Hannah's interiority; 1 Sam 1:26-26, where Eli fails to recognize Hannah in the temple; 1 Sam 2:22-25, where Eli has to learn about his sons' scandalous behavior through "hearsay."

introduces an element of hope into Israel's crisis situation. In the same way that the temple lamp will be extinguished at daybreak, when it is no longer needed for light, so also the long night of Eli's leadership is about to be "extinguished" through the divine call of Samuel to prophecy. The approaching dawn in v.3 looks back to the morning of Samuel's conception (1 Sam 1:19) and anticipates the new day of Samuel's prophetic leadership (1 Sam 3:15). Moreover, the fact that Samuel sleeps "near the ark of God" (v.3b) places him, once again, in the midst of divine presence (See 1 Sam 2:18, 21, 26).

The account of the double divine call to Samuel (vv.4-6), through the device of dialogue, introduces a spirit of dynamism into the text: the use of the direct address "Samuel!" in vv.4,6 communicates to the reader a sense of dramatic urgency; Samuel's youthful readiness, in contrast to Eli's lethargy is highlighted by the fact that he "runs" (v.5) to Eli, and by his three enthusiastic answers to the call, "Here I am!" in vv. 4,5,6. The insistency of the Lord's call to Samuel is underscored by the six repetitions of the verb "to call" (qr³) in vv. 4,5,6. And ironically, Eli's failure to perceive the divine nature of Samuel's call mirrors the description of his physical blindness in 1 Sam 3:2.

The narrative conclusion to this section of the "oracle actualization narrative," (v.7), with its double reference to "before" (trm), signifies not only a temporal shift to a new era in Israel, but a dividing point between the leadership of Eli and that of Samuel. The two clauses of v.7 are in parallel relationship:

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord; (v.7a)
and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed
to him. (v.7b)

The parallel relationship suggests that knowledge of God implies fidelity to his word. The author's use of the important verb "reveal" (yglh) in v.7b looks back retrospectively to the period long ago when divine revelation had been entrusted to the house of Eli's progenitor (1 Sam 2:27); at the same time, it anticipates a new era in Israel when, through the prophetic mediation of Samuel, revelation will again take place in Israel.

The Divine Oracle and the Circumstances of it Being
Perceived as Such: 1 Sam 3:8-18

⁸And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. ⁹Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears." So Samuel went and lay down in his place. ¹⁰And the Lord came and stood forth, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel! And Samuel said, "Speak, for thy servant hears."

11Then the Lord said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel, at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13And I tell him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. 14Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever." 15Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. 16But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." 17And Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." 18So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the Lord; let him do what seems good to him."

Delimitation of the Text

The strongest argument for the delimitation of 1 Sam 3:8-18 is on the level of style: vv.8-18 are chiastically structured. In addition, it may be pointed out that the center of the chiasm, the divine oracle (1 Sam 3:11-14), permits these verses to constitute, on the level of genre, the middle movement of an "oracle actualization narrative."³⁹ And finally, between vv. 1-7 and vv. 8-18, there are two major content "shifts": the

³⁹As mentioned previously, oracle actualization narratives consist of three parts: a crisis situation, a divine oracle, and a resolution of the crisis.

shift between perception and non-perception; and the shift from Elidic leadership to the prophetic leadership of Samuel.

Text and Structure

As noted above, vv. 8-18 constitute a perfectly balanced chiasm:

- A. The Lord calls Samuel a third time. Eli perceives that the Lord is calling the boy. (v. 8)
- B. Eli instructs Samuel: "Speak (dbr) Lord, your servant is listening." (v. 9)
- C. The Lord calls (qr) Samuel, who replies, "Speak, for your servant is listening." (v. 10)
- D. The Lord will carry out his word concerning Eli's house (ʔl-bytw). (vv. 11-12)
- E. The Lord will punish Eli's house (ʔt-bytw) forever, because he did not rebuke his blasphemous sons. (v.14)
- D¹. Nothing will ever expiate the sins of Eli's house (byt-ʕly). (v. 13)
- C¹. Eli calls (qr) Samuel, who replies only "Here I am." (v.16)
- B¹. Eli asks to know the "word" (dbr) which the Lord spoke (dbr) to Samuel. Samuel tells "all the words: to Eli. (vv. 17-18ab)
- A¹. Eli's reponse. "It is the Lord; let him do what seems good to him." (v. 18cde)

Text and Genre

Since it has already been established that 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a is an "oracle actualization narrative," it remains only to indicate that 1 Sam 3:8-18 corresponds to the middle movement of that genre, the part of the narrative which points to the divine oracle. The assignment of vv.8-18 to the central section of an oracle actualization narrative is verified by the fact that those verses manifest a concentric structure, and that the center of the chiasm consists of the divine oracle.

In comparing 1 Sam 3:8-18 with the divine oracles in other instances of this genre (1 Kgs 17:8-16; 2 Kgs 2:19-22; 4:42-44) the generic uniqueness of 1 Sam 3:8-18 emerges. The oracles in 1 Kgs 17:8-16; 2 Kgs 2:19-22 and 4:42-44 all describe divine interventions in Israel's history which result in reversals in Israel's fortunes relative to hunger (1 Kgs 17:8-16; 2 Kgs 4:42-44) or infertility due to poor water (2 Kgs 2:19-22). In 1 Sam 3:11-14, by way of contrast, the divine intervention in Israel's history results in a reversal of fortunes relative to the Elidic line of priests. It is not by chance that the Elides, who misused priestly power by taking sacrificial food by force (1 Sam 2:16), are reduced to diminished strength (1 Sam 2:31), an eternal

diminishment which can never be expiated by sacrifice or offering (1 Sam 3:14).

Text and Intention

First of all, it may be noted that the concentric structure evidenced in 1 Sam 3:8-18, with its balanced, symmetric elements of the text, introduces a variation in style into the oracle actualization narrative. Moreover, the conscious repetition of words and phrases in the panels of the chiasm retards the movement of the text, and thus allows the center and crucial part of the chiasm, the divine oracle, to stand out in bold relief.

The outer panels of the chiasm call attention to Eli's belated perception of the divine nature of Samuel's call, and to his humble resignation in the aftermath of the oracular judgement against his house (A and A¹); in B and B¹ there is an ironic interplay in regard to the "word" (dbr) which Samuel, under Eli's tutelage, has asked the Lord to "speak" (dbr);" the sense of irony continues in C and C¹, relative to the distinction that Samuel can now make between divine and human "calls;" in D and D¹, the outer frames of the divine oracle, the focus is upon the sinfulness of Eli's house and the divine judgement of it; in E, the center of the divine

oracle, the reason for the divine punishment of Eli's house is made explicit: Eli failed to rebuke his blasphemous sons.

Having outlined the implicit meaning behind the author's employment of a concentric structure for vv. 8-18, attention can now be directed towards the individual verses of this sub-unit.

In v.8 the theme of "call," previously introduced in vv. 4-6, continues. In this sub-unit, as in the last, the verb qr² will be repeated six times (1 Sam 3:8a_{fg}, 9, 10, 16), heightening the tension of the narrative and bearing witness to the insistency of the divine call. It is significant that Eli, only after the third call, perceives the divine nature of Samuel's vocation.

It must also be noted that, in v.8 Eli understands that the Lord is calling the "boy" (n_cr). This final and twelfth reference to Samuel as a "boy" picks up the motif of youthful vulnerability that has functioned throughout 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. The occurrences of the noun "boy" have functioned in several different ways throughout the pericope. In the accounts of Samuel's birth and dedication, the emphasis upon Samuel as a "boy" introduces an element of poignancy into the text, thus emphasizing the difficult fulfillment of a mother's vow (1 Sam 1:22, 24[2x], 25, 27); in 1 Sam 2:15 the noun "boy"

refers to the priest's servant, thus suggesting the failure of the Elides relative to their own faithful carrying out of priestly service; in 1 Sam 2:11, 18, 21, 26; 3:1,8 the references to Samuel as a "boy" point to his youthful vulnerability, and thus contrast the powerlessness of Samuel to the corrupt and powerful Elides. Thus, the motif of youthful powerlessness reinforces the theology already demonstrated in the Canticle of Hannah: through divine interventions in history, human destinies are reversed. The proud and powerful are overthrown and supplanted by the humble and weak. At the same time, the motif of "littleness" and "boyhood" has strong prophetic overtones, and evokes the early, sinless days of Israel when Yahweh treated the nation as a son (Hos 11:1; Ezek 16:22, 43, 60). The littleness and vulnerability of Samuel, and his need of assistance for his task, will open the way for the fatherly guidance of the Lord in Samuel's life.

