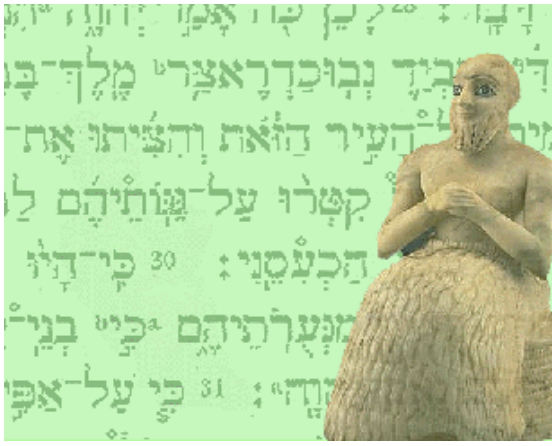
The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures

ISSN 1203-1542

http://www.jhsonline.org and

http://purl.org/jhs



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VOLUME 9, ARTICLE 10

RACHELLE GILMOUR,
SUSPENSE AND ANTICIPATION IN 1 SAMUEL 9:1–14

SUSPENSE AND ANTICIPATION IN 1 SAMUEL 9:1–14

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"There is no terror in a bang, only in the anticipation of it." –Alfred Hitchcock

1. INTRODUCTION

Whether a story is being told visually or with words, great stories have always used suspense as a powerful tool.[1] In recent decades there has been a renewed interest in the narratives of Samuel as 'great stories' and their power to engage and entertain the reader alongside other historical or theological purposes. This interest has led to reanalysis of unusual or anomalous features which have traditionally been given diachronic explanations. Historical and textual criticism have provided convincing accounts of how such features came to be in the Masoretic text as it has been passed down to us. However, a literary approach can provide answers about why such unusual features could remain in the text and be understood coherently by generations of audiences.

One such anomalous feature in 1 Sam 9:1–14 is the sudden identification of the anonymous seer as the prophet Samuel in v. 14. Several literary scholars have suggested that the sudden entrance of Samuel functions as a surprise in the narrative. This paper demonstrates that it is better understood as the climax of a long period of suspense. A look at wider literary and film contexts highlights a number of structures and techniques of suspense which can be identified in 1 Sam 9:1–14. These include an initiating event which foreshadows the climax of Saul's meeting with Samuel and a recurring pattern of anticipation, delay and resolution to heighten suspense throughout the chapter. Not only will this analysis increase our appreciation of this rich and entertaining story, it will also suggest a literary explanation for two further unusual features

[1] My thanks to Noel Weeks and Ian Young for reading and commenting on the draft of this paper. This paper was also presented in an earlier version at the SBL international meeting in Auckland 2008.

in the pericope: the list of place names in 9:4 and the editorial insertion on the terms ראה *seer* and נביא *prophet* in 9:9. Whilst the tendency in scholarship is to emend each of these verses, it will be demonstrated that their final MT forms contribute effectively to the structure of suspense in 9:1–14.

2. THE ANONYMOUS SEER: FOLKTALE FEATURE OR LITERARY DEVICE?

The story of Saul and his donkeys in 9:1–10.16 has long been considered to have folk tale origins. This identification was first made by Gressmann who isolated the physical superiority of Saul, the anonymous seer, the unnamed city in which he lives, the timelessness of the story and the setting in the realm of wonders, as elements which indicate a folktale prehistory of the text as a *Märchen*.[2] Scholars have since noted that these elements do not extend throughout all of the pericope in 9:1–10.16 and so have revised Gressman's form-critical analysis. In particular, the anonymity of the seer extends only to v. 14 where he is suddenly identified as the prophet Samuel. This has led to the widespread supposition that the earlier verses of chapter 9 represent an early folktale about Saul searching for asses but instead finding a seer, which was overwritten by the story of Saul being anointed king by Samuel.[3] A variant of this theory has been proposed by Birch who considers the late introduction of Samuel in 9:14 to be a literary device and so he does not include this verse as a later addition. However, he still divides up the chapter by identifying older folktale elements and

[2] Hugo Gressmann, *Die älteste Geschichtsschreibung und Prophetie Israels (von Samuel bis Amos und Hosea): übersetzt, erklärt und mit Einleitungen versehen.* (Göttingen: V & R, 1910), 26–27.

