THE FATE OF KING DAVID

THE PAST AND PRESENT OF A BIBLICAL ICON

EDITED BY
TOD LINAFELT,
TIMOTHY BEAL,
AND CLAUDIA V. CAMP

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary.* Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3d ed. Princeton, 1969
ANEP	*The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament*. Edited by J. B. Pritchard. Princeton, 1954
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford, 1907
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BWANT	*Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur *ZAW*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
GKC	Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar. Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2d. ed. Oxford, 1910
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Edited by L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner and J. J. Stamm. Translated by M. E. J. Richardson et al. 4 vols. Leiden, 1994–99
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*: Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
KBL	Koehler, L., and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros*. 2d ed. Leiden, 1958
KJV	King James Version
KTU	*Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit*. Edited by M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. AOAT 24/1. Neukirchen–Vluyn, 1976. 2d enlarged ed. of *KTU: The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places*. Edited by M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. Münster, 1995 (= *CTU*)
LXX	Septuagint

MT	Masoretic Text
NAB	New American Bible
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIV	New International Version
NJPS	New Jewsish Publication Society Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Old Testament Studies
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SBTS	Sources for Biblical and Theological Study
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	*Vetus Testamentum*, Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

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Introduction: On David and David

With the exception of Jesus, there is surely no more familiar biblical figure than King David. Within the Hebrew Bible, his story is central, formative not only in the books of Samuel and Kings, but also in Chronicles, Ruth, and many of the Psalms, which are often contextualized as prayers uttered by David at certain fraught moments in his life. Indeed, David's story also helped shape, in no small way, the gospel conceptions of Jesus, who is presented as his messianic descendent.

King David's post-biblical afterlives have been even grander than his biblical ones. He has been by far the most celebrated subject of the West's most celebrated Renaissance artists, from Donatello and Michelangelo to Caravaggio and Rembrandt. And his stories have been a favorite subject of moral lessons, from the hundreds of popular "character Bibles" of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the thousands of flannel boards and coloring books in Sunday school classes today. No doubt this is why President Bill Clinton, in apologizing publicly for his affair with Monica Lewinsky, could do no better than to invoke David, albeit indirectly, by quoting Ps 51, traditionally understood to be David's confession for his "affair" with Bathsheba. David is the cultural icon of a complexly compelling, a broken but redeemed, masculine godliness. Of course, that is just one of the many ways to read him in the biblical text.

Among biblical scholars, there is surely no more familiar or influential figure in Davidic studies than David M. Gunn. In the course of his academic career, Gunn has been at the forefront of three major revolutions in biblical studies, and David has been central to his work in each one of them. The first was narrative criticism and biblical narratology, which began in the late 1970s and dominated the field for the next two decades. The influence of David Gunn's early articles and his first two books, *The Story of King David* (1978) and *The Fate of King Saul* (1980), on that movement can hardly be exaggerated.[1] In a field dominated by

1. David M. Gunn, *The Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation* (JSOTSup 6; Sheffield: JSOT, 1978); and *The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation*

the disciplines of form-, source-, and redaction-criticism, Gunn modeled a new kind of scholarship, as rigorous in its pursuit of new questions, treating biblical narratives neither as the sedimentary remains of oral traditions nor as archives for reconstructing history but rather as aesthetic works crafted to generate meaning. Biblical scholarship, which had focused unrelentingly on the world behind the text, had to make room for a mode of interpretation that took seriously the literary world of the text itself, as well as the world of readers in front of the text. The literary representations of David and others were front and center; narrative contexts and readers' contexts were equally important to interpretation as historical contexts.

