

Uwe Becker – Hannes Bezzel (eds.), *Rereading the relecture? The Question of (Post)chronistic Influence in the Latest Redactions of the Books of Samuel* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe 66; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2014). Pp. IX+239. €54. ISBN 978-3-16-151995-6

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Deuteronomistic historiography of Israel (Joshua – 2 Kings) remains at the centre of biblical research and analysis for over 200 years. From the time of the basic monography by W. de Wette (*Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Alte Testament*) and J. Wellhausen (*Prologomena zur Geschichte Israels*), the Old Testament historians and exegetes continually discuss the origin of these books, their long redaction process, diversified forms of transmission and also their literary, historical and theological interconnections. This multidimensional scientific discussion, from time to time comes into a clear focus thanks to the new methodological suggestions emanating from the biblical scholar environments, which points to the new approaches to history and the interpretation of inspired texts. One of these new proposals, which – to a certain degree – calls into question the traditional hermeneutics of the historical biblical books is the hypothesis postulating a chronistic – or even post-chronistic – rereading of the Books of Samuel. This new reconstructing concept of the redaction of key elements of deuteronomistic historiography, which is the history of the Israel monarchy, since decades has sparked among the exegetes quite a few controversies and polemics. One of the fruits of this debate was the international symposium at the Fridrich Schiller University in Jena on 27-29 August 2012, which attracted biblical scholars from many universities from over the world. In the framework of these lectures and the ensuing discussions, the scholars tried to convey the pros and cons of this relatively new scientific hypothesis. The post-symposium publication expressly entitled: *Rereading the relecture? The Question of (Post)chronistic Influence in the Latest Redactions of the Books of Samuel* reflects the course and the essence of the debate. The discussion in Jena concentrated on the hypothesis – postulated by some exegetes – of the essential influence of the post-chronistic environment on definitive version of the Books of Samuel.

The volume *Rereading the relecture?* consists of two thematically complementary sections. The editor's introduction (p. 1-7) is followed by the group of four summarized texts, directly pertaining to the essential theme of the Symposium that is the intrinsic literary and redaction relationships between the Books of Samuel and of Chronicles (p. 11-78). The second section of the volume presents the other lectures, which – while remaining in the context of the above mentioned topics – focus on the detailed and complementary issues (p. 81-231). The central element of the Symposium in Jena, expressed on the first pages of the volume, was the scientific polemics of I. Kalimi with the thesis of G. Auld postulating a new concept of redaction of the Books of Samuel. I. Kalimi in his lecture defends the traditional solutions of the question of the intrinsic relationship between deuteronomistic traditions (Deut) and collections of the Books of Samuel and of Kings. Supporting his position with solid literary, exegetical and historical analysis (p. 23-27), exegete points unchangeable value of the current understandings, which can be summarized in a few basic thesis: 1) the current version of the *Early Prophets* (Deut – 2 Kings) came into being under a clear theological and literary influence of the deuteronomistic tradition (Deut) before the redaction of the Books of the Chronicles; 2) the analysis of the key biblical parallels leads to the conclusion that the Chronicler considered the Books of Samuel and of the Kings as the main source, which he applied in the redaction of his own work, considering the same persons and events from a different historical and theological perspective. Based on the implemented analysis, Kalimi conducts a multifaceted criticism of G. Auld's central thesis, which postulates the existence of the common source, constituting inspiration and constant point of reference for the redactors of the Books of Samuel and of the Chronicles (p. 16-23).

G. Auld contests this traditional approach and his lecture entitled *The Text of Chronicles and the beginnings of Samuel* (p. 31-40) proposes a significantly different approach to the literary relationship of the Books of Samuel and of the Books of Chronicles. On the basis of the literary analysis of the parallel texts selected from these books, and by comparison of their general narrative and theological specifics, Auld maintains his flagship thesis presented in his earlier publications. In his opinion, the Books of Chronicles are not the theological re-lecture of the Books of Samuel and of the Books of Kings, but they are – contemporary with them – the historiographical work based on the same source material (Story of Judah). Auld places the redactors of the Books of Samuel and of the Books of Chronicles at the same post-exile period, stating that all of them – even in different ways – made use of one source, elaborating their own versions of the described events. According to Auld, the Chronicler didn't need Deuteronomistic History (Deut – 2 Kings) for editing his work, and the parallel

texts in both works are the result of borrowing from the common *Vorlage*. In light of these hermeneutical assumptions, Auld articulates the relationship of 1 Samuel – 2 Kings to 1–2 Chronicles not in the category of the historical work and its re-elaborated version (the original version and its commentaries), but as an alternative version and – to a certain extent – competitive evidence of the early historiography of the Juda's kings period. In his opinion, the presence of thematically and stylistically related materials in the deuteronomistic and chronical works, is a proof of the existence of the autonomic source, of which – in the same degree – the redactors of the above mentioned historical books made use in the Persian and early Hellenistic epoch.

