Ever since its first, partial publication in the early fifties, the scroll known as 4QSam has attracted the interest of biblical text-critics. And rightly so, for this scroll contains a wealth of interesting readings, both primary and secondary, which are most significant for biblical exegesis, and for the history of the biblical text as well.

As an instance of a primary reading recovered through this scroll, let me mention its reading in 1 Sam 1:24. Plausibly completed as הבור בֶּן בֶּן מֶשֶלֶשׁ, this passage in the scroll confirms the witness of the LXX version, ἐν μόσχῳ τριετίζοντι, to the effect that the primary reading was not הבור משלאשׁ, but הבור משלאשׁוֹנָה שָׁלֹשׁ, “with a three-year-old bull,” an inference drawn long ago by commentators.

No less significant are the secondary readings contained in the scroll. I mention here a single case which has not attracted much attention to date. In 1 Sam 11:9, the MT reads מָרָא מָרָא לִפְנֵי הַנַּחֲלָה, “tomorrow you will have salvation.” 4QSam, as against it, reads מָרָא מָרָא לִפְנֵי הַנַּחֲלָה מַעַלְתָּו, “salvation[ation] from the Lord.” What is the import of such a reading?

In an article published in the early sixties, I. L. Seeligmann pointed out the tendency of late biblical authors such as the Chronicler to emphasize the role of the


[Textus 19 (1998) 63-74]
Lord in historical events over against the achievements of human heroes.⁴ Earlier authors, to be sure, acknowledged the saving acts, the victories, תורי ונה, of the Lord, but at the same time they freely described the redemptive intervention, נוחה, of a human hero, נבון. As against them, the authors that followed, more theologically oriented, insisted on the Lord as the sole redeemer, especially when the fate of the nation was at stake. Following this argument, Seeligmann claimed that short anecdotes relating the military feats of David's gibborim, (2 Sam 23:9-10, 11-12) originally reported the surprising victory of a human champion, רוית תורא ונה, (vv. 10,12); a late scribe then intervened and interpolated the name of the Lord into these passages, thus attributing to him the redemptive act: רוית נגן תורא ונה.

All this is conjecture, and no textual witness has so far provided evidence to confirm these emendations. But 4QSam⁶ to 15am 11:9, as quoted above, conveys a demonstration that late copyists did interpolate passages into their sources in order to emphasize divine intervention.⁵ The existence of this process in the textual realm is now well attested. In this case, as elsewhere, a secondary reading helps to establish an ideological trend and its textual effects in other passages as well.

Here, however, I will not discuss single readings from 4QSam⁶ and their correspondences in other textual witnesses. Instead, I propose to raise a fundamental question: what is the general character of 4QSam⁶ — is it really a biblical scroll, that is, a scroll purporting to contain the biblical text of Samuel?

The issue deserves some consideration. Scholars should not be biased by the fact that for more than forty-four years now this particular scroll has been designated as 4QSam⁶. As its siglum indicates, this was the first manuscript of Samuel from this cave to be deciphered and published. The much older manuscript 4QSam⁵ was published two years later.⁶ Fragments of further scrolls were brought to public knowledge at a much later date.⁷ Thus at first, one could not realize how much 4QSam⁶ diverged from all other Samuel scrolls from Qumran. Now, however, being

⁵To emphasize, indeed. The interpolator was not satisfied with Saul's declaration in v. 13.
in possession of enough comparative material, we are entitled to ask if 4QSam\(^8\) really contains the biblical book of Samuel or perhaps something else — a distinct composition based on the book of Samuel, but reworked at times according to some new intentions. If this is the case, the scroll should not be considered a copy of Samuel but rather as a kind of ‘Reworked Samuel’ or an ancient ‘Midrash Samuel.’

I begin the discussion by reconsidering a passage from 4QSam\(^9\) published in 1980 by Frank M. Cross Jr.\(^8\)

[...] vacat et omnes manum hanc et manum [vadem rachmim]

[...] vacat et omnes manum hanc et manum [vadem rachmim]

[this. So they] scorned him and brought him no gift.

[and Na]hash, king of the Ammonites, sorely oppressed the Gadites and the Reubenites, and he gouged out all their right eyes and struck terror and dread in Israel. There was not left one among the Israelites beyond] Jordan who]se right eye was not go[uted by Nahash king of the [A]mmonites; except seven thousand men


/About a month later, Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh-Gilead/ and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash [the Ammonite, “Make with [us a covenant and we shall become your subjects.”]

Nahash [the Ammonite said t]o [th]em, [“After this fashion will I make [a covenant with you”...”]

