



Cristiano D'Angelo

Davide e Mical: Studio sulla redazione e la teologia di 1-2 Samuele

Studi e Ricerche

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The book under review is the published version of a dissertation defended by Cristiano D'Angelo in 2017. The goal of the work is to analyze the text of the books of Samuel, trying to reconstruct their “prehistory,” that is, the different stages of composition of the text, in order to underline the different theological ideas. Indeed, D'Angelo deals with both historical-critical and narrative analysis. He focuses on the Michal story because it has been used as a “vantage point of view” of David's monarchy.

The book is divided into two parts: the first part (17–222) presents the historical-critical analysis of the Michal stories and is divided into seven chapters; the second part (225–317), which offers a narrative analysis of these stories, contains five chapters. The volume also contains two appendices: the first is a summary of 1 and 2 Samuel's “base text” and additions to it; the second contains a hypothesis of dating traditions (see further below). An extensive bibliography (337–57) closes the book.

The first part explores in detail the relationship among the Michal stories. D'Angelo summarizes his search results as follows (219): (1) the Michal stories are not attributable to one unitary tradition; (2) 2 Sam 3:12–16, 19–21 (Michal's return to David) presupposes 1 Sam 18:17–27 + 1 Sam 19:11–17 but does not depend on the same source; (3) base texts on Saul and David in 1 Sam 16:14–31:13 and on conquest of the kingdom in 2 Sam 2:1–5:5 do not depend on the same editorial layer; D'Angelo suggests that the base text in 1 Sam 16:14–31:13 is an addition in order to fill the void

between the Saul stories and David's throne conquest; (4) 1 Sam 18:17–27 + 1 Sam 19:11–17 contains ancient traditions and is independent of 1 Sam 18–31; (5) the Michal story in 2 Sam 3 (as 1 Sam 18–19) seems not to be an addition but was written by the author of the base text in 2 Sam 2:1–5:5; (6) no parallel source to base texts in 1 Sam 16:14–31:13 and 2 Sam 2:1–5:5 existed, so material not attributable to those texts must be considered secondary; (7) 2 Sam 6:16, 20–23a (Michal despises David) cannot be part of the same source of 1 Sam 18–19 and 2 Sam 3; this text was written for a different theological purpose; (8) 2 Sam 21:1, 2a, 3–10, 13b, 14b (last mention of Michal) seems to be independent and later than other stories about Michal; (9) thus a written tradition did exist about David and Saul relationship (1 Sam 18:17–27 + 19:11–17), while 2 Sam 6:16, 20–23 is an addition that connects different narrative blocks, and 2 Sam 21:1, 2a, 3–10, 13b, 14b is an addition as well, or a preexistent history, about David's innocence and the end of Saul's offspring.

The second part of the book deals with the narrative analysis of Michal stories. According to D'Angelo, the additions to the base text decrease the "dramatic pathos" of the history but enlarge the complexity of the characters. The message of the final text accentuates the personal blame and the judgment on Saul but saves his kingdom and his family. The final text presents the characters in all their psychological complexity.

About the meaning of the Michal stories, the base text seeks offer a reason for the marriage between David (and his kingdom) and Michal. The additions are not alternative stories but "supplements" with multiple purposes, such as to connect the Saul and David stories in 1 Samuel, to create a bridge between the story of David's succession to the throne and the story of Solomon, to present David's rule as according to the will of God, and to justify Abner's death and David's innocence from blood guilt.

In conclusion, 1 Sam 18:17–27 + 19:11–17 is the oldest tradition on Michal and lacks the reference to the will of God for David becoming king. In the base text, 1 Sam 16:14–1 Sam 31, David has God on his side, is loved by Michal, is son in law of the king, and is recognized as future king. Here Michal is less important as a link between Israel and David but becomes a symbol of Israel who wants David as king. This idealization process goes on in the final text (1 Sam 18–31), after additions to the base text: Michal is even less important but is more and more the image of Israel, in parallel with the idea of divine necessity of the monarchy. Michal is the symbol of Israel who comes back to David but denounces the weakness of the monarchy subject to military violence and power that originated in circles linked to Saul.

In appendix B, D'Angelo dates these traditions as follows: the original story of Merab and Michal (1 Sam 18:17–27 + 19:11–17) is from the eighth century, before the Deuteronomistic reform; the base text (2 Sam 2:1–5:5; 16:14–31:13) was during Joash's reign over Judah (835–796), because Joash's anointment recalls that of David in 2 Sam 5:3, or in any case before Josiah's reform, as the use of teraphim is permitted; the final text in 1 Sam 18–31:13 is dated to Josiah's reign, while the

final text in 2 Sam 2:1–5:5 is postexilic, around 538–515; 2 Sam 6:16, 20–23 is dated in to the fifth century, 2 Sam 21:1–14 between the fifth and fourth centuries.

The book is interesting and offers many insights. The research is conducted in a thorough way. D'Angelo presents a wide range of interpretations, and the literature consulted reflects depth and current scholarship. The greatest merit of D'Angelo is to join a text-critical method to narrative analysis, offering to the Italian reader a substantial study on the books of Samuel and a reflection on their composition. D'Angelo deals with textual reflections as well, but—and this is the only limit one can find—he does not consult the Dead Sea Scrolls witness, although parts of these chapters are attested in Qumran fragments. This is not the place to discuss aspects as, for example, the problems given by his dating, but Italian scholars will find in this book insight for further research and a deep discussion on several aspects of the books of Samuel.