The second revolution in which David Gunn's David played a major role was the rise of feminist criticism and gender theory in the 1980s and early 1990s. Two books, both co-authored with Danna Nolan Fewell, were especially influential: *Compromising Redemption* (1990), a feminist literary critical reading of the book of Ruth, the story of David's great grandmother; and *Gender, Power, and Promise: The Subject of the Bible's First Story* (1993), a close reading of Genesis through 2 Kings.[2] Each brought post-structuralist, deconstructive criticism to bear on the constructions of subjectivity in biblical narrative, revealing how sexual and ethnic identity in these stories is unstable and open to subversion. The chapter on David in *Gender, Power, and Promise* ("In the Shadow of the King") was especially significant for its attention to the construction of masculinity and male sexuality in the character of David vis-à-vis other women and men, especially Jonathan—themes Gunn also explored

of a Biblical Story (JSOTSup 14; Sheffield: JSOT, 1980). See also some of the genealogies of these books in the following groundbreaking articles: "Narrative Patterns and Oral Tradition in Judges and Samuel," *VT* 24 (1974): 286–317; "The 'Battle Report': Oral or Scribal Convention?," *JBL* 93 (1974): 513–18; "David and the Gift of the Kingdom," in *Classical Hebrew Narrative* (ed. Robert C. Culley; Semeia 3; Atlanta: Scholars, 1975), 14–45; "Deutero-Isaiah and the Flood," *JBL* 94 (1975): 493–508; "Traditional Composition in the 'Succession Narrative,'" *VT* 26 (1976): 214–29; "From Jerusalem to the Jordan and Back: Symmetry in 2 Samuel XV–XX," *VT* 30 (1980): 109–13; and "A Man Given Over to Trouble: The Story of King Saul," in *Images of Man and God: Old Testament Short Stories in Literary Focus* (ed. Burke O. Long; Bible and Literature 1; Sheffield: Almond, 1981), 89–112, 121.

2. Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, *Compromising Redemption: Relating Characters in the Book of Ruth* (Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Westminster John Knox, 1990); and *Gender, Power, and Promise: The Subject of the Bible's First Story* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993); see also David M. Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford Bible Series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

independently in a series of scholarly papers and articles.[3] (Perhaps we should not be surprised that the character Michal, accorded brief but strong subjectivity herself, is the touchstone for several of the essays in this volume, given her relationship both to Saul, as daughter, and to David, as wife.)

The third revolution, currently underway, is the rise of cultural studies and reception history, that is, the exploration of the myriad ways that biblical narratives, images, characters, and even the idea of the Bible itself is figured and refigured in particular cultural contexts. Rather than focusing exclusively on the biblical text in itself, as a literary object, new approaches are exploring the afterlives of this book in literature, music, visual culture, political discourse, and religious communities. Gunn's monumental commentary on Judges is a model for this emerging approach.[4] Equally if not more significant, in our opinion, is his ongoing research and writing on the cultural history of David, especially vis-à-vis Renaissance art and the construction of masculine sexuality in the modern West.[5]

3. Most significantly, "Goliath's Head: Text, Image, and the Subversion of Gender," presented to the Constructs of Ancient History and Religion Group of the SBL, Washington, D.C., 1993; and "Bathsheba Goes Bathing in Hollywood: Words, Images, and Social Locations," in *Biblical Glamour and Hollywood Glitz* (ed. Alice Bach; Semeia 74; Atlanta: Scholars, 1996), 75–101 (first presented in 1994 at the annual meeting of the SBL). See also Gunn's earlier articles and papers that were formative for *Gender, Power, and Promise*: "In Security: The David of Biblical Narrative," in *Signs and Wonders: Biblical Texts in Literary Focus* (ed. J. Cheryl Exum; Semeia Studies; Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 133–51; "A Fearful Dominion: Biblical Constructions of Homosexuality," presented to the Reading, Rhetoric, and the Hebrew Bible Section of the SBL, Kansas City, 1991; and "Shifting the Blame: The Character of God in the Garden," presented to the Reading, Rhetoric, and the Hebrew Bible Section of the SBL, San Francisco, 1992.

4. David M. Gunn, *Judges* (Blackwell Bible Commentaries; Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).

5. Gunn's research and writing on the cultural history of David has been underway for more than two decades. Articles appearing along the way include: "Goliath's Head: Text, Image, and the Subversion of Gender"; "Interpreting Decapitation: The Bible, Donatello's 'David,' and a Question of Gender," keynote lecture at the Eastern Great Lakes Bible Society, Clinton, Ohio, 1994; "Entertainment, Ideology, and the Reception of 'History' ": "David's Jerusalem' as a Question of Space," in *"A Wise and Discerning Mind": Essays in Honor of Burke O. Long* (ed. Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Culley; Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2000), 153–61; "Covering David: Michelangelo's David from the Piazza della Signoria to My Refrigerator Door," in *"Imagining" Biblical Worlds: Spatial, Social and Historical Constructs in Honor of James W. Flanagan* (ed. David M. Gunn and Paula M. McNutt; JSOTSup 359; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 139–70.