Eli's advice to Samuel in v.9, "Go (lk), lie down" is a continuation of the motif of "walking" (h₁lk) found throughout 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. The three repetitions of that verb in this sub-unit (3:8,9bh) complete the twelve-fold repetition schema in the pericope (1:17,18; 2:11,21,26,30,35; 3:5,6,8,9bh), and emphasize the Lord's

choice of a new leader who will faithfully "walk in his ways."

Eli's tentative direction to Samuel in v.9 "and if he calls you" continues the motif of the divine call. The fact that Eli refers to the Lord only indirectly ("and if he calls") may indicate a hesitation on his part to pronounce the divine name, a practice that Samuel will also follow when he responds to the climactic fourth call of the Lord in v.10.

Eli's instruction to Samuel in v.9 to say "Speak (dbr) Lord, for your servant hears" calls attention to the primary keyword in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a and in this sub-unit: dbr.⁴⁰ In telling Samuel to refer to himself as the Lord's "servant," Eli is placing the young Samuel in the tradition of the prophets in general (Jer 7:25; 26:5; 29:19; 34:13; Amos 3:7; Zach 3:8), or in the line of Israel's leaders who have executed a special mission from God: Abraham (Ps 105:6,42); Moses (Deut 34:5; Josh 1:1); and Joshua (Josh 24:29).

In addition, Samuel is characterized in v.9 as a servant who "listens." The participial form of šm^c

⁴⁰As previously indicated, the root dbr is repeated twenty-one times in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. Ten of those occurrences are in this subunit. See 1 Sam 1:13,16,23; 2:3,23[3x]; 3:1,7,9,10,11,12,17[5x],18,19,21; 4:1a.

implies a readiness to receive revelation, or a willingness to encounter the Lord precisely through his word. Within the plot development of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, Samuel's willingness to "listen" places him in contrast to Eli's sons, whose failure to "listen" brings about their own death (1 Sam 2:25). The verb šm^c is repeated three times for emphasis in this sub-unit, and is part of a nine-fold repetition schema in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a.⁴¹

In the final clause of v.9 there is a subtle indication that leadership over Israel has now passed from Eli to Samuel. In v. 2 of the previous sub-unit, the narrator describes Eli as "lying down in his own place" (bmqmw); now, in v.9, Samuel is described as lying down "in his place" (bmqwmw).

In v.10 the language becomes explicitly theopanic: the Lord "comes" (wyb[?]) and "stands forth" (wytysb) in Samuel's presence, calling him for the fourth time, "Samuel! Samuel!" It must be noted here that the author of 1 Sam 3 has used the literary technique of repetition in a most artistic way. First of all, through the use of repetition relative to Samuel's call, the author has brought about continuity between vv.1-7 and vv.8-18. And second, he has used repetition to retard

⁴¹1 Sam 1:13; 2:22,23,24[2x],25; 3:9,10,11.

the action in both sub-units, thus heightening the dramatic moment when the Lord comes, and Samuel himself perceives the identity of the One who is calling him. An analysis of the four calls of Samuel reveals a growing sense of urgency in the first three narrative accounts, an urgency which climaxes in the fourth call which switches from narrative prose to the vocative address:

- V.4 "Yahweh called Samuel" (wyqr³ yhwh 3l-šmw³l).
- v.6 "Yahweh continued to call Samuel again" (wy³sp yhwh qr³ ʿwd šmw³l).
- v.8 "Yahweh continued to call Samuel, a third time" (wy³sp yhwh qr³-šmw³l bšlšyt).
- v.10 "Yahweh came and stood forth, calling again and again, 'Samuel! Samuel!'" (wyb³ yhwh wytyšb wyqr³ kpʿm-bpʿm šmw³l šmw³l).

Not only has the author incorporated an artful use of repetition in the account of Samuel's call, but he has used numerical repetitions in an intriguing way. Usually, in threefold repetitions of a biblical activity or conversation, the third repetition is the one that "clicks" in the mind of the reader/listener. That is the case in v.8, when Eli suddenly perceives, after Samuel's third approach to him, that it is the Lord who is calling the boy. In addition to the ternary pattern manifested in Samuel's call, the call also entails the author's use of the 3+1 pattern. In that literary technique, after the listener has been lulled by the repetition of a

uniform threefold sequence, the formula is unexpectedly repeated again. The fourth repetition, as is the case with Samuel's fourth call, entails a crucial difference.

Samuel's reply to the fourth call, in which he reverently does not articulate the divine name, signifies that he understands who it is that is calling him, and that he is willing to hear the divine word of revelation.

Vv. 11-14, the divine oracle of judgement against Eli's house, constitute the "word" that Yahweh speaks to Samuel.

In v.11 the dābār that the Lord will bring about in Israel will cause "the two ears of all who hear it to tingle." Hence, the oracle of doom entrusted to Samuel is one of the utmost severity.⁴²

That the Lord will fulfill "all that he has spoken" (dbrty) against Eli's house (v.12), from beginning to end, includes the punishments against the Elides contained in the prophetic lawsuit (2:27-36). The brunt of the punishment is explicitly directed to Eli's house (3:12,13, 14ab).

In v.13, the center of the concentric structure, the reason for the divine condemnation is made clear:

⁴²See 2 Kgs 21:12 and Jer 19:3. Both of these oracles of doom are so severe that the ears of everyone who hears them will tingle.

Eli knew that his sons were blaspheming God,⁴³ and he did not rebuke them.

Therefore, in v.14, the Lord swears to Eli that neither sacrifices nor offerings will ever expiate the iniquity of his house. This final condemnation of Eli may, in an extremely subtle way, contain an element of hope for Eli. The spirit of the prophetic movement includes the possibility of returning to God, even after great sinfulness (Jer 31:18-19; Ezek 33:19; Hos 6:1; 14:1,2,7; etc.). The prophetic sense of conversion, however, is primarily non-cultic in character. In that sense, the statement that "sacrifices and offerings" will never expiate the sins of Eli's house may be both an indictment of the empty cult of the Elides, and a call, in the spirit of Hosea, for inner conversion: "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings" (Hos 6:6).

V.15 suggests that the era of blind darkness, under the leadership of Eli, the "anti-watchman," is over. Samuel awakens to a new morning, and ushers in a new era of light by opening the doors of the Lord's house.

⁴³Mt reads that Eli's sons were blaspheming themselves. No doubt scribes emended the text, changing ʔelōhīm to lāhem for pious reasons.

In v.16 the author's highly artistic use of repetition re-occurs, this time in connection with the way in which Samuel responds to Eli's call. An analysis of Samuel's responses to Eli reveals an interesting pattern:

- v.4 Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!"
- v.5 and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me."
- v.6 And the Lord called Samuel again. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me."
- v.8 And the Lord continued to call Samuel again, for the third time. And he arose, and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me."
- v.16 But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am."

It would seem then, that in Samuel's responses to Eli, the author has employed a variation of the 3+1 structure. The pattern of Samuel's responses differs from that of his call in so far as three identical responses are sandwiched between two abbreviated answers. After the repetition of the uniform threefold sequence "Here I am, for you called me," the final response, which reverts back to the original "Here I am," entails a crucial difference. It is ironical that, for the first time in 1 Sam 3, the verb "call" (qr³) is directly predicated of Eli; but, because Samuel has learned the true identity of the one who "called" him, he answers Eli in a way that indicates that he is no longer under Eli's tutelage.