[3] Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary.* (trans. John Stephen Bowden, OTL; London: S.C.M. Press, 1964), 79; Ludwig Schmidt, *Menschlicher Erfolg und Jahwes Initiative: Studien zu Tradition, Interpretation und Historie in Überlieferungen von Gideon, Saul und David* (vol. 38, WMANT; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970), 58–102; J. Maxwell Miller, "Saul's Rise to Power: Some Observations Concerning 1 Sam 9:1–10:16; 10:26–11:15 and 13:2–14:46," *CBQ* 36 (1974), 157–74; Frank Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand gegen das Königtum* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 57–60; P. Kyle McCarter, *I Samuel* (The Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 1980), 186; John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 254–56; Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1983), 84; Antony F. Campbell, *1 Samuel* (FOTL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 106. Although this theory is widespread, the exact divisions of the narrative between folktale and late rewriting vary among scholars. E.g. Miller (pp. 158–59), influenced by Schmidt but with modifications, considers 9:2b, 9, 13a, 14b–17, 20f, 22b–24a and 10:1, 5b, 9, 13–16 as the later additions. Van Seters (p. 255) suggests 9:1–8, 10–14, 18–19, 22–27aαβ; 10:2–6, 9–13 as the earlier folktale.

other verses which are linked to these by plot.[4]

In response to form critical divisions of the story, literary studies have identified a number of distinct continuities throughout the narrative. For example, Fokkelman points out that the quest for the asses is not forgotten when Saul meets Samuel, nor is Saul's servant.[5] Also, the use of בחור ("chosen") to describe Saul in 9:2 foreshadows his election as נגיד ("prince") in 10.1.[6] Furthermore, in agreement with Birch, it has been demonstrated that the sudden appearance of Samuel performs a literary function in the text. A climactic moment is created by the structure of 9:14 where the particle הנה ("behold") is followed immediately by שמואל ("Samuel").[7] Fokkelman proposes that it creates surprise for Saul about the suddenness of his new role and for the reader that there is hidden meaning in the tale of the asses.[8] Polzin's interpretation of the chapter as a whole leads him to suggest that it generates curiosity, suspense and surprise about who will be the true prophet in Israel.[9] Mayes has argued against the proposition that it is a literary device with the observation that the revelation of Samuel does not come at the climax of the story.[10] However, it is possible for the narrative to have more than one climax. Fokkelman describes three quests in the narrative—Saul looking for his asses, Saul and his servant searching for the seer and Samuel searching for Israel's king.[11] By this structure, the revelation of Samuel's identity comes at the resolution of both the second and third

[4] Bruce C. Birch, "Development of the Tradition on the Anointing of Saul in 1 Sam 9:1–10:16," *JBL* 90 (1971), 58–60. He assigns 9:1–14, 9:18–19, 9:22–24, and 10:2–4 to the early folktale and the remaining verses to the rewriting.

[5] J. P. Fokkelman, *Vow and Desire* (vol. IV of *Narrative art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses*; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1993), 364–5.

[6] Fokkelman, *Vow and Desire*, 374; Lyle M. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1-12* (Decatur: Almond Press, 1985), 348.

[7] See 1 Sam 11:5 and Gen. 22:13 for a similar use of הנה at the climax of the story. For more on the function of הנה to point to an unexpected turn of events, see Francis I. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), 94–96; Dennis J. McCarthy, "The Uses of wəhinnēh in Biblical Hebrew," *Bib* 61 (1980), 332; Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond, 1983), 91; Tamar Zewi, "The Particles HINNEH and WEHINNEH in Biblical Hebrew," *HS* 37 (1996), 24; and C. H. J. van der Merwe, "A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective on הנה in the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth," *HS* 48 (2007), 121–22.