Frank Cross, followed by his students Eugene Ulrich and P. Kyle McCarter in their publications on this matter,\(^9\) maintain that this passage is an integral part of the deuteronomistic history as contained in the book of Samuel. In their opinion, this portion dropped out of all other textual witnesses of Samuel (but for Josephus) by

\(^8\)“The Ammonite Oppression of the Tribes of Gad and Reuben: Missing Verses from 1Samuel 11 Found in 4QSam\(^8\),” *The Hebrew and Greek Texts of Samuel*, 105-119 (above, n. 7); reprinted in *History, Historiography and Interpretation* (ed. H. Tadmor et al.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983) 148-158. The completions are those of Cross; the translation follows him in the main.

\(^9\)See above, n. 3.
parablepsis, that is, the accidental skipping over of a few lines in his Vorlage by an ancient copyist. In my view, what happened here is quite the opposite: a late scribe inserted into the narrative of Samuel an additional story relating the subjugation of the Transjordanian Israelite tribes Gad and Reuben by the Ammonite king.

My argument is threefold. In the first place, the episode contained in this passage does not contribute to the clarity and consistency of the whole story. To be sure, the "new" story explains why Nahash nurtured such a hatred against Jabesh: they hosted his enemies! But then his cruel treatment of the Gadites and Reubenites is left without explanation. Whatever clarity the narrative may have gained on the one side it has lost on the other! Secondly, this episode contains no elements bearing the mark of originality — anything that could not have been concocted by a Second Commonwealth scribe out of information contained in earlier books. Finally, and most important, this passage reveals traits typical of Jewish aggadah: a single deed of one hero is multiplied, thus being transformed into a salient aspect of his character. In our case, the single proposal of Nahash to the people of Jabesh is described in the additional passage as Nahash's particular way of waging war against Israel.

In the aforementioned article I pointed out that this pattern fashions the aggadah in its elaborations on biblical figures such as Abraham, David, Balaam, or Doeg the Edomite. For instance, according to the book of Jubilees and the Mishna Abraham underwent not just one trial, the binding of Isaac, but seven or ten. Let me quote here an additional case: In the Hebrew Bible, Dathan and Aviram led a revolt against Moses in the desert (Num 16). According to the aggadah, however, Dathan and Aviram opposed Moses and Aaron five additional times: they were the two Hebrews who quarelled with each other and then betrayed Moses to Pharaoh,


11 In a later publication, “The Original Biblical Text Reconstructed from Newly Found Fragments,” Bible Review 1/3 (1985) 26-35, Cross explained that the mutilation of the Gadites and Reubenites was imposed on them as a punishment meted out, according to Ancient Near Eastern custom, to rebellious subjects. Needless to say, the text of 4QSam5 does not contain even a hint to such circumstances.

12 Cf. the norm enunciated in b. Megillah 11a: דַּעֲרָא דַּעֲרָא מֵאַבְּרָהָם לֹא בֶּרֶשֶׁם גָּדוֹלָה מִיָּם חָיוֹת מְדִיבֵהֶנָּה. a norm applied there to several negative figures, the opposite norm יַזְכֵרנָה describes the righteous. A full list of the mischiefs of the two brothers is provided by the late midrash Shemot Rabbah 1:29. Cf. A. Shinan, Midrash Shemot Rabbah, Chapters I-XIV (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1984) 90 with further references (Hebrew).
according to Exod 2:13-15; they were the ones who confronted Moses and Aaron when Pharaoh aggravated the conditions of forced labor for the Hebrews (Exod 5:19-21); they complained and denounced the exodus when the Israelites were caught up by the Egyptian army at the Reed Sea (Exod 14:11-12); they provoked Moses by leaving the manna overnight (Exod 16:20); and finally, it was they who suggested returning to Egypt when a mutiny broke out upon hearing the report of the ten scouts who had explored Canaan (Num 14:4). It appears that Dathan and Aviram were fortunate to have descended so speedily ad inferos (הלאה); otherwise the ag gadah would have charged them with some more acts of mischief.¹³

I have thus reached the conclusion that this plus of 4QSam⁴ contains an elaboration of Jewish ag gadah on the biblical episode of Nahash’s siege on Jabesh Gilead.