In v.17, as noted by Kirkpatrick,⁴⁴ Eli's conversation with Samuel is marked by a growing momentum: ". . . Eli first simply asks for an account of what had passed, then demands a complete statement, and finally adjures Samuel to conceal nothing from him." Again, the ironic style of the author comes into prominence. Eli, who has just been the object of an oracle of doom, pronounces doom upon Samuel if he dares to conceal part of the divine message!

It can be further noted that v.17 has an internal concentric structure of its own:

What is the word (hδbr) which he spoke (δbr) to you?

Do not hide it from me (δl-nδ tkδd mmny).

May God do thus to you, and thus again.

If you hide from me (δm-tkδd mmny)

A word (δbr from all the words (mkl- hδbr) which he spoke (δbr) to you.⁴⁵

In the concentric structure the emphasis falls upon Eli's adjuration, again drawing attention to the ironic style of the author.

In v.18 Samuel does exactly what Eli has adjured him to do: he tells him "all of the words" (δt-kl-

⁴⁴A. F. Kirkpatrick, The First Book of Samuel. The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: University Press, 1899), p. 67.

⁴⁵My translation, for emphasis.

hdbrym) of the oracular judgement against his own house. Thus the oracular judgement against Eli's house, as mediated by Samuel, climaxes in nemesis.

In the remaining clauses of v.18, this sub-unit ends where it began, with Eli's tragically belated perception of the actions of God in human history: "It is the Lord; let him do what is good in his eyes."⁴⁶ The author's illusion to the "eyes" of God once again picks up the motif of the prophet/watchman. God, in divine "vision," has supplanted Eli's non-visionary leadership with Samuel, a prophet capable of mediating divine judgement.

A final word might be said about the role that Eli plays in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. In contrast to the highly idealized portrayal of Samuel and his parents, the author presents Eli as a psychologically complex, and hence very real person. As a man he is capable of great error. He is unable to perceive either the interior depth of Hannah (1 Sam 1:13), or the blatant sinfulness of his own sons (1 Sam 2:12-17); he is an ineffective parent and spiritual leader (1 Sam 2:22-25); he is slow to perceive the divine call of Samuel (1 Sam 3:4-6); and, he is the object of both prophetic (1 Sam 2:27-36) and divine

⁴⁶My translation, for emphasis.

(1 Sam 3:11-14) oracles of judgement. On the other hand, Eli is capable of undeniable good. He sends the distressed Hannah away in peace (1 Sam 1:17); he receives the child Samuel into the temple service (1 Sam 1:28; 2:11); he blesses (1 Sam 2:20); and finally, in relation to Samuel's call, it is Eli, in the final analysis, who both perceives (1 Sam 3:8) and proclaims (1 Sam 3:18) the presence of God in human history.

Who is Eli? What is the function of this complex character? Can one presume to ask if the sinful Eli, in his humble acceptance of divine judgement, is not a figure of sinful Israel? If that is true, then the character of Eli functions as a model of later generations of Israelites who, in their sinfulness, will hear the Lord's word of judgement through prophetic mediation.⁴⁷

1 Sam 3:19-4:1a

¹⁹And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. ²⁰And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. ²¹And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the

⁴⁷For a similar interpretation of the meaning of Eli, see Charles Conroy, M.S.C., 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings. Old Testament Message, Volume 6 (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983), p. 26.

Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

Delimitation of the Text

The delimitation of this unit can be based on two facts. First, 1 Sam 3:19-4:1a follows a sub-unit characterized by a concentric structure, a structure which forms its own boundaries. Second, 1 Sam 3:19-4:1a forms the conclusion to the pericope 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. 1 Sam 4:1b begins a new pericope, the Ark Narrative, a literary unit having its own set of characters, its own locale, and its own plot development.

Text and Structure

1 Sam 3:19-4:1a is structured in the following manner:

- I. Samuel grows (v.19a)
- II. Divine presence with Samuel
 - A. The Lord is with him (v.19b)
 - B. and protects his word (v.19c)
- III. All Israel acknowledges Samuel as a prophet (v.20)

IV. Divine revelation at Shiloh

- A. The Lord continues to appear at Shiloh (v.21a)
- B. The Lord reveals himself through his word (v.21b)

V. Samuel addresses all Israel (1 Sam 4:1a)

Whereas the previous sub-unit began and ended with references to Eli, 1 Sam 3:19-4:1a begins and ends with references to Samuel. Whereas the center of vv. 8-18 was an oracle of judgement directed specifically against Eli, the center of this passage (v.20), which is framed with accounts of divine presence and divine revelation, points to Samuel's credibility in all Israel as a prophet of the Lord.

Text and Genre

As has already been established, 1 Sam 3:19-4:1a corresponds to the part of an "oracle actualization narrative" in which the oracle itself is actualized, and the crisis situation, which called for divine intervention, is resolved.

In 1 Sam 3:1-7 the crisis situation consisted of the rareness of the divine word, and the infrequency of vision (1 Sam 3:1). Emphasizing that situation by means of the literary device of metonymy, the author described

Eli's physical blindness and his inability to perceive the divine interventions relative to the Lord calling Samuel (1 Sam 3:4-6).

In 1 Sam 3:19-4:1a the crisis has been resolved and the oracle has been actualized in the sense that Eli is no longer exercising leadership in Israel. Indeed, his blind leadership has been replaced by Samuel, who is acknowledged as a creditable prophet by all Israel (1 Sam 3:20). In addition, the infrequency of vision in Israel (1 Sam 3:1) has given way to the Lord who now "makes himself seen" (lhr'h) at the Shiloh sanctuary. And finally, the rareness of the word of the Lord has given way to revelation "by the word of the Lord" and through the divinely protected words of Samuel (1 Sam 3:19c,4:1a).

Text and Intention

In v.19a the author relates the fact that Samuel "grew" (wygd1). This third occurrence of the root gd1 in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a (1 Sam 2:21,26; 3:19), calls attention to the divine protection and exaltation of the weak and powerless, a theme that was earlier introduced in Hannah's Canticle (1 Sam 2:4b,7,8).

Moreover, in v.19b the author places Samuel in divine presence. The Lord is "with" Samuel in the same

way that he is "with" other great leaders in Israel's history: Moses (Ex 3:12); Joshua (Josh 1:5,9); Gideon (Judg 6:12,16); and David (2 Sam 7:9).

Since the Lord is "with" Samuel, leading and guiding him, he will not allow his word to be ineffective. The author's image of a word "falling to the ground"⁴⁸ is apparently an image borrowed from the agricultural world. That is, the divine word will not, like a sheath of grain which falls to the ground before it can mature, "fall to the ground" without coming to maturity and actualizing itself.

In v.20 the phrase "from Dan to Beer-sheba" denotes the northern and southern cultic and geographic limits of Israel. It is the totality of Israel, then, that recognizes that Elidic leadership has been supplanted by the prophetic leadership of Samuel. Moreover, the author's statement that all Israel recognized Samuel as an "established" (n³mn) prophet is evocative of the "sure" priest (khn n³mn) whom the Lord will raise up (1 Sam 2:35a), and of the "sure" house (byt n³mn) that the Lord will establish for him (1 Sam 2:35c). Thus, Samuel's establishment as a prophet is, in itself, a tragic reminder of the divine diminishment of Eli's house

⁴⁸See also Josh 21:43; 23:24; 1 Kgs 8:56; 2 Kgs 10:10.

(1 Sam 3:11-14). And finally, relative to v.20, it may also be pointed out that, for the first time in 1 Sam 3, Samuel is officially designated as a "prophet" (nābî³), the technical term for Israel's great prophetic figures.

The two clauses in v.21 are in parallel relationship:

The Lord continued to make himself seen in Shiloh;
 [for]The Lord revealed himself to Samuel
 through his word.⁴⁹

V.21, in showing that "vision" results from the prophetic mediation of the "word of the Lord," serves as a hermeneusis for the crisis delineated in 1 Sam 3:1-7. Now, due to the actualization of the divine oracle against Eli and his house (1 Sam 3:11-14), the era of the rareness of the word of the Lord and the infrequency of vision has come to an end. In the divine raising up of a prophetic mediator, the Lord now causes himself to be seen (lhr³h) through "the word of the Lord."

