PORTRAITS OF DAVID: CANONICAL AND OTHERWISE

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I have been convinced for several years that Biblical scholars may gain insight for their work by listening to and seeing the work of artists who have interpreted the Bible. To hear Haydn's **Creation** or Bach's **St. Matthew's Passion** is to have one's ears filled with profound artistic responses to the initial words of the Hebrew Bible or to the gospel which appears first in the New Testament. To stand under Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel or to look at the drawings and etchings of Rembrandt is to confront insightful, visual interpretations of the written word. And, if I may return to my first example, to hear and reflect on Haydn's **Creation** is to be forced to rethink one's approach to and conclusions about Genesis 1. As an interpreter of Genesis, my horizon is wider after standing in dialogue with a forceful aesthetic interpretation.[1]

This morning, I would like to test my thesis by thinking about the character of David as described in the Hebrew Bible and by standing in dialogue with one artist's interpretation of this character. The artist is Marc Chagall, his interpretation occurs in this lithograph which I was recently able to acquire.

Our project is innovative in at least two ways. First, it is an attempt to relate critical interpretive work with an artist's vision. And second, my interpretation will encompass the full variety of the Hebrew Bible witness to the figure of David; just as, I am sure, Chagall thought about more than one Biblical text when doing his David. We will not limit ourselves to the obvious source material contained in 1 and 2 Samuel, the well-wrought prose which details the rise of David to prominence in Israel. Rather, we will

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This article constitutes David Petersen's address at his installation on 4 October 1985 as Professor of Old Testament at the Iliff School of Theology.

include as well the character of David as that is conveyed in Psalm titles; we will include one problematic reference to David in the book of the prophet Amos; we will even include mention of David in that little read narrative, the book of Chronicles. If this enterprise succeeds, we will have perceived the biblical character David in a new way, by appreciating various canonical portraits of this fascinating figure.

In order to set the stage for our reading of the Biblical material, I would like to have us look at Chagall's lithograph of King David.[2] I would suggest that we note four elements: color, harp, structure of the composition, and finally, David's head.[3]

First, color. These colors are bright, captivating. They are the brightest colors in all of Chagall's palette when he treated Biblical characters. Fuchsia or magenta, purple and orange control the piece. The color purple requires specific mention since it has become the traditional color of royalty. The use of this color underscores David's role as king; but the color is muted, not exuberant. This hue of purple alludes to but does not proclaim David as king. The color hints at but does not specify the nature of this character.

In some way, these colors are "unnatural," so the purple beard. However, it is important to know that such "unnatural" colors typify much of Chagall's work. Natural or not, these colors, when compared with Chagall's other lithographs treating Biblical texts, signal to us, the beholders and readers, that the character of David is both bright and ambiguous. This will be a character which attracts and keeps our attention.

Second, the lyre or harp. Chagall did not outline the musical instrument as definitively as he did David's face. It is a lyre but it remains indefinite--the magenta color of David's robe overlaps it. The shape of the harp, as was the case with the color purple, remains allusive rather than definitive.

The presence of the harp evokes deep connotations. It reminds us of David the singer who was able to quiet Saul during his fits of melancholy. It reminds us of David as putative author of the Psalms. And, since it does both of these things, the harp is

something of a time-composite, referring as it does to two quite different periods in David's life. We are dealing with disparate canonical roles when we speak of David as harpist.

As we look at the harp within the context of the total composition, we are left with one simple question: what kind of song is David singing? There is movement in his shoulder indicating the harp is being played. And the expression on his face strongly suggests that this David of at least middle age is not singing a soothing song or for that matter singing a psalm of thanksgiving. What is the song?

Third, the structure of the composition. In the series of lithographs from which this one is drawn, a series illustrating the Bible which Chagall published in 1956, there is a lithograph depicting Moses (M.126). That lithograph is structurally identical to the one of David. In both, there is a side view of the individual, with the individual facing left. And in each the individual is holding an object: Moses the stone tablets, David the harp. This structural similarity, one might even say archetypal similarity, suggests that, for Chagall, David had as central a role as Moses in ancient Israel. Without either of these individuals, Israel would not be what it was or what it became. And yet, despite the similarity in form, there were critical differences between Moses and David. One important difference is symbolized in the contrast between the stone tablet and the harp. One way to think about this contrast is to suggest that whereas the torah tablets are prescriptive the harp is expressive. Torah tells one what to do; the harp tells us something about the player. And we are left with the question, what kind of leader was David? What does his harp express?