Here, however, we encounter a new problem. If Cross was right, the omission of six lines by an ancient copyist would have been a case of mechanical error, a textual mishap. But if I am right (and I still hold this view), then the insertion of an entire episode featuring late legend into a biblical manuscript transcends the bounds of textual transmission. The scribe here is not copying; he is composing or at least compiling. This means that we have entered the realm of literary creation, the field of history of literature. Could it be that the scribe responsible for the text of 4QSam⁴ did not at all intend to give us a text of Samuel, but rather to present a kind of ancient parabiblical Samuel, containing the biblical text together with its midrashic commentary, or even sometimes rewriting the biblical text according to the commentary? The answer to this query depends on quantity, namely how much of this kind of expanding the text or otherwise rewriting and re-editing it, is present in other portions of the scroll 4QSam⁴.

II

Thus, let us move to the story of the sacrifice of Shilo at the time when the sons of Eli were officiating. The Masoretic Text, followed in the main by the Septuagint, reads here (1 Sam 2:12-17):

¹³For further examples see my article, “The Acts of Nahash” (above, n. 10).
Now Eli's sons were scoundrels; they paid no heed to the Lord. This was the practice of the priests with the people: When anyone brought a sacrifice, the priest's boy would come along with a three-pronged fork while the meat was boiling, and he would thrust it into 'the cauldron, or the kettle, or the great pot, or the small cooking-pot; and whatever the fork brought up, the priest would take away 'on it. Thus they would do at Shiloh with all the Israelites who came there. [But now] even before the suet was turned into smoke, the priest's boy would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, 'Hand over some meat to roast for the priest; for he won't accept boiled meat from you, only raw.' And if the man said to him, 'Let them first turn the suet into smoke, and then take as much as you want,' he would reply, 'No, hand it over at once or I'll take it by force.' The sin of the young men against the Lord was very great, for the men treated the Lord's offerings impiously.

MT and LXX concur in discerning two distinct courses that went on at Shiloh. The first one was legitimate: after the slaughter of the animal and the burning of the fat, and while the meat was being cooked, the servant of the priest would pick out at random meat for his master. The second action was illegitimate: immediately after the slaughter, before the burning of the fat on the altar, the servant would subtract a portion for the priest. This was considered sacrilege because the priest was usurping the precedence of the Lord (cf. v. 29).

Now it is evident that for a learned and pious Jew of later generations, who measured the story by the yardstick of the Torah, nothing of what went on at Shiloh could be acceptable. The priests' due portion of šelaim sacrifice, the breast and the right thigh, had been specified in Lev 7:28-34, and anything exacted in addition to this share, or even instead of it, would be illegitimate. It is this view precisely that comes to the fore in 4QSam⁴, Col. II, lines 1-5. The scribe here inverted the order of vv.13-14 and 15-16:¹⁶

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¹⁴The translation is that of the NJPS, adapted to my own understanding of the passage.
¹⁵In the last generation such a learned and pious Jewish scholar would be M. H. Segal. Cf. his commentary to Samuel (above, n.2) p. יב, on v. 13.
¹⁶To be sure, v. 15 is not represented, but it is implied by the beginning of v. 16 in this scroll. The hypothesis sometimes expressed (Cross, above n.1, 21; Segal, above n. 2, p. יב), that vv. 13-14 have been duplicated after vv. 15-16 does not appear plausible.
16 And the man would answer and say to the priest’s boy: “Let the priest first turn the [suet] into smoke and then take out whatever you want.” And he would reply: “No, hand it over at once.” And [he would] take it by force. 17 While [the] meat was boiling, he would take the three-pronged fork [in his hand] and he would thrust it into the cauldron on the small cooking pot, and whatever the fork brought up, he would take, either [bad or] good, in addition to the [waved breast and the right thigh]... The scribe of the young men was...

By putting the illegitimate action first, the late scribe has combined both actions into one major transgression. And lest anybody misunderstand him, he explicitly states that everything was taken by the priest “in addition to the waved breast and the right thigh” enjoined in Lev 7:28-34.

We touch here an ideological element that motivated much of the scribal activity during the Second Commonwealth, the nomistic concern. Actions and persons of Israel in the past were measured by the yardstick of the Torah. Even small details could be corrected accordingly: MT and LXX speak in v. 16 about the suet to be turned into smoke (כפיר). As against them, 4QSam specifies that this is to be done by the priest (כפור), conforming to the law of Lev 3:5, 11, 16. On a larger scale, this phenomenon features prominently in the book of Chronicles. For example, the Chronicler took over the story of the ark in 2 Sam 6 and expanded it (1 Chr 15:1-16:3) introducing therein the role of the Levites who properly carried the Ark on their shoulders, as prescribed by the Priestly Document in Num 4.