David Gunn's life journey has been that of a wanderer, often a resident alien; indeed, he has friends who have joked about inviting a homeless man to dinner! Born in Aotearoa New Zealand (the son of a socialist Protestant minister), he moved with his family to Australia at age 13. He received a B.A. (Hon) from Melbourne University in English literature and Greek, and then an M.A. in classics, before returning to New Zealand for a B.D. from the University of Otago. David then went to England to pursue his Ph.D. (at Newcastle-upon-Tyne) and eventually to teach (at Sheffield University). He came in 1984 to the U.S., first to Georgia (Columbia Theological Seminary) and finally to Texas (Texas Christian University), where he became a citizen (of the U.S., not Texas, though Texans sometimes reverse the order!) in 2008, just in time to vote for Barack Obama. A life-long student of politics, David's global, de-centered life has produced not just de-centering readings, but also politicized ones, and the geographically wide-reaching intellectual tentacles of reception history have provided grist for his mill. In particular, his interest in how people come to identify with a land they may or may not at the moment possess led him to investigate the appropriation of the Joshua story by the Maori leader Te Kooti, who fought the British (Pakeha) settlers in Aotearoa.[6] Similarly, returning once more to the David traditions, he considered how the motif of "yearning for Jerusalem" is used toward political ends on the Israel Foreign Ministry homepage.[7]

Clearly, then, the biblical David's life story and the biblical scholar David Gunn's *curriculum vitae* ("course of life") are intertwined. Few if any biblical scholars can think of one without the other.

A word is in order about how this volume came to take the shape it did, and about the editors' hopes for it. *Festschriften* are notorious for being sprawling, conceptually somewhat incoherent tomes, typically full of valuable individual essays, but, well, hard to know where to shelve. In the course of many long discussions, the editors of the present volume realized that we wanted to honor not simply the intellectual contributions of our friend and colleague David Gunn, but also something of his modest, user-friendly temperament and, especially, the way he has given so lavishly of his time and energy in shaping the field and promoting the

6. "Colonialism and the Vagaries of Scripture: Te Kooti in Canaan (A Story of Bible and Dispossession in Aotearoa/New Zealand)," in *God in the Fray: A Tribute to Walter Brueggemann* (ed. Tod Linafelt and Timothy K. Beal; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 127–42.

7. "Yearning for Jerusalem: Reading Myth on the Web," in *The Labour of Reading: Desire, Alienation, and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Fiona Black, Roland Boer, and Erin Runions; Semeia Studies; Atlanta: Scholars, 1999), 123–40.

work of others, both through personal relationships and a series of editorial projects. Our sense of David as a person led us, first, to envision a more user-friendly sort of *Festschrift*, one that strove for a relatively high degree of thematic coherence and that had potential for classroom use, as well as for research libraries. We must offer, then, more than the usual measure of thanks to the contributors, who dropped whatever else they were doing to write on King David and who tried to write with a wide audience in mind.

David's long-standing work as an editor also comes happily into view in this publication. Among his editorial initiatives have been the Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation series (Westminster John Knox, with Danna Nolan Fewell), the Biblical Limits series (Routledge, with Danna and Gary Phillips), and, with David Clines and Philip Davies, the mother of all Hebrew Bible publishing endeavors, the *Journal for the Old Testament* Supplement Series. The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies, our present venue, stands as successor to the JSOT Supplement Series. In deference to its origins, the re-christened series kept (on David's plea) the old Assyrian lion logo and continued numbering the volumes without a break. As good fortune would have it, volume number 500 (!) in the series came open as this book was in conception, and the press reserved it to honor David, as one of the founding editors. For this we thank the editors at T&T Clark/Continuum.