Fourth and finally, the head of David. There are several striking elements here. The head, unlike much else in the piece is a real entity. It is much more clearly defined than either David's body or his harp. The head remains a concrete symbol, underlining the individuality of this character.

The head is controlled by several important motifs: crown, ear, and eye. The crown is peripheral, literally peripheral. It serves

to define the upper extent of the head and blends into the hair. It, like the color purple, suggests kingship, but does not offer a definitive statement about the character of this king. The presence of the crown keeps us from thinking about David in the same way we do when Michelangelo's statue of David is in front of us, a statue which portrays David as a strong youth, but naked, inexperienced in the ways of the political world. The ambiguity of the crown raises a question for us: what sort of king was David?

The ear is surprisingly prominent and central to the composition. Chagall could have covered that area of the head with hair, but he chose not to. And I suspect for a reason, David can hear the music he plays. He can hear his song; and we are invited to ask the question: what sort of song is David playing, or for that matter hearing? The song is tangible. There is almost a circle of song: moving arm to hand, hand to harp, harp to ear, but not, apparently, ear to mouth. As far as I can tell this circle of song is broken or left incomplete by the closed mouth. David is not singing; he is only playing. He has, his eyes suggest, sung what could be sung. Now he is left to strum the harp; the ear rather than the mouth is central.

And finally the eye. The white color Chagall uses for the skin sets the contrast for the heavily outlined eye. This almond-shaped eye is a motif which Chagall inherited from the ancient world. Nonetheless, no eye in all of his Biblical lithographs is so demonstrably open as this one. It is impossible for a Hebrew Bible scholar to hear the phrase,"opened eye." and not feel the tug of Gen 3, "then the eyes of both were opened." Open eyes result after the two earth creatures had tasted the forbidden and yet delicious fruit. And once we have registered Israel's testimony concerning opened eyes, we are confronted with the question: what forbidden fruit has David eaten, such that his eyes remain so strikingly and resoundingly open?

Color, harp, structure, and the complexity of David's head--our senses have been touched and a number of questions have been raised. We are, I think, aware that for Chagall, David was no ordinary character.

David is, at the very minimum, terribly interesting. One of our culture's writers, Joseph Heller, has recognized this recently in the fictional presentation of David in his novel, **God Knows.** Heller's David says this:

> I don't like to boast--but I honestly think I've got the best story in the Bible. Where's the competition? Job? Forget him. Genesis? The cosmology is for kids... Now Moses isn't bad, I have to admit, but he's very, very long, and there's a crying need for variation after the exodus from Egypt. The story goes on and on with all those laws...Moses has the Ten Commandments, it's true, but I've got much better lines. I've got the poetry and passion, savage violence and the plain raw civilizing grief of human heartbreak. "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places." That sentence is mine and so is "They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions." My psalms last. I could live forever on my famous elegy alone, if I wasn't already dying of old age. I've got wars and ecstatic religious experiences, obscene dances, ghosts, murders, hair-raising escapes, and exciting chase scenes. There were children who died early. "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." That's for the one who died in infancy..." "My son, my son" was for another, who was struck down in the prime of young manhood. Where in Moses can you find stuff like that?[4]

Heller deems David interesting and profound because of what he experienced, and even more, because of what he said, especially his poetry. Heller's picture is, some would say, much too magnanimous. Those who have asked about the character of David have sometimes been radically negative in their judgments.

J. M. Powis Smith, in his posthumously published SBL Presidential Address wrote this assessment of David's character:

> We have been dealing thus far with the record of David's life found in I and II Samuel. This record certainly does not make David a saint. It rather makes him at times a brute. David was a brave and aggressive ruler. He combined Judah and Israel under his sway and he made the surrounding peoples largely tributary to Israel. But the spread of Israel's power was almost wholly due to his military power and cruelty. He was loyal to his friends, but ruthless to his foes. He was a liar, deceiver, and traitor. That later tradition should have glorified and magnified him so much notwithstanding his many limitations passes all understanding. These later writers deliberately ignored most of his crimes and faults and focussed attention upon his virtues. From that point of view he is presented as a great figure. But his place in the minds of

> modern men who take into account all the known facts is relatively small.[5]

These are rather harsh words. Moreover, they reflect a response to the character of David different from Heller's. Smith is interested first in recovering the historical David and then making a moral judgment about him.