In 1 Sam 4:1a Samuel continues to function as a prophetic mediator by "speaking" (dbr-šmw³l) to all Israel.

⁴⁹My translation, for emphasis.

CHAPTER SIX

TEXT AND SETTING: THE STRUCTURAL DIALECTIC WITHIN THE UNITS OF THE TEXT

As has been indicated earlier in this study,¹ the option has been taken to move away from a monolithic approach to setting, an approach which only understands setting in terms of it being the oral societal origin of genres. It has already been noted that, in his re-evaluation of setting, Richter noted that there are three ways of focusing upon the question of setting: institutions, the style of an epoch, and literature itself.²

In this chapter, setting will be discussed only from the standpoint of literature itself. What is being sought at the level of setting, then, is the function of each unit within the context of the whole pericope 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. As we will see, this synchronic analysis of the relationship of the units within the text will reveal that the story of Samuel's birth and call to prophecy

¹See Chapter 2, pp. 45-46.

²Wolfgang Richter, Exegese als Literaturwissenschaft, op. cit., pp. 145ff.

builds its plot by means of a careful attention to symmetry between the various units of the pericope.

Before analyzing the relationship between the units of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, however, it must be noted that several scholars have already drawn attention to the symmetrical arrangement of the various units of the pericope.

Bourke, for example, divided 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a into seven episodes, or "scenes": Hannah's prayer and vow (1 Sam 1:1-18); Samuel's birth and dedication (1 Sam 1:19-28); the blasphemous behavior of Eli's sons (1 Sam 2:12-17); Hannah's restored fruitfulness, an interlude (1 Sam 2:19-21); Eli's futile protest of his son's behavior (1 Sam 2:22-26); the call of Samuel (1 Sam 3:1-9); Yahweh's word to Samuel (1 Sam 3:10-15); Samuel as a prophet (1 Sam 3:15b-4:1a). Bourke's division of the pericope is open to question, however, because he deleted the Canticle of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10) and the judgement suit against the Elides (1 Sam 2:27-36) as "obvious interpolations."³

More recently, René Péter-Contesse⁴ has drawn attention to the structure of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. Following

³Joseph Bourke, O.P., "Samuel and the Ark: A Study in Contrasts," Dominican Studies 7 (1954), pp. 73-103. For a more detailed synthesis of Bourke's study, see Chapter 1, pp. 24-26.

⁴René Péter-Contesse, "La Structure de 1 Sam 1-3," op. cit., pp. 312-314.

the tradition-historical work of Martin Noth, Péter-Contesse believes that the final redactor of the pericope had at his disposal two sets of traditions: those concerning Samuel (1 Sam 1:1-28; 2:19-21a), and those concerning the sons of Eli (1 Sam 2:12-17; 22-25; 27-36). In joining those traditions, according to Péter-Contesse, the author added, as a sort of refrain, the following verses: 1 Sam 2:11b, 18, 21b, 26; 3:1a. Consequently, 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a may be structured in the following manner:

1:1-19a:	Hannah in the Shiloh sanctuary
1:19b-28:	Birth and childhood of Samuel
2:1-10:	Hannah thanks the Lord
2:11	Refrain
2:12-17	The sons of Eli
2:18	Refrain
2:19-21a	The family of Samuel
2:21b	Refrain
2:22-25	Eli reproaches his sons
2:26	Refrain
2:27-36	Judgement announced to Eli and his family
3:1a	Refrain
3:1b	Introduction to the theme of "the word of the Lord"
3:2-18	The call of Samuel
3:19-4:1a	Conclusion

In his analysis of 1 Sam 3, Michael Fishbane⁵ argues that both 1 Sam 2 and 1 Sam 3 are characterized by chiasmic structures. Accordingly, 1 Sam 2 may be understood in the following manner:

- A. Hannah's prayer and reference to a royal mašîah (2:1-10)
- B. Samuel serves YHWH (2:11)
- C. Sins of the Elides (2:12-17)
- D. Samuel serves YHWH and grows with God (2:18,21)
- C¹. Sins of the Elides (2:22-25)
- B¹. Samuel serves YHWH and grows with God (2:26)
- A¹. Divine oracle and reference to a royal mašîah (2:27-36)⁶

In addition, according to Fishbane, 1 Sam 3 may be understood in the following manner:

- A. The initial mise-en-scène, describing Samuel's youth, Eli's diminishing powers, and the absence of divine oracles (vv. 1-3)
- B. Three divine calls to a bewildered Samuel (vv.4-9).
- C. The climactic fourth and subsequent oracle against the Elides (vv. 10-15)
- B¹. Eli's request of Samuel to reiterate the divine revelation (vv.16-18)

⁵Michael Fishbane, "1 Sam 3: Historical Narrative and Narrative Poetics," op. cit., pp. 191-203.

⁶Michael Fishbane, "1 Sam 3: Historical Narrative and Narrative Poetics," op. cit., p. 195.

- A¹. The dénouement and conclusion, describing Samuel's growing stature as a man of God and the return of divine oracles to Shiloh.⁷

While one is struck by the careful attention paid to the text by both Péter-Contesse and Fishbane, it is now proposed, at the end of this lengthy study of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, that the whole pericope is chiastically structured. In that sense, the story of Samuel's birth and call to prophecy, along with the story of the demise of the Elides, may be visualized in the following manner:

- A. Introduction to the pericope;
a conflict story between two
wives (1 Sam 1:1-8)
- B. The story of Hannah's vow;
Eli's rebuke of Hannah
(1 Sam 1:9-18)
- C. The accounts of Samuel's birth,
weaning, and dedication in the
Shiloh temple; Elkanah's prayer
for the establishment of the
word of the Lord (1 Sam 1:19-28)
- D. Hannah's Canticle: A
Prophetic Exhortation
(1 Sam 2:1-11)
- E. The sinfulness of Eli's sons:
an account of cultic abuse
(1 Sam 2:12-17)
- F. The Family of Samuel: A Blessing
narrative (1 Sam 2:18-21)

⁷Michael Fishbane, Ibid., pp. 193-194.

E¹. Eli's ineffective rebuke of
his sinful sons: a warning
against treason (1 Sam 2:22-26)

D¹. A prophetic judgement suit
against the Elides (1 Sam 2:
27;-36)

C¹. The crisis in Israel: the rareness
of the word of the Lord (1 Sam 3:1-7)

B¹. Divine oracle against Eli, because
he did not rebuke his sons
(1 Sam 3:8-18)

A¹. Conclusion of the pericope;
resolution of conflict in
Israel through the establish-
ment of the institution of
prophecy.

In reflecting upon the meaning of this structure,
attention will first be turned to the more explicit rela-
tionship between the units of the text, and then to the
implicit meaning behind the structure of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a.

A (1 Sam 1:1-8) and A¹ (1 Sam 3:19-4:1a)

The relationship between these two units may be
summarized in the following way:

1) On the level of characters, one can detect a
movement from the specific to the general, that is, a
movement from two specific families (Samuel's family and
Eli's family) to a whole, unified nation, i.e., "all
Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba" (1 Sam 3:20).

2) On the level of locale, both 1 Sam 1:1-8 and 1 Sam 3:19-4:1a allude to the Shiloh sanctuary (1 Sam 1:3; 1 Sam 3:21).

3) On the level of time, both 1 Sam 1:1-8 and 3:19-4:1a are a-temporal. Both units describe a given situation in Israel, not a specific moment.

4) On the level of style, both 1 Sam 1:1-8 and 1 Sam 3:19-4:1a can be classified as descriptive narrative.

5) On the level of content, two points can be made. First, the conflict endured by Hannah, the favored barren wife in 1 Sam 1:1-8, is definitively resolved by the presence of Samuel in 1 Sam 3:19-4:1a. Second, Eli's priestly leadership at Shiloh (1 Sam 1:3) has been supplanted by the prophetic leadership of Samuel there (1 Sam 3:21).