[8] Fokkelman, *Vow and Desire*, 363.

[9] Robert M. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History; Part Two - I Samuel.* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 90, 97.

[10] A. D. H. Mayes, "Rise of the Israelite Monarchy," *ZAW* 90 (1978), 13.

[11] Fokkelman, *Vow and Desire*, 362–367.

lution of both the second and third quests. This is an appropriate point for a climax in the narrative. Long has also responded to Mayes by saying that this climax comes early because the narrative is stressing the ignorance of Saul not of the reader.[12] This view is shared by Gordon who shows that it represents Saul's complete unawareness of what lies ahead of him.[13]

I suggest that a third effect of the initial anonymity of Samuel is that it marks the change from Samuel to Saul's leadership of Israel. Samuel has been rejected by Israel as their leader, and Saul is the new centrepiece of the narrative. This effect also results from the namelessness of the town where Saul meets Samuel[14] and the apparent timelessness of the narrative. These features give the narrative a sense of new beginning and dislocation from the preceding narrative where Samuel has had the leading role.

As the form critical theory of Birch demonstrates, the proposition that the sudden identification of Samuel is a literary device does not exclude the possibility of folk tale origins. However, literary studies of this feature draw our attention to its success in the final form of 1 Sam 9:1–14. It encourages a closer look at how the appearance of Samuel functions in the narrative and whether this device is integrated into its surrounds. In this paper, I will show that the entrance of Samuel in 9:14 is not a 'surprise' in isolation from the earlier part of the narrative but rather it is the climax of a period of suspense and anticipation.

3. THE ANATOMY OF SUSPENSE AND ITS APPLICATION IN 1 SAMUEL 9

As we look at how suspense is created in Samuel, it is helpful to examine the concept of suspense from wider literary and film studies. The first element necessary for suspense is an *initiating event* which is an event "with the potential to lead to a significant outcome."[15] Brewer describes the importance of the initiating event for a suspense discourse structure, using a famous example suggested by Hitchcock. He suggests that a possible suspense structure might follow the sequence:

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[12] V. Philips Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul: A Case for Literary and Theological Coherence* (Dissertation series [SBL]; Atlanta: Scholars Pr., 1989), 197.

[13] Robert P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel: A Commentary* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1986), 32, 113.

[14] Two other reasons for the anonymity of the city are firstly because the name Ramah would have made Samuel's identity too obvious or secondly, simply the name of the city was irrelevant to the narrative and so is not mentioned.

[15] William F. Brewer, "The Nature of Narrative Suspense and the Problem of Rereading," Peter Vorderer, Hans J. Wulff, and Mike Friedrichsen (eds), *Suspense: Conceptualisations, Theoretical Analyses, and Empirical Explorations* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996), 113.

1. *Alfred H. put a bomb under the table.*
2. *Three men came into the room.*
3. *The men began playing cards.*
4. *The men were talking about the weather.*
5. *The bomb under the table exploded killing the men.*[16]

It is the audience's knowledge that the bomb is under the table and that it might go off at any moment which generates suspense for the audience. This can be distinguished from a surprise discourse structure which would not contain the first event in the sequence. The bomb would go off without the audience having any prior knowledge of its existence.[17]