E. Ben Zvi sees this complex question from an entirely different perspective. He considers the question of the status, of genesis and – above all – of the intrinsic relationship between the Books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, in a wider religious-cultural and sociological context. Exegete attempts to decipher and to compare the activity of the redactors of these biblical books in the context of a specific memorizing method used to perpetuate the persons and historical facts, which – in his opinion – was typical in the late Persian and the early Hellenic epoch. In Ben Zvi opinion, historiography born in the deuteronomistic and chronistic circles should be categorized as two complementary – and not contradictory – phases of the one uninterrupted and consistent consolidation process of the tradition in Israel, which resulted the redaction and transmission of the Pentateuch and the prophetic texts (p. 41-56).

C. Nihan takes up another perspective in which he is analyzing the redaction process of the Books of Samuel and of the Chronicles with their post-chronistic revisions, comparing the various versions of their original text (p. 57-78). Comparing the parallel fragments of the Masoretic Text, LXX and the Dead Sea Scrolls (4QSama; 4Q51), Nihan attempts to establish the principles and the mutual correlations in the redaction and transmission process of the text of the Books of Samuel and the Chronicles. In the end, Nihan was unable to come to a clear unambiguous conclusion, which could lead to e.g. the hypothesis of the existence or of non-existence of a common version of the text (*Vorlage*) in both these works. Exegete signalizes many methodological difficulties in establishing reliable criteria to define the age of the analyzed texts and also their belonging to the redaction environment of the Chronicler. In his opinion, the analysis of the parallel versions of the text of 1–2 Samuel and of 1–2 Chronicles can only prove the uniqueness and independence of the environments transmitting both of these traditions in the Second Temple Period.

The second part of the volume concerns the remaining lectures of the scholars present in Jena, but represents a form of very detailed studies and analysis. All of them are dedicated to the textual, exegetical or ideological-theological

problems related to today's text of the Books of Samuel and the Chronicles. This section starts with the publication by G. Hentschel (p. 81-91), which analyses and defines the various redactional layers of the tradition predicting the decline of the priestly line of Heli and social-religious rise of the priests of the Sadok's line (1 Sam 2:12-17,22-25,27-36). Applying the method of biblical diachrony, he indicates the source material of the analyzed periscope – which forms the body of narration – and subsequently defines the theological elaborations done by the deuteronomistic redactor of the book.

The publication of P. Porzig addresses the essence of the leading issue of the Symposium. He is looking for the post-chronistic traces in the one of the most ancient cycle of traditions maintained in the Books of Samuel, that is in the cycle of the Ark (1 Sam 4:1-7:2; 2 Sam 6:1-23). The argument for their existence is – for this scholar – the presence of the theological principle according to which only the Levites or the priests born of the line of Levi could carry the Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam 6:15). In the context of the comparative analysis of the selected traditions of the Ark and Levites (among others Deut 10:1-5,8-9; 1 Kings 8:4; 1 Chr 15:2), Porzig formulates his hypothesis that the cult-religious conviction of that kind did not belong to the original version of the deuteronomistic historiography, but is a result of the redaction revision completed on one of the latest stages of its edition. Ultimately, the exegete lacks convincing arguments to directly connect this redaction intervention with the theological environment of the Chronicler (p. 93-105).

Subsequently R. Müller attempts to define the question of the literary and theological relationship between the Books of Samuel and Chronicles, based on the analysis of the theoforic roots of some names comparing in these works (p 107-127). Exegete considers that the Masoretic Text of the 1–2 Samuel contains a certain group of proper names whose forms are significantly different in the parallel traditions maintained in the 1-2Chronicles. The Chronicler mentions the proper names containing the theoforic root: *b'l* „Baal” without any connection, whereby the Masoretic version of the 1–2 Samuel the same names are lacking such element, and in its place they contain the Hebrew root *bšt*, which means “shame”. Looking for the intrinsic reason of this essential phonetical and thematic difference, exegete refers to the etymological and contextual analysis of all parallel passages of 1–2 Samuel and of 1–2 Chronicles which contain these names. Müller stands for the hypothesis – generally accepted by the exegetes – of the conscious theological correction, made by the redactor of the proto-Masoretic version of the Books of Samuel intended to condemn the cult of one of the most important gods of Kanaan – Baal.

U. Becker strongly suggests the thesis of the chronistic revision of some sections of the Books of Samuel (p. 131-145). Using the method of diachronic

analysis exegete precisely reconstructs the redaction of the theological epilogue of the traditions describing the establishment of the monarchy in Israel (1 Sam 12:1-25). Becker postulates that this epilogue is – already in his first version (1 Sam 12:1-13a,16b-20) – the fruit of the work of the Chronicler and not of the deuteronomistic school (DtrH or DtrN). Simultaneously, he suggests that the key fragment of the cycle should be considered as a deliberated ideological and theological chronistic revision of the strong deuteronomistic critics of the institution of monarchy contained in the previous passage of 1 Sam 8:1-22. The chronistic mark is contained first of all in the gloss of 1 Sam 12:13b-15, which – consistent with the theology of 1–2 Chronicles – introduces a specific theocratic concept based on the obligation of fidelity to the Tora precepts mandatory for the monarch and his subjects.