B (1 Sam 1:9-18) and B¹ (1 Sam 3:8-18)

These two units are related in the following manner:

1) In regard to locale, both units take place within the Shiloh temple.

2) In regard to style, both units are narratives consisting primarily of discourse.

3) On the level of genre, both units contain within them elements of judgement suits against an individual. Eli's inappropriate indictment of Hannah (1 Sam 1:14) corresponds to the oracular indictment of Eli and his house (1 Sam 3:11-14).

Moreover, on the level of genre, Hannah's avowal of innocence (1 Sam 1:15-16) corresponds to Eli's acquiescence to divine judgement in 1 Sam 3:18: "It is the Lord; let him do what seems good to him."

4) On the level of content, several structural relationships may be noted. First, Hannah's request to the Lord for a son (1 Sam 1:11) has been granted in the person of Samuel (1 Sam 3:8-18). Second, Hannah's appeal to divine perception, or vision, in her vow ("if seeing, you see . . .") corresponds to Samuel's perception of a divine vision (ʔt-hmrʔh) in 1 Sam 3:15. Third, the use of the root ḏbr, in reference to Hannah in 1 Sam 1:13,16 corresponds to the ten occurrences of that root in 1 Sam 3:8-18 (3:9,10,11,12,17[5x],18). Fourth, Eli's spiritual blindness and lack of perception in 1 Sam 1:12-14 corresponds to his tragic belated perception in 1 Sam 3:8,18.

C (1 Sam 1:19-28 and C¹ (1 Sam 3:1-7).

These units are related in the following ways:

1) On the level of genre, both units may be classified as "accounts," or "reports." In neither unit is there a movement from conflict to the resolution of the conflict.

2) The two units are thematically related. In 1 Sam 1:23d, the center and focal point of the chiastic structure, the emphasis is upon the future establishment of the "word of the Lord." 1 Sam 3:1-7 is framed by references to the "word of the Lord."

3) 1 Sam 1:19-28 and 1 Sam 3:1-7 are related thematically in regard to "presence" and "absence." 1 Sam 1:23d points to the future establishment, or presence, of the prophetic word; 1 Sam 3:1 and 7 point to the actual absence of the prophetic word.

4) The root "to see" (rwh), evocative of the prophet/watchman (1 Sam 1:1) occurs in both units. In 1 Sam 1:22 Hannah promises to bring the child to the temple, after he is weaned, so that he may be seen (wnrh) in the presence of the Lord. In 1 Sam 3:2 Eli, because of his blindness, is unable to see (lrwt).

5) 1 Sam 1:19-28, which looks forward to the establishment of the prophetic word, begins in the light

of morning (1 Sam 1:19). 1 Sam 3:1-7, which draws attention to the absence of the prophetic word, takes place in the darkness of night, when the lamp is still burning in the temple (1 Sam 3:3).

6) Finally, on the level of content, it can be noted that in 1 Sam 1:22 Hannah promises to bring the child to the temple after he is weaned. In 1 Sam 3:1-7, which occurs several years later, the child (in fact) is in the temple, ministering to the Lord under Eli.

D (1 Sam 2:1-11) and D¹ (1 Sam 2:27-36)

1 Sam 2:1-11 and 1 Sam 2:27-36 are related in the following ways:

1) Both the Canticle of Hannah and the prophetic lawsuit are manifestations of prophetic discourse. The Canticle of Hannah is a prophetic exhortation; 1 Sam 2:27-36 is a prophetic judgement suit against an individual.

2) Thematically, both 1 Sam 2:1-10 and 1 Sam 2:27-36 are concerned with judgement. The Canticle of Hannah is a prayerful reflection upon the God who judges (1 Sam 2:3cd, 9ab); 1 Sam 2:27-36 is an actual judgement suit against an individual.

3) Both the Canticle of Hannah and the prophetic lawsuit are concerned with divinely orchestrated reversals of human destiny. In the Canticle of Hannah the powerful are supplanted by the weak (2:4-8); in the prophetic lawsuit the powerful Elides will be diminished by the divine elevation of a "faithful priest" (2:35).

4) In both the Canticle of Hannah and the prophetic lawsuit those who were sated with food are reduced to hiring themselves out for bread (2:5 and 2:36).

5) Both the Canticle of Hannah and the prophetic lawsuit allude to the Lord's messiah (1 Sam 2:10; 2:35).

6) Both the Canticle of Hannah and the prophetic lawsuit are concerned with the precariousness of human might (1 Sam 2:9 and 2:31).

7) In the Canticle of Hannah, the Lord will guard the "feet" of his faithful ones (1 Sam 2:9); in the prophetic lawsuit, the Lord will raise up a faithful priest who will "walk" before his anointed (1 Sam 2:35).

E (1 Sam 2:12-17) and E¹ (1 Sam 2:22-26)

These two units are related in the following ways:

1) Both passages are concerned with the sinfulness of Eli's sons.

2) In both passages the sinfulness of the sons of Eli affects "all Israel" (1 Sam 2:14; 2:22).

3) In both passages, the sons of Eli sin against both Israelites and God (1 Sam 2:13,15,17; 2:25).

Now that the dialectical relationship between the different units of the text has been established, something can be said relative to the implicit meaning behind the structure of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a.

The rhetorical power of the author of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a surfaces anew in the artful way in which he has structured the various units of the text. The concentric structure allows the pericope to unfold in terms of conflict (1 Sam 1:1-8) and conflict resolution (1 Sam 3:19-4:1a); it signals the differences between human and divine judgement (1 Sam 1:9-18 and 1 Sam 3:8-18); it calls attention to periods of light and darkness in Israel, depending upon the presence or absence of the prophetic word (1 Sam 1:19-28; 1 Sam 3:1-7); it focuses upon the power of prophetic mediation, either through a prophetic exhortation (1 Sam 2:1-10), or through a prophetic lawsuit (1 Sam 2:27-36); it points to human sinfulness and depravity (1 Sam 2:12-17; 22-26); finally, in the midst of human sinfulness, standing out in

brilliant clarity, the center of the chiasm focuses upon a divine blessing, a blessing which ironically is mediated by Eli, the blind and ineffective "watchman" and parent. Thus, it may be proposed that 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a functions as a parenetic device for Israel. It is a device which calls Israel to reflect upon human need and divine resolutions to that need; it is a reminder of the dire consequences of human sinfulness, and of the human need for divine judgement; and, in a most dramatic way, the center of the chiasm suggests that God's final word to Israel is a word of blessing. Moreover, in the author's most poignant use of irony, divine blessing to Israel is mediated by a weak and ineffective instrument. Thus, 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a is ultimately a paradox. For sinful Israel, it is a warning of the reality of judgement; at the same time, for an Israel which is in touch with its own weakness and frailty, it is a tender offer of hope.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

As has been demonstrated in the preceding chapters, 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a is a literary entity consisting of eleven (sub-)units which, together, form a concentric structure. The concentric structure, as a literary device, points to certain theological themes: the divine resolution of human conflict; Israel's need for prophetic mediation of the divine word; the moral darkness that results from the absence of the divine word; divine judgement of human sinfulness; divine blessing as a reality which breaks through human weakness and frailty.

Within the concentric structure, and running throughout the whole pericope as keywords and motifs, one can detect the presence of other theological themes.

The primary and controlling motif in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a is that of the divine word. As has been demonstrated earlier, the root db occurs twenty-one times in the pericope, growing in momentum as the story of Samuel, in relation to the Elides, unfolds. The root db occurs three times in 1 Sam 1 (1:13,16,23); four

times in 1 Sam 2 (2:3, 23[2x]); and fifteen times in 1 Sam 3 (3:1,7,9,10,11,12,17[5x],18,19,21; 4:1a).

Moreover, for purposes of demonstrative theology, the author has placed the account of Samuel's prophetic call, and the account of the divine judgement of the Elides, within a literary genre which focuses upon the power of the divine word; that is, the author has incorporated an "oracle actualization narrative into 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. Thus, the whole pericope climaxes in a theological construct which emphasizes both the power of the divine word and the correspondence between the divine word and events in human history.