Birch, Fokkelman and Polzin all use the language of 'surprise' to describe the entrance of Samuel into the narrative in 1 Sam 9, but the differentiation above suggests that it functions rather as a climax to suspense. Chapter 8 is the initiating event which makes the reader aware that Samuel will shortly anoint a king. The opening of chapter 9 is separated by only eight words from God's command to Samuel to anoint a king in 8.22. This abrupt juxtaposition associates the new introduction with Samuel's unresolved commission in the minds of the audience, thus performing the same function as the first event in Brewer's sequence. In this case, the audience of 1 Sam 8–9 is left in a state of suspense as to whether the man in this new introduction will be the king whom Samuel must anoint. For an audience familiar with the name of Israel's first king, the mere mention of Saul in proximity to Israel's request for a king suggests that this journey may end in the crucial meeting with Samuel. However, even for an audience who does not yet know the conclusion to the story, the juxtaposition is so overt that this audience is also very likely to question whether Saul will bring resolution to God's command to Samuel. Thus Saul's meeting with Samuel in v 14 does not occur without warning but is foreshadowed by the initiating and unresolved event that Samuel is commanded to anoint a king.

Another common feature of suspense is that the outcome should not be entirely certain and that there should be two possible alternatives.[18] These two possible outcomes are generated by the initiating event. In the case of Samuel, the context of the story leads the reader not to ask, what significant event will take place at the end of Saul's journey, but rather, will Saul meet Samuel and be anointed the next king or will his journey have no significance. For

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., 112.

[18] Noël Carroll, "The Paradox of Suspense," Peter Vorderer, Hans J. Wulff, and Mike Friedrichsen (eds), *Suspense: Conceptualisations, Theoretical Analyses, and Empirical Explorations* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996), 75. He points out that this finite number of possible endings is what separates suspense from mystery.

most readers, these are the only two reasonable expectations. Carroll also theorizes that suspense is effective because one possible outcome is more desirable than the other. Commonly, the narrative appeals to the morality of the audience in order to align them with one particular outcome.[19] It is more difficult to see whether this aspect of suspense is functioning in 1 Samuel 9. Presumably the reader wants an event of significance to take place in order to further the story. Furthermore, a pious reader may be anxious to see God's insistent command to Samuel obeyed. The choice of Saul is also made desirable by his pedigree, handsome appearance and impressive height. In questions of morality, it is very difficult to make generalizing statements about what all readers will feel. However, these three factors are plausible causes for the audience to desire Saul's meeting with Samuel.

A technique for heightening suspense in a narrative is the incorporation of dangers which suggest the undesirable event or catastrophe might take place.[20] Whilst the language of 'dangers' is somewhat melodramatic for the narrative of 1 Sam 9, the concept can be generalized to any sort of obstacle or delay which stands in the way of the desired outcome. As we examine 1 Sam 9 more closely, we will recognize a number of such delays which threaten the desired outcome of Saul's meeting with Samuel.

A final characteristic of suspense I will mention here is that the macro structure of suspense in a narrative is often made up of a number of shorter episodes. These episodes consist of some sort of endangerment, followed by a resolution, which serves to increase the overall narrative suspense.[21] To some degree, the section of narrative in 1 Sam 9:1–14 is one such episode in the greater narrative of the institution of Israel's first king in 1 Samuel 8–12.[22]

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[19] Ibid., 76–7.

[20] Hans J. Wulff, "Suspense and the Influence of Cataphora on Viewers' Expectations," Peter Vorderer, Hans J. Wulff, and Mike Friedrichsen (eds), *Suspense: Conceptualisations, Theoretical Analyses, and Empirical Explorations* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996), 7.

[21] Brewer, "Narrative Suspense," 116, 19; Zolf Zillman, "The Psychology of Suspense in Dramatic Exposition," Peter Vorderer, Hans J. Wulff, and Mike Friedrichsen (eds), *Suspense: Conceptualisations, Theoretical Analyses, and Empirical Explorations* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996), 207.

[22] For a recent study of suspense in the whole pericope of 1 Sam 9:1–10:16, see Serge Frolov, "The Semiotics of Covert Action in 1 Samuel 9–10," *JSOT* 31 (2007), 429–50. Frolov argues that there is a discontinuity between 1 Sam 8 and 9 and that therefore the suspense in chapter 9 is tied to the secrecy of Saul's anointing in the context of conflict with the Philistines. Despite this basic difference in approaches, Frolov offers a helpful account of suspense in this section, although he does not deal with 9:1–14 in any detail.