* * *

One of the pleasures of editing a volume of this nature is the serendipitous process of organizing and thematizing the scholarly gifts that the friends of the honoree bring forward as offerings. Thus the editors offer our readers the following:

In Part I of the book, "Relating to David," authors have deployed a wide range of literary-critical methods to demonstrate how the character of David in 2 Samuel unfolds—or can be unfolded—from his relationships with other characters in the tale. Close reading, with an eye to larger literary patterns, is evident in Jan Quesada's study ("King David and Tidings of Death: 'Character Response' Criticism") of the seven episodes—repetition remarkable enough to count as a type scene in her estimation—in which David is brought news of someone's death. In all seven scenes, the narrative closely attends to David's behavior in response to the grim news. By considering these often dramatic and always significant moments in 2 Samuel's portrait of David, readers can gain fresh insight into the book's complex vision of "the Lord's anointed," who is, above all, a survivor.

Like Quesada, Francis Landy, in "David and Ittai," also attends to the nuances of David's reactions to fraught encounters with other characters—in this case, Ittai, the commander of David's Gathite mercenaries, and Zadok the priest, who brings the Ark of the Covenant with him. Each of these minor characters proposes to accompany David as he flees from Jerusalem during the revolt of his son Absalom, and David turns each back. Both of the incidents exemplify the dialectic between inside and outside and evoke the sense of going home into exile, the future remembered as past. Both exhibit David's rhetorical mastery, his ability, despite his weakness, to manipulate feelings and loyalties; and both evoke a tangle of symbolic, intertextual, and ethnic complexities. With David Gunn, Landy rejects the simple classification of the narrative as pro- or anti-Davidic, and also brings into view the chosen king's complicated relationship with YHWH.

The next three essays in this section continue to "read relationships," but now with the particular interest in gender that has been such a hallmark of David Gunn's career. Mary Shields, in "A Feast Fit for a King: Food and Drink in the Abigail Story," examines one example of David's frequently depicted relationships with women, the story of Abigail in 1 Sam 25. Shields' focus on the details of food and drink in the story leads her to another interpretive move, an intertextual comparison of Abigail with Woman Wisdom in Proverbs[8]—who claims "by me, kings reign!" (Prov 8:15)—arguing that the wise Abigail similarly enables the transition of David, the erstwhile guerilla warrior, to the kingship.

But King David's relationships are often fraught with ambiguity, calling on readerly acts of imagination to fill in gaps in the Bible's typically spare narrative style. Readers seeking to make sense of the motivation of characters, for example, often construct their own scenarios to rationalize characters' underdrawn relationships and actions. Inhibited both by a Protestant view of the Bible's own inherent truth and the evidential norms of the Western interpretive tradition, this readerly activity often takes place quite unconsciously. In contrast, traditional Jewish midrashic interpreters freely added imaginative details to the text, in effect, interpreting through story-telling itself. Adopting this mode, David Penchansky's "Four Vignettes from the Life of David: Recollections of the Royal Court" weaves a larger tapestry out of the hints of characterization in several problematic texts relating to King David,

8. For an example of characterizing by intertextual reading in David Gunn's work, see "Samson of Sorrows: An Isaianic Gloss on Judges 13–16," in *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Danna Nolan Fewell; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 225–53.

Michal, and Jonathan. The Bible deals with the marriage of Saul's daughter Michal and her second husband Paltiel, for example, in two verses (1 Sam 25:44 and 2 Sam 3:16)—its inauspicious beginning as the result of David's flight from Saul and its poignant ending in Paltiel's tears, as Michal is returned to her victorious first husband. Penchansky fills in the missing middle of the relationship, highlighting the way the two disempowered characters rise (or not) to their fates. David's charisma and physical attractiveness are evident in a vignette that also gives subjectivity to one of the slave women who watched him dance before the Ark, while his capacity for both connection and ruthlessness come through in his "own" recollections about his relationship with Jonathan.