Co-extensive with the motif of the divine word is the motif of "vision" and the "prophet/watchman." That motif was introduced in 1 Sam 1:1, in the author's introduction of Elkanah, where he presents Elkanah as being a man "from Ramathaim of the watchmen" (šôpîm). The motif is extended, often through the author's use of irony, in the accounts of Eli's inability to perceive reality as it is. He is unable to perceive Hannah's interiority (1 Sam 1:12-14); he is unable to recognize her when she brings the young Samuel to the temple in fulfillment of her vow (1 Sam 1:26-28); he is unable to perceive either the sinfulness of his sons or the impending judgement coming to his own house (1 Sam 2:22-26; 26-36); in the issuing of

his inappropriate "prophetic lawsuit" to Hannah, Eli is presented as a false "watchman" (1 Sam 1:14). Finally, through the literary device of metonymy, the author concretizes Eli's lack of perception by describing him as a physically blind man (1 Sam 3:2); moreover, the author shows that Eli's lack of perception has dire consequences for Israel since "there was no frequent vision" there (1 Sam 3:1). On the "other side" of this motif is Elkanah's allusion to Hannah's authentic perception: "Do what is good in your eyes" (1 Sam 1:23); also to be noted is Eli's resignation in the face of divine perception: "He will do what is good in his eyes" (1 Sam 3:18). In addition, the motif of vision is extended through the author's use of the root "to see" (rʾh). In her vow, Hannah appeals to divine vision ("If seeing, you see . . . in 1 Sam 1:11); she promises to dedicate Samuel in the temple, so that he may be "seen" by the Lord (1 Sam 1:22); Eli is unable "to see" (1 Sam 3:2); finally, through Samuel's prophetic mediation of the divine word, the Lord causes the divine self "to be seen" in Shiloh (1 Sam 3:21).

In addition, there are secondary motifs running throughout 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, motifs which are clearly in the spirit of the prophetic movement in Israel.

First, there is the motif of sacrifice and offerings. This motif begins with reference to the piety of Samuel's family relative to the yearly sacrifice (1 Sam 1:3,4,21; 2:19); it continues in regard to the cultic abuse perpetrated by the sons of Eli (1 Sam 2:12-17); and in regard to the prophetic judgement suit against the Elides (1 Sam 2:28,29); it climaxes in the divine oracle against Eli and his house (1 Sam 3:11-14), particularly in the divine statement that "the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offerings forever" (1 Sam 3:14). Thus, in the author's incorporation of this motif, there is a movement from sacrifices offered in the spirit of piety, to the Elidic abuse of sacrificial offerings, to the climactic statement relative to the powerlessness of an empty cult. Thus, in the final analysis, the motif of sacrifice in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a really functions as a prophetic call to inner conversion.

Second, there is the motif of food and eating. This motif begins with reference to Hannah's inability to eat (1 Sam 1:7,8); it continues with reference to the sacrificial meals celebrated in Shiloh (1 Sam 1:9,18), and in the account of the sacrificial gifts of food which Elkanah and Hannah bring to the temple on the occasion of the young Samuel's dedication there; it re-appears in the

Canticle of Hannah, relative to the divinely orchestrated reversals in the destinies of the hungry and the sated (1 Sam 2:5), and in the prophetic lawsuit against the Elides (1 Sam 2:27-36), in the prediction that the Elides will be forced to beg for a morsel of bread to eat (1 Sam 2:36). Thus, one sees in this motif two major concerns. First, there is the prophetic concern for an authentically pious celebration of the cult; and second, there is the prophetic concern relative to a wrongful division of the human community, a division resulting from an uneven distribution of food.

And third, there is the motif of time in 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. For Elkannah and his family, time is measured in relation to liturgical feasts (1 Sam 1,3,4,7,21; 2:19); for Hannah, time is connected with divine visitation and the determination of her destiny as the mother of Israel's first prophet (1 Sam 1:20); for the Elides, time signals the day of their judgement (1 Sam 2:31; 3:12); finally, for Samuel, time begins on the morning of his conception (1 Sam 1:19); his kairotic moment, the divine call to prophecy, begins in the early hours of dawn (1 Sam 3:3); finally, time comes to fruition in Samuel's life on the morning in which he first functions as a prophet (1 Sam 3:15-18).

Thus, through the literary artistry of the author of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a, the reader has encountered the vision of a master theologian. Through his or her eyes, we have encountered the divine word as it addresses itself to humans of all ages. We have seen that the divine word has the power to actualize what it calls into being. Through the motif of the prophet/watchman, we have seen that the divine word, through prophetic perception and mediation, issues forth either in judgement, which is ultimately a call to conversion, or in blessing. We have seen the author's concern for authentic cultic practice, a practice which must be motivated from the human heart. We have been challenged, through the motif of food and eating, to think seriously about food and hunger. Finally, in regard to time, we have seen that, ultimately, time belongs to God. Moreover, we have seen that the way in which we participate in history will determine our final destiny. Will it be a time of judgement, or a time of divine visitation and blessing?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY
OF WORKS CITED

- Abrams, M. H. A Glossary of Literary Terms, 3rd ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971.
- Ackroyd, Peter R. The First Book of Samuel: A Commentary. CBC. Cambridge: University Press, 1971.
- Alter, Robert. The Art of Biblical Narrative. New York: Basic Books, 1981.
- André, Gunnel. Determining the Destiny: PQD in the Old Testament. ConBOT 16. Lund: Gleerup, 1980.
- Augustine, Saint. Bishop of Hippo. The City of God. New York: The Fathers of the Church, 1954.
- Barthélemy, Dominique. Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, 50/1, Éditions Universitaires Fribourg/Suisse
Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982.
- Bentzen, Aage. Introduction in the Old Testament. 3 vols. 2nd ed. Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1952.
- Berg, Sandra Beth. The Book of Esther: Motifs, Themes and Structure. SBL Dissertation Series 44. Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1979.
- Blank, Sheldon H. "The Confessions of Jeremiah and the Meaning of Prayer." HUCA 21 (1948), pp. 331-337.
- Booth, Wayne C. The Rhetoric of Fiction, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- _____. A Rhetoric of Irony. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.

- Bourke, Joseph. "Samuel and the Ark: A Study in Contrasts." Dominican Studies 7 (1954) 73-103.
- Bressan, G. "Il Cantico di Anna," Biblica 32 (1951), pp. 503-521; 33 (1952), pp. 67-89.
- Brown, Raymond E. The Birth of the Messiah. New York: Doubleday, 1977.
- Budde, Karl. The Books of Samuel. Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text, printed in colors exhibiting the composite structure of the book, with notes. English translation of the notes by B. W. Bacon. SBOT 9. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1894; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press; London: David Nutt.
- _____. Die Bücher Richter und Samuel, ihre Quellen und ihr Aufbau. Giessen: J. Ricker'sche Buchhandlung, 1890.
- _____. Die Bücher Samuel. KHC VIII. Tübingen and Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1902.
- Caird, George B. "The First and Second Books of Samuel." Vol. II of The Interpreter's Bible. New York: Abingdon Press, 1953, pp. 876-896.
- Calderone, Philip. "HDL-II in Poetic Texts." CBQ 23, (1961), pp. 451-460.
- Campbell, Antony. The Ark Narrative (1 Sam 4-6: 2 Sam 6); A Form-Critical and Traditio-Historical Study. Dissertation Series 16. Missoula, Montana: SBL and Scholars Press, 1975.
- Conroy, Charles. 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings. Old Testament Message, Volume 6 (Wilmington: Michael Glazer, 1983).
- Cornill, C. H. Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament. Translated by G. H. Box. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907.
- Cross, F. M., Jr. Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic. Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel. Cambridge Harvard University Press, 1973.