Also J. Hutzli, applying the same diachronic approach to the inspired text, searches for later traces of (chronistic) corrections in the Books of Samuel (p. 147-165). The subject of his detailed research are two thematically and literarily related stories, of which the first narrates the Saul's revenge on the disloyal priests of Nob (1 Sam 22:6-23), while the second speaks of the equally bloody crime committed by king David on the descendants of his predecessor (2 Sam 21:1-14). In both traditions the exegetes see the original deuteronomistic layer based on the earlier sources, together with several later ideological-theological corrections. Hutzli attributes a later origin to the both accounts, pointing at the stylistic, contextual and historic reasons. Taking into consideration the lack of these texts in 1–2 Chronicles and the fact that both books contain a very negative assessments of King Saul (see 1 Chr 10:13-14), exegete considers that these anti-Saul pericopes were added to 1 Samuel only after the redaction of the Books of Chronicles.

C. Edenburg comes to very similar conclusions as she postulates in the publication *2 Sam 21,1-14 and 2 Sam 23,1-7 as Post-Chr Additions to the Samuel Scroll* the post-chronistic origin of the narration of the extermination of Saul's descendants, as well as the poetical passage called the *Testament of David* (p. 167-182). She joins the ranks of the exegetes who, based on the discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls, are convinced that the Masoretic Text of the Books of Samuel was being formed already in the Persian period, which means, during the period of the redaction of the Chronicles. In the consequence, Edenburg regards likely influence of this environment upon the final version of the Books of Samuel. According to Edenburg, the concrete example of the latter literary and theological influence on the frame of 1–2 Samuel are both – analyzed by her – narrations, which she considers as the post-chronistic revisions or glosses inserted in the body of the deuteronomistic narration (appendix to 2 Sam 21-24). Their thematic and literary singularity (terminology, type and style of narration), and the lack of them in 1–2 Chronicles – despite the fact that they are ascribed

to the ideological and theological pro-David optics of the Chronicler – is for the scholar sufficient argument to recognize them as the post-chronistic additions.

Also H. Bezzel speaks of the influence of the chronistic school on the final version of the Books of Samuel, analyzing the ideological and theological image of the king Saul, which appears in both of these works. Examining the beginning of the summarium regarding Saul's military activity in Israel (1 Sam 14:47) and – first of all – the parallel descriptions of his death (1 Sam 31:1-13; 1 Chr 10:1-14), and the narration of the slaughtering of his sons (2 Sam 21:1-14), Bezzel builds a hypothesis of the chronistic revision of Saul's image in 1–2 Samuel, based on the text of 1 Chr 10:13-14. Exegete even considers several essential aspects of this theological and ideological elaboration, whose principle goal was the anti-Saul correction of the Masoretic Text regarding Samuel, destined to justify the rejection and the shameful death of the first ruler of Israel and the tragic fate of his descendants (s. 183-214).

Equally, the concluding publication by T. Rudnig's (p. 215-231) ascribes to the methodology and theological optics accepted by the exegetes who postulate the later (chronistic and post-chronistic) revisions of the Books of Samuel. He comes to this conclusion based on the analysis of the selected texts from the David Succession Narrative (2 Sam 13-20; 1 Kings 1-2), which deals with the theme of the cult and the fixed location of the Ark in Jerusalem (2 Sam 6-7; 15:24-29), as well as the theme of the king's retribution modelled after the principle of God's reward (2 Sam 9:1-13; 16:1-4; 19:25-31; 2 Kings 2:5-6,28-35). Rudnig concludes that the texts regarding the cult initiatives of David in Jerusalem, and also the narratives of the just king's reward for Meribbaal and Joab can reflect the theological convictions of the redactor of the Books of Chronicles and the post-chronistic environments.

In order to summarize the presentation of the volume *Rereading the relecture?* one must emphasize the high level of the included publications. The Jena Symposium participants presented the rich methodological entirety and thoroughness of research of the very difficult and complex question of the redaction process of the Books of Samuel. Even if the thesis – sustained by the majority of them – about the post(chronistic) influence on the final version of the Books of Samuel is still to be considered as a more or less founded hypothesis, it opens the door to further research in this field. The novelty of this approach to the biblical texts is unquestioned, because to a certain extent, it questions the conventional scientific patterns and concepts of the redaction process of the 1–2 Samuel, significantly altering the time of its final redaction. Of course, one may – or even must – argue with certain conclusions and thesis presented in various publications of the volume, but this polemic does not diminish the significant contribution which the meeting in Jena contributed to the discussion regarding the origin, reception and the transmission of the historical Old Testament books.