While textual gaps present one sort of problem to the interpreter of biblical narrative, yet another arises with the need to make sense of odd, seemingly superfluous, textual details. One of David Gunn's favorite thought experiments is to imagine a modern painting, at first glance almost entirely blue, but also containing, on closer inspection, a few very small red dots. What then is the painting "about"? Is it a painting about blue? Or is it a painting about the red dots? How will a viewer construct—because it will indeed be the viewer's construction—the relationship between the two?[9] And what does this construction say *about the viewer* as well as about the work? Randall C. Bailey, in "Reading Backwards: A Narrative Technique for the Queering of David, Saul, and Samuel," calls dramatic attention to the way in which readers' ideological perspectives predetermine what they will make of a text's details, indeed, how they will translate the text in the first place. Ironically, he argues, "while feminist hermeneutics has had to explore silences in the text and fill in gaps to reclaim the lives of women, queer male readings have only to do close readings of the text. The problem is that we have all been trained to read along with the canons of heteronormativity." Moving past previous arguments for a homoerotic relationship between David and Saul's son, Jonathan, Bailey uncovers "cover up translations" that deflect homosexual possibilities for the biblical characters. Given the clearly sexual meaning of the phrase "delight in" in the book of Esther, for example, why would we not admit to that possibility not only for Jonathan's, but also for Saul's, feelings for David? Through the strategy of "reading backwards," from (narratively) later texts to earlier

9. See, for example, the study of Lot's wife in Fewell and Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise*, 56–67, and also Gunn's attention to the variant details of Goliath's death in "What Does the Bible Say? A Question of Text and Canon," in *Reading Bibles, Writing Bodies: Identity and the Book* (ed. Timothy K. Beal and David M. Gunn; London: Routledge, 1996), 242–61.

ones, Bailey queers a wider range of David's relationships, with Saul and Samuel as well as with Jonathan.

We note, then, the range of literary methodologies in which David Gunn's pioneering work in literary criticism has borne fruit: through formalizing (as type-scene) or thematizing (as wisdom) their texts, Quesada and Shields allow textual details to collect around their respective foci, and thus build meaning from them. Penchansky, on the other hand, by noticing textual gaps, finds spaces to pour possible meanings into the narrative, while Bailey fixates on repeated but fleeting textual details, forcing readers to notice how our preconceptions determine from what our eyes will flee. Landy, in yet another narratological move, lets sometimes similar (but never identical) and sometimes discordant textual details bump up against each other, and observes some of their trajectories, without settling on a single or centered reading. Landy's analysis of the Zadok episode evokes, among other things, a poetic and ritual sensibility, including psalmic metaphors. It thus provides a transition to a different set of roles and connections of David in the Hebrew Bible, namely, the singer and musician of the Psalms, which a number of our contributors take up directly in Part III.

Part II of the book, "Canonizing David," lingers yet a little while longer, however, with the David of the narratives, though now expanding the circle outwards from its core in 1 and 2 Samuel. In the larger canonical picture, the significance of King David grows from that of a literary character in relationships to both humans and God to that of an icon embodying and mediating social identity and theological meaning, while remaining multivalent and contested. Thus, as Walter Brueggemann comments in "Heir and Land: The Royal 'Envelope' of the Book of Kings," "it is clear that David functioned in ancient Israel over time as a supple generative cipher in the ongoing interpretive process." Brueggemann offers a canonical and intertextual reading of the promise near the beginning of the books of Kings (1 Kgs 2:1–4), a promise of both lineage and land to the Torah-obedient king, in light of the ambiguous conclusion in 2 Kgs 25:27–30 and certain prophetic texts. He argues that the move from the contested metaphor of David to the contested metaphor of Jehoiachin requires an indeterminate understanding God's threats and promises when faced with the reality of a king without a land.

Danna Nolan Fewell's "A Broken Hallelujah: Remembering David, Justice, and the Cost of the House" contrasts the Chronicler's story of David with the story found in the books of Samuel. The latter is a post-exilic act of memory and "true" mourning that confronts an indigestible

past, one which can be neither fully remembered nor forgotten; Chronicles' "successful mourning," on the other hand, recounts a past that is easily digestible, consoling, and is designed to make the community forget its pain. Chronicles is not seen here as a revision of Samuel; rather, these are two "histories" with competing but radically different efforts to remember and mourn the past and envision the future. The essay offers a different model of understanding the functions of such stories in a community under Empire.