However, this section can also be broken up into a number of even smaller episodes.

Drawing on this survey of some modern theories of suspense, I propose that the narrative of 1 Sam 9:1–14 is composed of a pattern of episodes of suspense which lead to the climax of Samuel's entrance into the narrative. Each of these episodes consists of three key components: 1. Anticipation is raised: similar to the function of the initiating event, the text will provide some suggestion that Saul is on his way to Samuel; 2. Delay or 'danger': a delay occurs in Saul's journey which suggests it may not lead to Samuel after all; and 3. Resolution: the delay is resolved or the obstacle removed and Saul moves one step closer to his meeting with Samuel.

4. EPISODES OF SUSPENSE IN 1 SAM 9:1–14

I will identify four episodes of suspense in 9:1–14, two of which contain the verses of particular interest in this paper. First however, let us examine the two other episodes to illustrate how such episodes function. The first episode of suspense takes place in 9:1–2. A suggestion of the fate of Saul is established with the introduction of his father in v 1 (ויהי־איש מבן ימין "there was a man of Benjamin"). I have already demonstrated the way in which this statement follows the initiating event of chapter 8 to generate anticipation. There is then a delay for the expectation of the audience in v 1b when the name of this man is introduced ושמו קיש ("and his name was Kish") – it is not the expected name of a king of Israel. The delay is drawn out by an extensive list of ancestors which is further lengthened by the unnecessary repetition of the tribe of Benjamin מבן ימין and בן־איש ימיני.[23] Finally, the delay is resolved in v 2 when Saul's familiar name is revealed. Here we observe the three components of the episode of suspense: anticipation, delay and a resolution which causes the audience to progress in their anticipation of the climax ahead.

Another episode of suspense occurs in vv 5b–8. Once again, the episode begins in v 6 with a suggestion that Saul's journey will result in a meeting with Samuel. The servant suggests to Saul that they visit a certain man of God and his description of the seer כל אשר ידבר בוא יבוא ("everything he says, indeed it comes to pass") is similar to the statement about Samuel in 1 Sam 3:19

[23] The list is further lengthened by the superfluity of both בן ("son") and איש ("man") in the phrase בן־איש ימיני. McCarter, *I Samuel*, 167, emends בן־איש ימיני to איש ימיני based on LXX^{L}. Scholars have also attempted to lessen the redundancy of meaning caused by the repetition of both phrases by emending מבן ימין to מגבעת בן ימין ("from Gibeah of Benjamin"). This is followed in McCarter, *I Samuel*, 167, and Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel*, 75. Despite the good logical sense of these emendations, we note here the literary value of these phrases in their final form.

ולא־הפיל מכל־דבריו ארצה ("and none of his words fell to the ground").[24] Saul himself creates a delay by objecting that he has no present to offer the seer. His use of נביא in 9:7 has provoked extensive discussion because it is a homonym for both "we bring" and the meaning "prophet", although the syntax here does not allow any ambiguity.[25] This wordplay is a subtle intimation of the man of God's identity as the prophet Samuel, as Eslinger writes, "prodding the reader on in hope of an authoritative identification".[26] This additional information suggesting that the man of God will be Samuel heightens the momentary frustration caused by the obstacle of no gift. However, the delay is short lived as the servant proffers a solution in v 8, הנה נמצא בידי רבע שקל כסף ("Behold, a quarter of a shekel of silver is found in my hand"). The unusual passive construction used in this simple statement subtly suggests that the silver has appeared through divine sovereignty. [27] The audience's anticipation that Saul's meeting with Samuel will take place, is both confirmed and teasingly delayed in this episode.