Evaluations as different as Heller's is from Smith's should prevent us from thinking that we may speak simply about the character of David. "Interesting and profound," so Heller, "brute," so Smith, reduce what is surely a complex character to a simple one. In both Heller's and Smith's views, there is a tendency toward monochromatism, disallowing the possibility of a colorful and varied portrait. As we turn to the canonical material, we must try to avoid such monochromatic readings.

What then is the canonical portraiture of David?

To answer this question, we must look at four quite distinct portions of the Hebrew Bible, 1) the prose narratives of the former prophets, the books of Samuel, 2) the latter prophets, viz., the individually authored prophetic books, 3) the psalter and 4) the Chronicler's history.[6]

It seems only proper to commence with the prose narratives of Samuel since they comprise, by far, the largest block of David material in the Hebrew Bible. Within the books of Samuel, it has been customary since the seminal work of L. Rost, to zero in on 2 Samuel 9-20 and 1 Kings 1-2, and to treat those narratives as "the succession history."[7] These chapters are usually interpreted as unusually excellent literature, chapters which provide a remarkably realistic picture of David as king. Rost maintained that these

chapters had as their primary theme the resolution of the question: who would reign as king after David? There were, after all, a number of princes, sons of David by his various wives.[8]

One of the key issues which plagued Rost's theory was the identification of the beginning of the succession history. The ending was clear. 1 Kings 2:46b, "So the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon." But as Blenkinsopp, among others, has pointed out, "there is no corresponding incipit."[9]

I would like to argue that the location of the beginning of this narrative may be identified, and that the identification of the beginning of the story is of considerable importance for a sketch of David's portrait in this literature. I will maintain 1) that the beginning to the story of David as king occurs in 2 Samuel 2:1-5:3, 2) that 2:1-5:3 is, technically speaking, a prologue, and 3) that an appropriate title for the entire work is not "succession history" but rather "David as king" story.[10]

Our prologue begins and ends with David becoming king. In 2 Samuel 2:1-4, David becomes king over the house of Judah, whereas in 5:1-3 the writer portrays David acceding to the throne over Israel. These two moments of royal accession create a narrative bracket or inclusio which holds the interior of the prologue together in a tightly bound package. The surface rhetoric of the prologue is political; David becoming king is the topic. We might expect David to function as a politically vigorous figure here. Not so. In both accession scenes, the texts describe people, in the first text, "the men of Judah," in the second "the elders of Israel," as the primary actors. David is not portrayed as politically aggressive.

Within this prologue, the author has narrated a scene in which David has a problem. It is a scene which foreshadows problems which will recur in the "David as king" story. The scene occurs in 2 Sam 3:22-29. David is, again, not the main actor. Rather, the protagonists are Abner and Joab, Abner the general of the house of Saul, Joab, David's general. Abner had just made an agreement with David such that Abner had promised to enable him to rule over the northern kingdom, the territory Saul had controlled. Joab returned after the deal had been struck and accused David of having been duped, of having allowed Abner to spy on the Judahite king in his Hebron stronghold. Whereupon Joab left the king and, unbeknownst to David, proceeded to kill Abner. Up until this point in the story, David is presented to us as passive, indecisive. After Abner's death, he laments Abner's demise just as earlier in the book of Samuel, he had lamented the death of Saul and Jonathan. And then, perhaps surprisingly, he admits his inability to deal decisively with Joab, his own general: (2 Sam 4:39), "I am this day weak, though anointed king. ...these men, are too difficult for me."

In this prologue, we are presented at both beginning and end with episodes in which David becomes king. And yet what a peculiar king. He is made king, not at his own initiative but at the initiative of Judahites and Israelites. And he is a weak king, unable to cope with Joab, his powerful general. So far in our attempt to sketch a canonical portrait, we have discovered an individual who is unable to act decisively.

Before leaving the "David as king" story in 2 Samuel, I want to jump from the prologue into the story itself to note that the

author does not always depict David as indecisive and weak. In 2 Samuel 11-12, the David and Bathsheba story, we encounter a David who acts very decisively. Consider the opening verses of this account, **2 Sam 11:14**, "In the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they ravaged the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. It happened later one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking upon the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? So David sent messengers and took her."