The last essay of Part II, Philip R. Davies's "Son of David and Son of Saul," highlights the on-going contestation of the King David icon even in early Christian literature, noting that precisely the monarchic title "Messiah," otherwise one of the key New Testament attributions for Jesus, is absent from the writings of Saul/Paul. The reasons for this may be various, but in the absence of any compelling theological motive, Davies suggests that the apostle was too proud of his name and his ancestry to talk easily of "David" (except as prophet) or even to call himself a "Judean." By looking at Paul and Jesus as a replay of Saul and David, the essay offers a psychological profile of Paul as someone who avoids any kingly titles (such as messiah).

King David's most notable canonical connection is, of course, with the Psalter, and our four contributors to Part III, entitled "Singing David," move from the harpist of the narrative to the iconic singer-songwriter of the Psalms. Carole R. Fontaine's "A Sharper Harper (1 Samuel 16:14–23): Iconographic Reflections on David's Rise to Power" argues that the passage that introduces David as a harper taken into Saul's service for treatment of mental illness is often overlooked for its political implications. Her survey of the representation of harpers in action in Egyptian and Assyrian art suggests that David learned more than new songs while playing in the court of Saul. Harping and political intrigue, often with deadly outcomes, are part of a "genre" of representation of court scenes, and serve as a touchstone of the realia behind this pericope.

Robert Culley and David Gunn first became acquainted around their shared interest in oral literature. David, originally a classics guy, wrote a masters thesis at Melbourne University analyzing Homer in terms of Serbo-Croatian epic tales.[10] David recalls Robert's early encouragement to pursue these interests in the context of biblical studies, and his earliest published work in the field of biblical studies dealt with oral forms in the

10. His earliest scholarly publications were in top-tier journals of classical philology: "Narrative Inconsistency and the Oral Dictated Text in the Homeric Epic," *American Journal of Philology* 91 (1970): 192–203; and "Thematic Composition and Homeric Authorship," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 75 (1971): 1–31.

books of Samuel.[11] It seems fitting, then, that Robert returns to their common bond in "David and the Psalms: Titles, Poems, and Stories," where he takes up the question: what happens when the traditional poetic language of the complaint psalms is linked to the prose tradition of stories about David, also marked by the dense repetition-with-variation of traditional oral forms? The poems and the stories have different strategies that go in different directions. Because the poems move away from specific persons and situations toward a more general perception of what it means to be in trouble, readers who wish to apply them to themselves must turn the generality of the poems back toward the specific. The stories, on the other hand, move toward the specific and particular: they are "replete with details about the difficult situation of David facing an enemy, always identified and usually Saul." But, as with all literature, these stories remain open to the general. The interplay of different kinds of discourse and their strategies allows the consideration of other dimensions of the larger figure of David within the tradition as a whole.

R. Christopher Heard, in "Penitent to a Fault: The Characterization of David in Psalm 51," also considers the relationship between the entitled David of the Psalms (in this case the famous penitential psalm) and the differently entitled David of the narrative, whose heinous crimes of murder and adultery provoke the need for penitence. A more suspicious reader than most in the David-exculpating tradition, Heard suggests that the superscription of the psalm recasts the psalm's penitential prayer in an ironic light. Whereas the confession by the poem's unidentified penitent represses the memory of the human victims of sin, the superscription's recollection of David's story returns our attention to them. Heard also points to a larger social context for the psalm, observing that David's often vaunted non-sacrificial penitence threatens to victimize, in a quite different way, the cultic functionaries who depend on sacrifices for their livelihood.

In a quite different turn, David Clines's "Psalm 23 and Method: Reading a David Psalm" leads this quintessential Davidic psalm through a series of methodological moves: rhetorical criticism, deconstruction, gender criticism, materialist criticism, post-colonial criticism, and psychoanalytic criticism. The readings hinge on the initial rhetorical-critical observation regarding the quirkily metaphorized subjectivity of the poem: David, the shepherd of sheep, imagines himself the sheep of a shepherd; or, alternatively, an Israelite poet imagines himself as a shep-

11. "Narrative Patterns and Oral Tradition in Judges and Samuel," *VT* 24 (1974): 286–317; and "The 'Battle Report': Oral or Scribal Convention?," *JBL* 93 (1974): 513–18.

herd imagining himself as a sheep. If, as Clines argues, this metaphor persists throughout the poem, it has surprising implications when subjected to the other methods, for example, the sheep who ends up in Jerusalem, as does this psalmist, ends up dead. The oft-quoted Ps 23 will never seem familiar again!