5. PLACE NAMES IN VV 4–5

Now that we have analyzed how these two episodes of suspense function in the narrative, we will turn to the remaining episodes in vv 3–5a and vv 9–14 which each include verses we wish to understand better in their final form. The first anomalous feature we shall examine is the list of place names where Saul visits in vv 4–5. Many scholars have attempted to locate these place names but no consensus has yet been reached. "The hill country of Ephraim" tends to be considered a summarizing statement of Saul's journey and as the destination is ultimately the land of Zuph, deduced from 1 Sam 1:1 to be also in the hill country of Ephraim, it follows that all of the place names mentioned should be located in this area. The problem therefore lies with the place name 'Benjamin'. Septuagint versions offer alternative readings, *iabein* or *iakein* but these

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[24] Eslinger, *Kingship of God*, 291.

[25] It has been suggested that Saul's use of the word נביא ("we will bring") as the 1st plural imperfect of בוא is part of a folk etymology in vv9aβ–10a for the word נביא meaning 'prophet' (John B. Curtis, "A Folk Etymology of *nabi*," *VT* 29 [1979], 491–93). In response, Shemuel Shaviv, "*Nabi* and *nagid* in 1 Samuel 9:1–10:16," *VT* 34 (1984), 108–13, has suggested it is merely a wordplay, a view also held by Martin Buber, "Die Erzählung von Sauls Königswahl," *VT* 6 (1956), 126; Fokkelman, *Vow and Desire*, 383; and Eslinger, *Kingship of God*, 294–95.

[26] Eslinger, *Kingship of God*, 294.

[27] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 185; Eslinger, *Kingship of God*, 295. Furthermore, the occurrence of the verb מצא ("to find") in this verse recalls its earlier repeated use in 9:4 to describe Saul's failed attempt to find his donkeys. Thus the situation where Saul cannot find his donkeys but instead finds a piece of silver as a gift for the seer indicates the providential redirection of his journey.

are ambiguous and it is generally accepted that the original version is still a matter of conjecture. A plausible emendation to the MT is from **ימיני** ('Yemini'=Benjamin) to **ימני**('Yimni') without the medial *yod*. It is speculated that Yimni is the name of a place located in the Ephraim hills. Two reasons have been suggested for how the text may have come to read Benjamin rather than Yimni. McCarter proposes that the *yod* was added because of confusion between Ephraimite Ramah, the place from which Samuel came from according to 1 Samuel 1, and Benjaminite Ramah, which was a town by the same name. Thus the text came to associate Benjaminite Ramah with Samuel and the land of Benjamin made its way into this text.[28] Diana Edelman suggests that it happened at a time when the locality of Yimni had been forgotten and so the *yod* was added to make the place name recognizable.[29] Both of these explanations give plausible accounts for the presence of the place name Benjamin in the text and the emendation or LXX versions provide a starting point preferable to the MT for locating Saul's geographical route.

Implicit in this emendation is the assumption that the place names must constitute a logical route for Saul to have followed in his search for his donkeys. However, there is evidence to suggest that the MT final form of the place names can be read more successfully for their literary and rhetorical effect. The message of the verses is that Saul searched high and low and still could not find his donkeys. One can certainly imagine the young and naive Saul crisscrossing the countryside without any success, rather than following a methodical route.[30] A rhetorical reading is also supported by the choice of place names: the first and last are both tribal names and the second and third, שלשה 'Shalishah' and שעלים 'Shaalim', assonate not only with each other but, incidentally, with the names of Saul (שאול) and Samuel (שמואל).[31]

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[28] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 174–5.

[29] Diana Edelman, "Saul's Journey through Mt. Ephraim and Samuel's Ramah (1 Sam. 9:4–5; 10:2–5)," *ZDPV* 104 (1988), 49, 53.

[30] This view is shared in Frolov, "Semiotics," 435, who comments in n. 10 that despite the fact most reconstructions of Saul's journey represent the route as a line, it makes sense that Saul combed one area after another such that it took him three days to reach a city probably only a dozen miles away (as reported in 9:20).