- _____. "Epigraphic Notes on Hebrew Documents of the Eighth-Sixth Centuries B.C.: II. The Murabba'at Papyrus and Letter Found Near Yabneh-yam" BASOR 165 (1962), p. 44.
- _____. "A New Qumran Biblical Fragment Related to the Original Hebrew Underlying the Septuagint." BASOR 132 (1953) 15-26.
- Dhorme, Paul. Les Livres de Samuel. Etudes Bibliques. Paris: Gabalda, 1910.
- Drijvers, Pius. The Psalms: Their Structure and Meaning. London: Burns & Oates, 1967.
- Driver, S. R. Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913.
- _____. An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament. 6th ed. rev. and enl. New York: Charles Scribner's, 1897.
- _____. Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913.
- Dus, J. "Die Geburtslegende Samuels I. Sam.1 (Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu I. Sam. 1-3)." Rivista degli Studi Orientali 43 (1968) 163-94.
- Ehrlich, E. Der Traum im Alten Testament. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 73. Berlin: Alfred Topelmann Verlag, 1953.
- Engell, I. "Samuelsböckerna." Svenskt Bibliskt Uppslagsverk. 2nd ed. Stockholm: Nordiska Uppslagsböcker, 1962.
- Fishbane, Michael. "1 Sam 3: Historical Narrative and Narrative Poetics." in Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis (ed), Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives. Nashville: Abingdon, 1982, pp. 191-203.
- _____. Text and Texture: A Close Reading of Selected Biblical Texts. New York: Schocken Books, 1979.

- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. "Qumran and the Interpolated Paragraph in 2 Cor 6, 14-7,1" CBQ 23 (1961), pp. 271-280.
- Fokkelman, J. P. Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel, vol. 1. Assen: Van Gorcum Publishers, 1981.
- Freedman, David Noel. "Psalm 113 and the Song of Hannah," in Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy. Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1980.
- Gevirtz, Stanley. Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel. Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.
- Ginzberg, Louis. The Legends of the Jews. Vol. VI. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947.
- Gnuse, Robert. "A Reconsideration of the Form-Critical Structure in 1 Sam 3: An Ancient Near Eastern Dream Theophany." ZAW 94 (1982), pp. 379-390.
- Goldman, S. Samuel. Hebrew Text of English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary. London: Soncino Press, 1949.
- Good, Edwin M. Irony in the Old Testament. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965.
- Gunkel, Hermann and Begrich, Joachim. Einleitung in die Psalmen. Die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933.
- Habel, N. "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," ZAW, LXXVII (1965), pp. 297-323.
- Harvey, Julien. Le plaidoyer prophétique contre Israël après la rupture de l'alliance. Etude d'une formule littéraire de l'Ancien Testament. Bruges: Desclée DeBrouwer, 1967.
- . "Le 'Rîb-Pattern' réquisitoire prophétique sur la rupture de l'alliance." Biblica 43 (1962), pp. 172-196.

- Hertzberg, H. W. I & II Samuel: A Commentary. Old Testament Library. Translated by J.S. Bowden. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964.
- Huffman, Herbert B. "A Further Note on the Treaty Background of Hebrew YADA^c." BASOR 184 (1966) 36-38.
- _____. "The Treaty Background of Hebrew YADA^c." BASOR 181 (1966) 31-37.
- Hupfeld, Hermann. Die Quellen der Genesis und die Art ihrer Zusammensetzung. Berlin: Wiegand & Grieben, 1853.
- Hylander, Ivan. Der literarische Samuel-Saul-Komplex (I. Sam. 1-15) traditions-geschichtlich untersucht. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1932.
- Jenks, Alan W. The Elohist and the North Israelite Traditions. SBL Monograph Series 22. Missoula, Montana: SBL and Scholars Press, 1977.
- Jolles, A. Einfache Formen. 4th ed. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1968.
- Johnson, A. R. The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1962.
- _____. "Hesid and Hāsîd," Interpretationes ad Vetus Testamentum (Mowinckel Festschrift) Oslo: Fabritius and Sonner, 1955.
- Joûon, P. "Belial," Biblica 5 (1924), pp. 178-183.
- Kenik, Helen Ann. The Design for Kingship in I Kings 3:4-15: A Study in the Deuteronomistic Narrative Technique and Theology of Kingship. Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1983.
- Kessler, Martin. "A Methodological Setting for Rhetorical Criticism," in D. J. A. Clines, David M. Gunn, and Alan J. Hauser (eds.) Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature. JSOT Suppl. 19 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982).

- Kirkpatrick, Alexander Francis. The First Book of Samuel, with Maps, Notes, and Introduction. The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899.
- Klein, Ralph W. "The Song of Hannah," Concordia Theological Monthly, 41 (1970), pp. 674-684.
- Knierim, Rolf. "Old Testament Form Criticism Re-Considered," Interpretation, 27 (1973), pp. 435-468.
- Kugel, James L. The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 1981.
- Kuntz, J. Kenneth. "The Contribution of Rhetorical Criticism to Understanding Isaiah 51:1-16." Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature. Edited by David J. A. Clines, David McGunn and Alan J. Hauser. JSOT Supplement Series. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982.
- Léon-Dufour, X. "L'annonce à Joseph." Mélanges biblique Rédigés en l'honneur de André Robert. Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1957.
- _____. "Le Juste Joseph." NRT 81 (1959), pp. 225-31.
- Lévêque, Jean. Job et son Dieu. Etudes Bibliques. Paris: Gabalda, 1970.
- Lods, Adolphe. Israel from its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century. Translated by S.H. Hooke. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962.
- Long, B. "2 Kings III and Genres of Prophetic Narrative," VT 23 (1973), pp. 337-348.
- McCarter, P. Kyle, Jr. "The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature," Harvard Theological Review 66 (1973), pp. 403-412.
- _____. I Samuel. A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary. The Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1980.

McCarthy, Dennis J. "The Inauguration of the Monarchy in Israel. A Form Critical Study of 1 Samuel 8-12." Interpretation 27 (1973).

_____. Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament. AnBib 21. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1978.

Macholz, G. Ch. Untersuchungen zu Geschichte der Samuel-Überlieferung. Th.D. dissertation, Heidelberg, 1966.

McKane, W. I & II Samuel. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1963.

McKenzie, J. L. Dictionary of the Bible. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1965.

_____. "The Four Samuels," Biblical Research 7 (1962), pp. 3-18.

_____. "Knowledge of God in Hosea." JBL 74 (1955) 22-27.

Miller, Patrick and Roberts, J.J.M. The Hand of the Lord. A Reassessment of the "Ark Narrative" of I Samuel. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.

Muilenburg, James. "The Linguistic and Rhetorical Usages of the Particle in in the Old Testament." HUCA 22 (1961), pp. 135-160.

Murphy, Roland E. Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Esther. The Forms of the Old Testament Literature, Vol. XIII. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1981.

Newman, Murray. "The Prophetic Call of Samuel." Israel's Prophetic Heritage. Essays in honor of J. Muilenburg. Edited by B.W. Anderson and W. Harrelson. New York: Harper, 1962, pp. 86-97.

Nielsen, Kirsten. Yahweh as Prosecutor and Judge. JSOT Supplement Series 9. Sheffield: JSOT, 1978.

Noth, Martin. "Samuel und Silo." VT 13 (1963) 390-400.

- Ong, Walter J., S. J. Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- Oppenheim, A. L. The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, N.S. Vol. 46, Part 3. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1956.
- _____. "Mantic Dreams in the Ancient Near East." The Dream and Human Societies. Edited by Gustav E. Von Grunebaum and Roger Caillois. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.
- _____. "New Fragments of the Assyrian Dream-Book." Iraq 31 (1969), pp. 153-165.
- Péter-Contesse, René. "La Structure de 1 Sam 1-3." The Bible Translator 27 (1976), pp. 312-314.
- Philo. The Loeb Classical Library in 11 Volumes. Vol. 5. London: William Heinemann, 1949-1962.
- Press, Richard. "Der Prophet Samuel. Eine traditions-geschichtliche Untersuchung." ZAW 56 (1938) 177-225.
- Richter, W. Exegese als Literaturwissenschaft. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970.
- _____. Die sogenannten vorprophetischen Berufsberichte: Eine literaturwissenschaftliche Studie zu 1 Sam 9. 1-10, 16, Ex 3f. und Ri 6, 11b-17. Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 101. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970.
- Ritterspach, A. David. "Rhetorical Criticism and the Song of Hannah." Rhetorical Criticism. Essays in Honor of James Mullenburg. Edited by Jared J. Jackson and Martin Kessler. Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1974, pp. 68-74.
- _____. The Samuel Traditions: An Analysis of the Anti-Monarchical Source in 1 Sam 1-15. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Graduate theological union and the San Francisco Theological Seminary, 1967.