Part IV of the book, "Receiving David," comprises five essays that respond to the forward edge of David Gunn's work, his move into cultural studies, especially in the form of reception history. The long history of the King David's re-presentations in visual and literary art is a monument to creative gap filling, evidenced here first in Yvonne Sherwood's "Scenes of Textual Repentance and Critique/Confession: King David between the Renaissance and the Reformation, the Secular and the Sacred, and Samuel and Psalms." Yvonne adds to David's long-standing work on David and Bathsheba with a poem by Theodore of Beza entitled "A Poetic Preface to David's Penitential Psalms." Beza's verbose and elegant Latin poem, written prior to his conversion (the story of which is itself a literary construct built out of biblical materials), is a composite theater of the biblical and classical, in which David and Bathsheba meet Venus, Cupid, and Hera. The poem dramatizes the Renaissance/Reformation merger between *humanitas* and *divinitas*, evincing the Bible's cultural cringe in the face of the Classics: the perceived need to supplement the sparseness of biblical style.

Burke Long, in his "From Babylon to David and Back Again: The Sexually Charged History of a Victorian Drawing," follows the cultural-reception history of Simeon Solomon's pen and ink drawing, originally entitled "Babylon" (1859). He investigates how what began as a sexually charged representation of Babylon, with an allusion to Jer 51:7, migrated to the books of Samuel as the original work received new titles in subsequent exhibitions: "King David" in 1939, and "David Playing Before Saul" in 1985. This trajectory mirrors, in the first place, the artist's own changes in status from a publicly disgraced, penniless, and forgotten transgressor of Victorian sexual propriety to celebrated contemporary gay icon and, in the second place, the revitalized reception of the Saul/David/Jonathan narratives as sexually ambiguous invitation to transgressive readings.

The very young Bertolt Brecht (around age 22) conceived an ambitious play about the biblical David and left substantial fragments of it. "'David on the Brain': Bertolt Brecht's Projected Play 'David'," David Jobling's contribution to the book, is a study of these fragments, with some general comments about how Brecht can help us not only to read Samuel, but also to "stage" David. One part of the Brechtian fragments

shows the author taking a fragmentary approach to the biblical story, with its chronology collapsed and the moral coding of its characters, such as it is, re-worked (Uriah, for example, is no longer David's victim, but plays a duplicitous double game with David and Absalom). Other parts of Brecht's notes show David as a youth, with Saul, and then in old age reflecting back on his past. Jobling suggests that, while "youth" was Brecht's initial impulse for tackling the David story, "His final concept for 'David' indicates that he accepted one of the great gifts that the Jewish Bible—not the New Testament—has to offer: the depiction of a whole life lived."

J. Cheryl Exum, in "A King Fit for a Child: The David Story in Modern Children's Bibles," asks: Is the Bible an unsuitable book for children? How does one tell Bible stories in a manner suitable for small children? As Exum observes, the "many collections of Bible stories for children…all make decisions about how to present 'unsavory' material, and their solutions range from simple omission to tasteful reshaping." Her survey of selected children's Bible centers on two questions related to their portrayals of the character of King David: first, whether they give any indications of his possibly ambiguous motives during his rise to kingship, and, second, how they deal with "unsuitable" material like his adultery with Bathsheba, the murder of her husband, and long-term aftermath of David's choices in the ruined and ruinous lives of his children. Exum concludes that omissions and softenings of harsh details produce not only a less complex and less interesting David, but also a less complex and less interesting God. Lest we take such saccharine for granted as the price of youth or piety, however, Exum challenges us with a reminder of the success of J. K. Rowling's richly characterized and morally complex Harry Potter novels.