Much can be said about these verses. I want to make two straightforward points. First, the tone is set by irony in the first verse. The temporal setting for the story is the spring, the time when kings fight. But where is David? At home, getting up late in the afternoon. True kings would be out fighting and David remains in Jerusalem. This contrast helps us begin to answer our earlier questions. What sort of king is David? And then, when David is confronted with something that he wants, Bathsheba, he acts like a general or a king; he makes inquiries, sends messengers and takes. The picture here is of a decisive individual, but interestingly, decisive apart from the proper exercise of his royal office.

As a result of a briefer examination of the prologue to and one scene of the "David as king" story, it seems clear that the author is presenting a complex David: indecisive as king, decisive in private

affairs. And, were we to continue with the story, we would discover a David unable to deal effectively with family matters, an issue which affects his ability to deal effectively with matters of state. In the book of 2 Samuel, in which we find the "David as king" story, we are introduced to someone who, when he becomes king, is nowhere nearly as effective as he was as a guerrilla warrior--a peculiar king indeed.

In order to do justice to the notion of a canonical portrait, we must move on to the latter prophets, the individually authored prophetic books. And here I have something rather surprising to report. David's name appears almost forty times in these books. If I read these texts correctly, only in one instance does an author refer to David as a person. All the other texts refer to David as a reference to the house of David. To say, "David" is simply a way to refer to the royal dynasty. Amos 6:5 is the single text in which an author alludes to David the person. Amos 6:5 is part of a woe oracle uttered against certain citizens of the northern kingdom:

"Woe to those who lie upon beds of ivory,
and stretch themselves upon their couches,"

and then several lines later,

"who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp
and like David invent for themselves instruments of music."

This reference to David strikes a decidedly negative note. Those people against whom the woe oracle is being uttered are being compared in a simile to the machinations of David as musician. This view of David is not, I should add, to be attributed to the hand of

Amos since the phrase "like David" interrupts the meter of the Hebrew poetry.[11] That phrase should instead be traced to the hand of a later editor who obviously did not have a very high view of David. Such disclaimers aside, however, this reference in Amos 6:5 is a part of the final form of the book of Amos and is appropriate grist for our mill as we attempt to understand the canonical portraiture of David.

If we reflect on the lithograph for a moment, it is altogether appropriate that Chagall included the harp. That instrument is the single object which might characterize the person David according to the latter prophets. Moreover, it is a symbol which did not inspire the editor of the book of Amos to sing or jump for joy. Put another way, David's harp does not have the same significance as did the Torah tablets in Moses' hands. Chagall's structural parallels invite us to contemplate the similarities and differences between Moses' tablets and David's harp. And as we contemplate this issue, we are confronted with a text which condemns the inhabitants of Samaria as those who, like David, invent for themselves instruments of music. From the canonical perspective, therefore, David's harp is at the very least an ambiguous symbol.

I would like to have us stay with the symbol of the harp as we move to the third part of the Hebrew Bible canon at which we will be looking this morning, the book of Psalms. The question which importunes is quite simple and it is one which Chagall's lithograph has already raised for us. What kind of song is David playing? There are two quite different ways to answer this question. On the one hand, we could look at the poems or songs attributed to David and

embedded in the prose narratives of Samuel; and on the other hand, we could look at the songs in the Psalter. Both perspectives belong in our canonical portrait.

The most abundant evidence comes from the Psalter. There are a series of Psalms to which titles relating the psalm to some event in the life of David have been attached. These titles postdate the psalms themselves by a rather wide margin and involve the beginnings of midrashic exegesis, a form of Biblical interpretation prominent in Jewish circles during the Greco-Roman period.[12] Hence the titles are, in themselves, of little value in dating or explaining the psalm in question. But as a group, they provide important data about the psalm titles authors' perceptions of the character of David.

There are thirteen psalms which have been prefaced by such psalm titles (3; 7; 18; 34; 51; 52; 54; 56; 57; 59; 60; 63; 142). Of these, one is repeated in 2 Samuel 22 as a song sung by David "on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul." Psalm 18, which is duplicated in 2 Samuel 22, and one other, Psalm 34, belong to the type of psalm known as the individual thanksgiving. Apart from these two, however, the remaining eleven share one genre: the individual lament. They are songs in which a complaint is directed to God. Consider these individual laments attributed to David and the titles which have been attached to them: Psalm 3, "a psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son;" Psalm 142, " a <u>maśkîl</u> of David when he was in the cave;" or Psalm 59, "a <u>miktām</u> of David when Saul sent men to watch his house in order to kill him."