- Sabourin, Leopold. The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning. New York: Alba House, 1974.
- Saydon, P. P. "Assonance in Hebrew as a Means of Expressing Emphasis," Biblica 36 (1955), pp. 36-50; 287-304.
- Schildenberger, Johannes. Literarische Arten Geschichtsschreibung im Alten Testament. Neue Folge, 5. Einsiedeln/Zurich/Köln: Benziger Verlag, 1964.
- Schoonenberg, Piet. Man and Sin. Translated by Joseph Donceel. London and Melbourne: Sheed and Ward, 1965.
- Schultz, Herman, "Das Todesrecht im Alten Testament," BZAW 114 (1969), pp. 5-84.
- Simon, Uriel. "Samuel's Call to Prophecy: Form Criticism with Close Reading." Prooftexts 1 (1981), pp. 120-132.
- Smith, H.P. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912.
- Talmon, S. "Double Readings in the Massoretic Text." Textus 1. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1960.
- Thenius, Otto. Die Bücher Samuels. KeH IV. 3rd ed. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1898.
- Winton, Thomas D. "Some Observations on the Hebrew Root שׁוּן." Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, IV (1957), pp. 8-16.
- Tidwell, M. L. "The Linen Ephod: 1 Sam II 18 and 2 Sam VI 14," VT 24 (1974), pp. 505-507.
- Tournay, R. "Recherches sur la chronologie des Psaumes," Revue Biblique 65 (1958), pp. 321-357.
- Tsevat, M. "The Death of the Sons of Eli," J. Bible & Relig. 32 (1964), pp. 355-358.
- _____. Studies in the Book of Samuel I. Interpretation of I Sam 2:27-36, the Narrative of Kareth. Hebrew Union College Annual 32 (1961), pp. 191-209.

- Tucker, Gene M. Form Criticism of the Old Testament. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.
- _____. "Prophetic Authenticity. A Form-Critical Study of Amos 7;10-17." Interpretation 27 (1973).
- Turro, James C. "1-2 Samuel" in Jerome Biblical Commentary, ed. by Raymond E. Brown, S.S., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S. J. and Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968.
- Vaux, R. de. Samuel. B. J., Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1961.
- Vawter, Bruce. On Genesis: A New Reading. New York: Doubleday, 1977.
- Veijola, T. Die Ewige Dynastie: David und die Entstehung seiner Dynastie nach der deuteronomistischen Darstellung. Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, Ser B., Tom 193. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1975.
- Vogels, Walter. Le prophète. Un homme de Dieu. Paris and Montreal: Bellarmin, 1973.
- Ward, Eileen de. "Eli's Rhetorical Question: 1 Sam 2:25." Journal of Jewish Studies 27 (1976) 117-37.
- _____. "Superstition and Judgement: Archaic Methods of Finding a Verdict." ZAW 89 (1977) 1-19.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.
- Weiser, Arthur. Introduction to the Old Testament. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961.
- _____. The Psalms: A Commentary. Translated by Herbert Hartwell. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962.
- Wellhausen, Julius. Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments. 4th ed.; unchanged reproduction of the 3rd ed. 1899. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1963.

- _____. Der Text der Bücher Samuelis. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht's Verlag, 1871.
- Westermann, Claus. Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech. London: Lutterworth Press, 1967.
- _____. The Praise of God in Psalms. Translated by Keith R. Crim. Richmond: John Knox, 1961.
- _____. The Structure of the Book of Job. Translated by Charles A. Muenchow. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981.
- Williams, James G. Women Recounted: Narrative Thinking and the God of Israel. Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1982.
- Willis, John T. "An Anti-Elide Narrative Tradition from a Prophetic Circle at the Ramah Sanctuary." JBL 90 (1971) 288-308.
- _____. "Cultic Elements in the Story of Samuel's Birth and Dedication." Studia Theologica 26 (1972) 33-61.
- _____. "The Song of Hannah and Psalm 113," CBQ 35 (1973), pp. 139-154.
- Wilson, Robert R. Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.
- Wolff, Hans Walter. "The Elohistic Fragments in the Pentateuch." Interpretation 26 (1972) 158-173.
- Wright, Ernest. "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32." Israel's Prophetic Heritage. Essays in Honor of J. Mullenburg. Edited by B. W. Anderson and W. Harrelson. New York: Harper, 1962.
- Zannoni, A. E. An Investigation of the Call and Dedication of the Prophet Samuel. 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Marquette University, 1976.

ABSTRACT

Chapter One of this dissertation is concerned with the history of the exegesis of the pericope 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. A survey of that history reveals that the scholarship dedicated to 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a has been primarily diachronic in nature. That is to say, the focus of the research has been mainly concerned with the tradition-historical questions relative to the text. Up to this point in time, no comprehensive form-critical analysis of 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a has been undertaken.

Chapter Two describes the methodology employed in this dissertation. That methodology has its roots in the Old Testament Form Critical Project under the editorship of Rolf P. Knierim and Gene M. Tucker, at the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, Claremont Graduate School, in Claremont, California. In view of recent studies in different academic disciplines, this methodology seeks a broader and more flexible method for the analysis and interpretation of texts.

Chapter Three is concerned with a form-critical analysis of 1 Sam 1. The analysis reveals that there three sub-units in the story of Samuel's birth and dedication, each constituting a genre in its own right: 1 Sam 1:1-8 is generically identified as a conflict story between

two wives; 1 Sam 9-18 is a variation of an OT announcement of birth; 1 Sam 1:19-28 consists of accounts of Samuel's birth, naming, circumcision, and dedication in the temple.

Chapter Four focuses upon a form-critical analysis of 1 Sam 2, an analysis which reveals the presence of five literary units: 1 Sam 2:1-11, Hannah's Canticle, is identified as a prophetic exhortation; 1 Sam 2:12-17 is an account of cultic abuse; 1 Sam 2:18-21 is a blessing narrative; 1 Sam 2:22-26 is a warning against religious treason; 1 Sam 2:27-36 is a prophetic lawsuit against an individual.

Chapter Five is concerned with a form-critical analysis of 1 Sam 3, a literary entity traditionally referred to as "the call of Samuel." A preliminary overview of the research dedicated to that chapter reveals that there is no scholarly consensus relative to the generic identity of 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a. The position taken in this dissertation is that, in an analysis of text as text, the call of Samuel can only be understood as a motif present within a larger generic unit. Consequently, 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a is generically identified as an "oracle actualization narrative." As such, 1 Sam 3:1-4:1a may be divided into three phases, or sub-units: 1 Sam 3:1-7 describes the crisis situation in Israel due to the absence of the divine word; 1 Sam 3:8-18 is concerned with a divine oracle, and the

circumstances of it being perceived as such; 1 Sam 3:19-4:1a is concerned with the actualization of the oracle, and also forms the conclusion of the pericope 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a.

In Chapters Three, Four, and Five each unit is analyzed on the basis of five rubrics: delimitation of the text, text and structure, text and genre, and text and intention. Since, in the methodology proposed by Knierim, the question of setting can be approached from several different perspectives (institutions, the style of an epoch, and literature itself), the option was taken in this dissertation to deal with setting only from the perspective of literature itself. Consequently, Chapter Six is concerned with the internal relationship of the various units within 1 Sam 1:1-4:1a. An analysis of those units reveals that the units themselves form a chiastic structure, the focal point of that structure being the blessing narrative (1 Sam 2:18-21).

Chapter Seven, the conclusion of the dissertation, also includes a brief theological reflection.