Athalya Brenner's "Michal and David: Love between Enemies?" might be seen, in one sense, as a companion piece to David Penchansky's essay in this collection, insofar as both use a midrashic mode to fill characterological gaps in this portion of the David narrative. Brenner's piece subtly complicates this process, however, with reference not only to midrash but also to current cultural studies, reading the biblical texts in conversation with a film and a novel. Brenner writes with a feminist ideological agenda as well, "to construct a Michal story" that will make the fragments of this tale "make sense for *'her,'* not only for her male kin." Her multi-part midrash then "multi-focalizes" Michal after the manner of Akira Kurosawa's famous film *Rashomon*, offering different perspectives on her relationships with David, Saul, and Jonathan that

derive from the fragments of the biblical text, but are also informed by the complex relational nuances of Isaac Bashevis Singer's novel *Enemies: A Love Story*.

In Part V, "Re-locating David," the book returns (?) David (one or another of them) to (or near) his islands of origin or, alternatively, uproots and re-plants him again or altogether. Aware of the Euro-American scholarly tradition of uncritical (despite the claims to objectivity of "higher criticism") and culturally self-aggrandizing appropriation of the Bible to its own political-cultural center, contemporary scholars from elsewhere on the globe often display a *self*-critical consciousness in their readings. The doubled vision of a white (Pakeha) citizen of David Gunn's first home, Aotearoa New Zealand, informs Judith McKinlay's "Through a Window: A Postcolonialist Reading of Michal." The essay uses the methodological tools of literary, feminist, and ideological criticisms, but also follows the call of postcolonial scholars to read biblical narratives in dialogue with those of the reader's own context. Like Brenner, then, McKinlay also reads the narrative of Michal in dialogue with a novel, in this instance Fiona Kidman's historical novel, *The Book of Secrets*, based on a religious settler community in Aotearoa New Zealand. Judith's own critical but strong subjectivity comes through in her on-going reflection on her own reading process, as well as in the choice of the novel itself, which involves events her ancestors were a part of.

Jione Havea imagines a storytelling event that imitates storytelling events in South Seas island cultures, including his own native Tonga, an "exercise in rocking upon the waves of storytelling." Set as a play with many different characters, some biblical and some not, Havea retells the story of Bathsheba with multiple voices that "weave and wave [at] David." Strikingly included among these voices are those of various sorts of tradents—narrator, storyteller, scribe, chronicler—whose presence further complicates the relationships of the biblical *dramatis personae*. Havea foregrounds the voice of the storyteller who, in island tradition, is not bound to the narrator or the listeners, as well as the mumbles and asides of different laborers. The result is "a sea of stories, …confluent, wavy, and restless." Indeed.

* * *

Of all biblical figures, King David has perhaps the most productively opaque of inner lives. Although biblical narrative tends as a rule to give only the most sparing access to the inner lives of characters, nowhere

else does the movement of the plot and the reaction of the reader depend so crucially on such inaccessible information. We simply do not know, in situation after situation, both public and private, what David is thinking or feeling or intending.[12] Consequently, we as readers often do not know how to respond to this David, whose charisma seems too often trumped by his ruthlessness and whose actions seem too often driven by blunt self-interest. In this at least, the biblical David could not be more different from David Gunn. Any one who has had dealings with the latter David will attest to his warmth and generosity, to his passion and exuberance, and to his willingness to forego self-interest if it means helping a friend (or acquaintance, or stranger). It is hard to imagine anyone more giving of his time or more honestly demonstrative, whether the latter take the form of praise or of a needed critical judgment. This makes our David something of an anomaly in an academic culture that tends to conceive of scholarship as a solitary pursuit and that encourages and rewards individual achievement. Teaching, mentoring, collegiality, and friendship matter far more to our David than do the accolades that come along with individual achievement; though as for that, he somehow manages both. And so we are pleased to offer this volume of essays as a tribute to both Davids: the one who remains distant (in time and otherwise), and the one we are glad to have more near. Both command our respect, but only one are we pleased to call our friend.

12. As Danna Fewell and David Gunn have pointed out, "while several characters in the story are said to love David, nowhere unambiguously is David ever said to love anyone" (*Gender, Power, and Promise*, 150).

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Part I

Relating to David

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