There can be little doubt that, as we contemplate the portrait of David in the Psalms, we find the authors of the psalm titles thinking about a person who sings consistently one type of psalm, the lament. These people who knew the psalms and who knew the stories of David's life thought this one genre, the individual lament, typified the first true king of Israel. For them, David's natural song was the lament. He was a person who had experienced enemies, a plight typical in most laments. David had experienced enemies who were his nation's enemies, the Philistines; enemies who were from within Israel, Saul and Sheba; even enemies from within his nuclear family, his son Absalom. And, as is typical of one who sings a lament, he was able to escape from or achieve victory over his enemy. According to the psalm titles, the complaint or lament <u>is</u> David's song.

Though fewer in number, there are some significant songs attributed to David which lie outside the book of Psalms. Three poems purportedly uttered by David lay within the bounds of 2 Samuel. The first, 2 Samuel 1:19-27, is, not surprisingly now, a lament, a song bemoaning the deaths of Jonathan and Saul. That David should lament the death of his friend, Jonathan, is predictable, but that he should lament the death of Saul, who had tried to kill him repeatedly, is surprising. And Saul is integral to the lament:

19) Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places!
How are the mighty fallen!

23) Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!
In life and in death, they were not divided;
they were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.

27) How are the mighty fallen,

and the weapons of war perished!"

Less typical than this lament are the two poems which occur near the end of the David story, two poems which make up much of 2 Samuel 22 and 23. Here we do not have laments, but first an individual thanksgiving and then second a hymn. In the first, as is typical of the thanksgiving, there is reference to some difficulty which an individual encounters, so 2 Samuel 22:5-6. The difficulty is presented to us in extravagant imagery in which the powers of death and the underworld are depicted metaphorically: "for the waves of death encompassed me, the torrents of perdition assailed me; the cords of Sheol entangled me, the snares of death confronted me." And then, after the difficulty is so described, the individual thanksgiving continues with a report that Yahweh has rescued the person who has called for help. So 2 Sam 22:7, "In my distress, I called upon the Lord, to my God I called. From his temple, he heard my voice, and my cry came to his ears."

This song of thanksgiving is placed near the end of David's life. By so situating this individual thanksgiving, the Biblical writers have presented to us a David whose laments are, ultimately, answered. The David who regularly sang or played a lament finally sang a thanksgiving. And after that thanksgiving, he even sang a hymn, 2 Sam 23, in which he praised Yahweh in terms more general than those in the thanksgiving. What is a life filled for the most part with lamentation is, in the final two songs, one which allows for the presence of thanksgiving and hymn.[13]

If we examine Chagall's lithograph, we are, I think, forced to conclude that here David is playing a song of lamentation. The thanksgiving is yet to come. If one has only one still shot--one lithograph--in which to depict the Biblical David, it is appropriate to focus on the lament, not the thanksgiving. The lament is David's song.

Our final look at David in the canonical literature comes in material foreign to most of us, the book of Chronicles. One special characteristic of Chronicles is its uniformly favorable and almost idiosyncratic view of David. Here there is no David and Bathsheba story. Instead, the Chronicler presents us with a David who is the founder of Israelite worship. To read 1 Chronicles 11-29 is to find a much different character than we encounter in Amos, Samuel or Psalms. The Chronicler's David spends his time organizing the temple priesthood, establishing the music program of the second temple and setting up functionaries such as the gatekeeper. This David completes the plans for the temple such that all Solomon has to do is carry out his father's elaborately designed plans. The Chronicler's David is a new David, a different portrait. We see here a patron of the religious establishment, an administrator if you will.

It would be wrong to suggest that the Chronicler's portrait is a simple or one-sided view. Rather, we are given a different canonical slant. The hero who was battle leader, lamenter, murderer and indecisive could also be religious leader. This was yet another role, one which the writer of "David as king" story does not highlight but one which the Chronicler places in the limelight. The author of

Chronicles definitely knew the traditions about David in the books of Samuel which did not paint David in the most favorable light. However, David's feet of clay did not dissuade the Chronicler from having David appear as the consummate churchman, if I may be slightly anachronistic. It is, I think, instructive that the canonical tradition about David does not require religious leaders to be perfect, a notion perhaps relevant to our own time.