[31] Observed by Fokkelman, *Vow and Desire*, 377. The pun on Saul's name with the place names Shalishah and Shaalim was earlier highlighted in Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991), 145. A further rhetorical function may therefore be that these place names continue the wordplay on the root שאל ("to ask") which is found throughout the narrative of Saul and Samuel. The significance of this wordplay is examined in Moshe Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel: A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies and Parallels* (Ramat-Gan: Revivim, 1985), 72–75.

Furthermore, these place names perform an important function as a part of the episode of suspense in vv 3–5a. First we have a build-up of anticipation of the endpoint of Saul's journey: Saul travels through the hill country of Ephraim. The audience will immediately recognize this as the homeland of Samuel and so a suspicion is aroused that a meeting could occur. It was mentioned above that "the hill country of Ephraim" is generally thought to be a summary statement of the whole journey, yet the grammar of the verses does not require that this is so. This place name is listed within a pattern of *wayyiqtols*, where the verb ויעבר ("and he passed through") is repeated[32] to introduce each place name. This suggests that each of the places were visited in sequence and so the first, the hill country of Ephraim, is not naturally read as a summarizing statement.

Following this alternative interpretation, the delay in the episode follows chronologically after this arousal of anticipation. Saul travels to two other places which are not connected with Samuel, Shalishah and Shaalim. This delay is then heightened by the report that Saul is back in the land of Benjamin where he started! Momentarily it seems that Saul's journey will not lead to Samuel after all. Finally, in v 5a there is the resolution of delay and a heightening of anticipation: Saul and his servant come to the land of Zuph, a location named after an ancestor of Samuel. The momentary tension is resolved and the anticipation of the audience is increased. In this way, the reading 'Benjamin' rewards an audience who eagerly anticipate the future of the young man Saul, rather than one which is interested in geographical precision.

6. THE ASIDE OF VERSE 9

The second problematic verse we will examine is v 9. It reads: "Formerly in Israel, anyone who went to inquire of God would say, 'Come let us go to the seer: for the one who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer'". Two issues have been raised in connection with this verse. First, it appears to have been inserted in an inappropriate position. The term ראה "seer" is not introduced into the narrative until v 11, only the term "man of God" has been used up to this point. This consideration would suggest that the aside of v 9 would fall more naturally between v 11 and v 12.[33] On the other hand, if the aside was placed between vv 11 and 12, it would interrupt Saul's interaction with the young women at the well. It would disrupt the narrative mid conversation, separating a question and its answer. Therefore, although there are no textual witnesses for this change, McCarter proposes that the aside

[32] With variation to the plural form ויעבר in conjunction with the place name Shaalim.

[33] As suggested by Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel,* 113.

in v 9 be moved between vv 10 and 11 to minimize the disruption to the story.[34]

Verse 9 has also featured in discussions about the folk origins of sections of the chapter. It has been proposed that the aside was inserted into the text in order to create a bridge between the older folktale, where the term 'seer' was used, and the later rewriting where the prophet Samuel is introduced.[35] In other words, it is a deuteronomistic attempt to harmonize the two types of material.

Let us now reexamine v 9 in the context of a final episode of suspense which spans from vv 9 to 14. As we have already seen, the previous episode of suspense culminated in v 8 when the servant offered a solution to the problem of a lack of gift for the man of God. Therefore, according to this structure, this is in fact the position of minimal disruption. It lies immediately after the close of the previous episode in v 8 and it introduces the information necessary for the reader to understand the next episode, before the action of the episode is properly begun.