Regarding our scroll, how should we describe the work of its composer in this pericope? He has not merely glossed the text, or omitted or substituted a word or a phrase as was the habit of so many scribes while copying ancient writings. Rather, he has allowed himself to reorganize the story, to rewrite it. His reworking is characteristic of so many ancient commentaries that do not comment on the text as they have it, but rather rewrite it. They do not explain an old story; they explain the


18Cf. J. Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Israel (English Transl.; Edinburgh: Black, 1885) 175-177.
events which presumably lie behind it. But what interests us most in the present context is the fact that we have here an ancient commentary incorporated into the text; in other words, not so much a book of Samuel, but rather an ancient Midrash Samuel.

At this point, a short comment on Samuel’s nazirite status is in order. Samuel of the MT is dedicated to the Lord, to work in his sanctuary. He is not a nazirite, even if his hair is left untrimmed (1 Sam 1:11). The LXX presents a plus in this verse, καὶ οἶνον καὶ μέθυσμα ὄο πίειαν, which equates Samuel with Samson the nazirite (cf. Judg 13:7,14). And yet, this equation is only implicit: the LXX merely hints at a nazirite vow concerning Hannah’s child. It is 4QSam\(^{a}\) that makes the final step and in a substantial plus vis-à-vis MT and LXX (after 1Sam 1:22) defines Hannah’s dedication of Samuel as בニー Animated דּוּד כָּל נֶאֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל [Hebrew]. The motivation of the scribe is again nomistic: he is trying to comprehend Samuel’s status in accordance with the Torah (Num 6:1-21). But what especially distinguishes 4QSam\(^{a}\) over against the other textual witnesses is its bold expansion of the text, both in quantity and in quality — a text longer by a full line which explicitly declares the nazirite status of Samuel, in line with further Jewish sources (Ben Sira 46:13 and m. Nazir 9:5).

III

An additional instance of such a rewriting of the text in 4QSam\(^{a}\), intending in this case to smooth over its problems, is found at the end of the book in the story of the pestilence and the altar of Araunah (2 Sam 24).\(^{20}\) Let me summarize the passage and its queries: David chooses to be punished with three-days’ pestilence (vv. 13-14 together with 14aLXX: καὶ εξελέξατο ἐκυπέρων Δαυὶς τὸν θάνατον καὶ ἡμέρας τῆς θερίσμου πυρόν); the Lord then afflicted Israel with a pestilence until the set time (דר בְּמַרְאִ֖י רְעָֽו), i.e., for three full days (v.15). But when the angel of the Lord began to smite Jerusalem, the Lord repented and stopped him (v. 16). Here we encounter


\(^{20}\)My position on this subject was first stated in my Ph.D. dissertation Israelite Belief in Angels (Ph.D. thesis; The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1969; reprinted: Jerusalem: Makor 1979) 184-203 (Hebrew): A later, English version is “4QSam\(^{a}\) in the Light of Historico-literary Criticism: The Case of 2 Sam 24 and 1 Chr 21,” Biblische und Judaistische Studien (Fs. Paolo Sacchi; ed. A. Vivian; Judentum und Umwelt 29; Frankfurt a. M. etc.: P. Land, 1990) 109-119.
a first puzzle: did the pestilence really last three days, or was it interrupted by the Lord beforehand? The question of timing is garbled again further on in the story: the angel indeed stopped smiting (v.16) and David, by order of Gad the prophet, proceeds to erect an altar in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. But in his address to Araunah, David mentions the plague as still raging (v. 21), and even the omniscient author tells us that only after the altar had been built and the sacrifices offered was the plague against Israel checked (v. 25). Thus vv. 21 and 25 contradict v. 16.

Finally, there is the issue of the motivation for the erection of the altar: in v. 16 we are told that the angel stopped smiting at Araunah’s threshing floor. This implies that the building of an altar on the site was caused by angelophany. On the other hand, vv.18-19 relate that the prophet had commanded king David to build an altar and the king complied. Here it is the prophetic word that determines the cultic step. The erection of the altar is thus doubly motivated. There are grounds enough here to suspect the presence of distinct narrative strands.

This portion of 2 Sam 24 can serve as a wonderful exercise-ground for Bible critics — and I include myself in the team.21 At this juncture, however, we will deal not with the history of the biblical narrative but with its Nachgeschichte. We proceed then to see how the story of the plague and the altar fared in 1 Chr 21.

The author of 1 Chr 21 does away with the inconsistencies of 2 Sam 24 one by one. The main point of this second writer is the distinction of two phases in the cessation of the pestilence: at first, the Lord told his angel to withhold his hand (v. 15). But the angel of the Lord remained standing there, midway “between earth and heaven, with a drawn sword in his hand, directed against Jerusalem” (v. 16). Only after David had built the altar and had presented his sacrifices did the Lord instruct the angel “to return his sword to its sheath” (v. 27).