Let me conclude by turning back to the lithograph. Bright colors are apt. David is truly a captivating character. The crown--David was king. He was not entirely successful--perhaps that is why the crown is not definitive. But he secured a place for Israel among the nations. His harp--he was a singer of laments; and he is surely here playing such a doleful song. The picture's structure: David embraces neither Torah scroll, royal scepter nor, for that matter, Bathsheba. He embraces the symbol of his songs--the lyre of lament. And finally, his eyes. David has seen much: the death of his children as infant and as adult. He has seen the violence of war and the violence of court intrigue. He has seen the trauma of a difficult private life and the trials of life in public office. He has seen the love of Jonathan and the love of, among others, Abigail, Michal and Bathsheba. He has tasted forbidden fruit and his eyes remain wide, strikingly, open.

The figure of David has elicited various responses. There are canonical portraits: the perspectives of Samuel and of Psalms, those of Amos and of Chronicles. And there are a variety of extra-canonical portraits -- Chagall's is only one of these. I hope to have suggested that by standing in dialogue with Chagall's David we

are, as interpreters, in a much better position to appreciate the canonical portraiture of David.

It would be puerile to think that David encapsulates everyone's experience. Nonetheless, it is not too much to maintain that in the various canonical portraits of David, we may see one or another aspect of ourselves, whether it be in struggle or aspiration, in success or defeat, difficulty in public or private life. David's portraiture may help us understand and express something of ourselves. So, I am thankful that there are these diverse canonical portraits of David, and that Chagall reflected on this diversity in such a profound way.

1. I do not deny that some artistic interpretations of Biblical texts are either bad art or bad interpretations, or even both bad art and bad interpretation. My conviction is, rather, that by reading Biblical literature through the eyes of a good artist, we may be spurred to ask new questions or to consider answers different from those we normally accept.

2. The lithograph, M. 134, published in 1956, is entitled "David a la Harp."

3. I am indebted to Prof. C. Shaw Smith, Jr., of the University of Denver's Department of Art, for discussing the Chagall lithograph with me. Any errors in aesthetic perception or judgment are, however, my own.

4. J. Heller, **God Knows**. N.Y.: Knopf, 1984, 5-6.

5. J. M. Powis Smith, "The Character of King David," **JBL** 52 (1933) 5.

6. After completing this study, I received a copy of W. Brueggemann's just published **David's Truth in Israel's Imagination and Memory** (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985). He too surveys a variety of canonical material, though a different set from that included here. Cf. on the ambiguity of David's character, though not canonical variety, L. Perdue, "'Is there anyone left of the house of Saul...?'" Ambiguity and the Characterization of David in the Succession Narrative" **JSOT** 30 (1984) 51-66.

7. L. Rost. **Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge David.** BWANT 42. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1926. (trans. by M. Rutter and D. Gunn, as **The Succession to the Throne of David.** HTTBS, 1. Sheffield: Almond, 1982.

8. Rost's theories have undergone close scrutiny. D. Gunn has challenged the labelling of the genre as history and has proposed instead the notion of traditional story. D. Gunn, **The Story of King David. Genre and Interpretation.** JSOTSS 6. Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1978, 35-62. Cf. the valuable discussions of J. Flanagan, "Court History or Succession Document? A Study of 2 Sam 9-20 and 1 Kings 1-2." **JBL** 91 (1972) 172-181, and J. Van Seters, **In Search of History. Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History.** New Haven: Yale University, 1983, 249-291.

9. J. Blenkinsopp, "Theme and Motif in the Succession History (2 Sam 11:2ff) and the Yahwistic Cropus." **VT Supp** 15, 47. Cf. J. Van Seters, **In Search of History**, 280-286.

10. The position articulated here is similar to that of Gunn, although he would not include 2 Sam 2:1-8 (or-12) in the composition nor does he adopt the notion of prologue, D. Gunn, **The Story of King David**, 65-84.

11. So the standard commentaries, H. W. Wolff, **Joel and Amos**, Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977, 272-273; J. Mays, **Amos**. OTL. Philadelphia: Westmister, 1969, 113.

12. I exclude reference to brief titles such as "a psalm of David" and focus instead on those formulations, such as the one which precedes Psalm 47, which link the psalm to some event in David's life. On these titles generally, see conveniently, B. Childs, "Psalm Titles and Midrashic Exegesis." **JSS** 16 (1971) 137-150.

13. This move from lament to thanksgiving and finally to hymn in the Davidic songs is typical of what I have termed elsewhere "the psalmic experience." At the end of a lament is a vow to praise Yahweh if the supplicant is rescued. The singing of a thanksgiving is the payment of that vow. And at the end of a thanksgiving one often finds imperative language: "sing to or praise the Lord!" And it is this mood with which hymns begin.