Moreover, the aside itself contributes towards the build-up of anticipation at the beginning of the next episode of suspense. In the same way that the homonym **נביא** was subtly inserted into v 7, **נביא** ("prophet") is now mentioned in this aside as an unmistakable allusion to Samuel. In combination with v 10, a chain of equations is made between the prophet and the man of God mentioned frequently up to this point. Firstly, **נביא** ("prophet") and **ראה** ("seer") are equated explicitly in v 9. Then, in a more subtle way, **ראה** ("seer") and **איש האלהים** ("man of God") are equated in v 10. Although the word **ראה** is not used in v 10a, the phrase **לכה נלכה** ("come, let us go") strongly echoes the more extended statement in v 9, **לכו ונלכה עד־הראה** ("come and let us go to the seer"). The strong similarity implies to the reader that **לכה נלכה** ("come, let us go") is a shorthand repetition of the previous verse and that it therefore describes the same situation of going to a seer. The final link in the chain is made in v 10b where a narrative explanation repeats the information given in Saul's direct speech in v 10a. Where the word **ראה** ("seer") is implied in v 10a, it is now replaced with the term **איש האלהים** ("man of God"), generating the effect for the reader that they are synonymous terms. Indeed, the success of this subtle chain of equation causes many readers not to notice at first that the aside comes many verses before the use of the term **ראה** ("seer") in the story. Finally, a direct connection between the man of God and Samuel is also made in v10b. The use of the phrase **וילכו אל־העיר** ("and they went to the city") in this verse echoes Samuel's command in 1 Sam 8:22 **לכו איש לעירו** ("Go every man to his city"), thus recalling this initiating event and further

[34] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 169.

[35] Ibid., 177; Terry L. Fenton, "Deuteronomistic Advocacy of the *nabi*: 1 Samuel IX 9 and Questions of Israelite Prophecy," *VT* 47 (1997), 27.

alluding to Samuel. In these ways vv 9–10 taken together not only build anticipation that Saul and his servant are finally on their way to the man of God, but they further prepare the reader for the identification of the man of God as the prophet Samuel.

The familiar pattern for the episode of suspense continues with a delay in vv 11–13. The scene is remarkably detailed and lengthy for biblical narrative, which serves to slow down the action. There is initial hope that Saul has reached his destination in the young women's answer in v 12. He asks if the seer is there and they reply in one succinct word יש ("he is!"). But these hopes are delayed by their extended explanation of Samuel's movements up toward the high place and the details of the requirement for him to bless the sacrifice before the people begin to eat.[36] In particular, their exhortation, מהר ("hurry") adds an element of danger that Saul may be momentarily too late to find Samuel. As the lengthiest episode, it is fitting that rather than ending in an increase of anticipation, it concludes with the 'bang' that ends the suspense. Samuel himself appears in v 14 and this period of suspense is now abated.

7. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have examined the structures and methods of suspense which build towards the identification of Samuel as the anonymous seer in 1 Sam 9:1–14. This small section of narrative takes the audience on a journey through four episodes of suspense, drawing successively closer to the climax. In turn, each episode has three stages: anticipation, delay and resolution, which tease and engage the audience as they are introduced to Israel's first king.

Through the identification of this structure of suspense, we have been able to understand a number of anomalous features in this narrative in their final form. Although the geography of v 4 may be nonsensical, it effectively creates an image of Saul criss-crossing the country, only to conclude his journey in the place where he started. His circular journey provides a suspenseful moment of delay and is therefore an important component of an episode of suspense. The positioning of the aside in v 9, whilst unusual in some respects, is in a place of least disruption for the structure of the chapter's episodes of suspense. Furthermore, it performs the function of building up anticipation before the next delay takes place. Therefore, although textual or historical critical methods are needed to understand many verses in the Hebrew

[36] See Gary A. Rendsburg, "Confused Language as a Deliberate Literary Device in Biblical Hebrew Narrative," *JHS* 2 (1999), article 6, pp. 2–3, for a discussion of how the confused speech of the women conveys their excitement about the young man before them. One can certainly imagine Saul being delayed as he tries to discern an answer from this group of excited women.

Bible as we have received them, the final forms of these two verses are demonstrated to hold a literary integrity of their own.

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