In accordance with this corrected timetable, the author of 1 Chronicles 21 deleted from his story a few statements: the phrase “and the plague against Israel was checked” found in 2 Sam 24:25 is absent from Chronicles. Also, the duration of the plague “from the morning (the morrow?) until the set time,” specified in 2 Sam 24:15, lacks a counterpart in Chronicles. Thus the timetable of the pestilence and the erection of the altar has been entirely reorganized and made consistent.

Even the query about the *hieros logos* of the altar — the manifestation of an angel or the word of a prophet — has been solved in an elegant way. It was the angel, so states 1 Chr 21:18, who told the prophet Gad to instruct David concerning the erection of the altar on the threshing floor of Araunah.

Let me say a word of praise about the author of 1 Chr 21. He detected contradictions and even a less conspicuous tension in a manner worthy of a modern Bible-critic! And this in turn confirms that biblical criticism is not applying to the Bible criteria alien to the logic of biblical authors!

Moving one step further in our investigation, we can state that the author of 1 Chr 21 is not the Chronicler — and this is very easily demonstrated: The Chronicler is fond of miracles indeed, but not at all enthusiastic about angels! His own story does not have one single note about angels.22 As against him, 1 Chr 21 introduces into the story five instances of the angel of the Lord, in addition to Satan in v. 1. Angels are omnipresent in 1 Chr 21.

Who, then, is the author of 1 Chr 21? Does he precede or follow the Chronicler? Today we are able to answer these questions thanks to the scroll designated as 4QSam9. This scroll, structured as it is according to the outline of the book of Samuel, contains at the very end, in the story of the plague, a text of 2 Sam 24:16-20 which in its essentials agrees with the plague account as given in 1 Chr 21:15-20 MT.

The fragments published so far read as follows:23

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[א]ת עיני...
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The affinities between the scroll and the version of Chronicles are evident. But above all, the mention of the angel standing with a drawn sword in between earth and heaven is particular to 1 Chr 21, because this description belongs to the distinction

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22 A doubtful passage is 2Chr 20:22: נַחֲנָה הָאָמְרוּ לָם. The context makes it plausible that these “ambushers” are heavenly beings, but the diction is reticent; *alter S. Japhet, I and II Chronicles — A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster, 1993) 797-798.

23 I follow Ulrich (above, n.3) 86, 156-161.
of two phases in the checking of the plague. This means that the author of 1 Chr 21 is a scribe who reworked the book of Samuel, and his work crops up now in 4QSam as well.

Returning now to the character of 4QSam, it has become clear once more that we have here not a merely divergent text with minor variants, additions, and omissions. What we find in 4QSam to 2 Sam 24 is a reworked tale with its own logic, with its own theology. In this case the concern of the late writer was not to adapt the tale to his nomistic concepts; rather, he adapted it to his angelological notions. Most important, however, we noticed how he reorganized the timetable of the story. As a good ancient interpreter he did not explain a preceding text, but turned to explain the facts that lay behind the text.

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The four instances adduced here concur in establishing my main point: 4QSam in some of its more extensive fragments does not present merely a text of Samuel; it contains a text expanded or reinterpreted according to the ideas of late scribes; such a work should properly be defined as 4Q Midrash Samuel.

This midrashic work seems to have become quite popular during the Second Commonwealth, if we are to judge by its diffusion. Elements from it were known to the Chronicler by the mid-fourth century BCE; one copy, transcribed around the mid-first century BCE, reached the library of Qumran; yet another copy was used by Josephus (end of first century CE) as a main source for the times of Samuel, Saul and David. Such a popularity need not surprise us when we consider how much the kind of interpretation offered in this work was in demand by Second Temple literati.

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25 Cf. W.E. Lemke, “The Synoptic Problem in the Chronicler’s History,” HThR 58 (1965) 349-362. However, Lemke did not apparently realize the extension and tendency of the reworking represented by 4QSam or its recent origin (not long before) the Chronicler.

26 I rely here on the authority of Cross (above, n.1).

27 According to Ulrich (above, n.3).
Finally, let me emphasize that even if defined as a non-biblical book, this scroll does not lose its value as a textual witness. More often than not, secondary witnesses attest good, primary readings; all the more so, because they escape correction towards the dominant lines of textual tradition.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{28}A draft of this paper was read at the universities of Marburg and Göttingen on June 16 and 18, 1997. My thanks go to both audiences for their warm reception and illuminating comments.