Uncorrected Proofs of pp. 125-41 in *Dress and Clothing in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. A. Finitisis. London: T&T Clark, 2019.

6

THE EMPEROR AND HIS CLOTHING: DAVID ROBED AND UNROBED BEFORE THE ARK AND MICHAL

Ian D. Wilson

The famous story of David dancing before YHWH's Ark as it enters Jerusalem has two distinct versions: one in 2 Samuel 6 and the other in 1 Chronicles 15.¹ In both versions, a grand procession bears the Ark into the City of David, the king dances wildly, and Michal observes the events from a window. The two versions are, however, remarkably different in many of their particulars. One such particular is the king's clothing. The version in 2 Samuel states that David "whirled with all his might" before the Ark while wearing a "linen ephod" (אֶפֹד בִּדְ) —some kind of priestly clothing that is probably only a scant loincloth or undergarment (6:14).² Michal despises David for this behavior (6:16), and she chastises him for it, claiming that he exposed himself "as one of the riffraff might expose himself" (6:20). Michal thus condemns David's dancing but also his clothing (or lack thereof). In 2 Samuel's version of the story, David seems to have dressed down for the occasion. In 1 Chronicles, however, David is "wrapped in a robe of fine linen"

1. Psalm 132 contains another account of the Ark entering Jerusalem. It speaks of YHWH's/Zion's priests being "clothed" (לְבִשׁ) in righteousness and victory (vv. 9, 16), and of David's enemies being clothed in disgrace (v. 18). The psalm, though, does not mention David's clothing, his dancing, or Michal's reaction—the main concerns of this chapter—so I do not discuss it here.

2. Cf. 1 Sam 2:18; 22:18; also Exod 28:42; 39:28; Lev 6:3; 16:4, 23, 32 (see בִּד [III] in *HALOT*; N.L. Tidwell, "The Linen Ephod: 1 Sam. II 18 and 2 Sam. VI 14," *VT* 24 [1974]: 505–07; and P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *II Samuel*, AB 9 [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984], 171). In 2 Sam 6:14 it is impossible to tell for sure the nature of the garment indicated. Michal's response to David's actions, however, strongly suggests that this particular garment, worn while dancing about, conceals very little. In 1 Sam 2:18–19, moreover, the text notes that young Samuel wore an אֶפֹד בִּד and that his mother would bring him "a little robe" (קֵטָן מְעִיל) every year, implying that the אֶפֹד בִּד was to be accompanied by another, outer garment (cf. Exod 28:4, 31; 29:5; 39:22–23; also 1 Chr 15:27). See Carmen Imes' contribution for additional discussion of priestly garments, in this volume, 30–38.

(מכרבל במעיל בויץ) in addition to his priestly ephod (1 Chr 15:27).³ The narrative in Chronicles highlights Michal's distaste for David's whirling about (1 Chr 15:29), but it does not recount Michal's comments about indecent exposure. David's state of dress (and Michal's reaction to it) is a conspicuous difference in the versions, a difference that impacts potential readings of the narrative.

In this chapter, I want to work toward an understanding of how ancient Judean literati thought about David's (lack of) clothing and its (in)appropriateness at this momentous event. Judean readers in the early Second Temple era were conversant with the book of Samuel and the book of Chronicles. They read both, they contemplated both, and both played a part in their social remembering of Judah's monarchic past. Both books were, without a doubt, part of the intellectual repertoire of the literate community in and around the Jerusalem temple in the Late Persian period. The two books existed in this historical context in a discursive relationship, informing and balancing one another's narrative perspectives on Israel's past.⁴ When the discourse came to David and his state of dress before the Ark and Michal, what were the discursive possibilities? How did these texts contribute to the remembering of David and the Israelite monarchy in a postmonarchic milieu?

The first thing to consider is the broader cultural context of the narrative. The story of the Ark entering Jerusalem is a narrative that reflects ANE royal rituals and festivities. It depicts a civic event, a spectacle that puts royal and cultic functionaries and their accoutrements on full display for the purpose of celebrating the king and his deity and (re)affirming their relationship of power and the power of their relationship.⁵ Compare, for example, the annual Hittite festivals of the Late Bronze Age, which in some cases lasted for multiple weeks and which included ceremonies at the main temple in Hattusa as well as traveling processions to neighboring locales.⁶ "By maintaining the various cults in the

3. On the term "robe" (מעיל), see Scott Starbuck's contribution to this volume, 145–50.

4. Although the narrative in Samuel–Kings appears to have been the more authoritative version of the monarchic past, Chronicles also garnered some amount of authority for Judean readers, as later Second Temple-era literature evinces (Ehud Ben Zvi, *History, Literature and Theology in the Book of Chronicles* [London: Equinox, 2006], 243–68; Ian D. Wilson, "Chronicles and Utopia: Likely Bedfellows?" in *History, Memory, Hebrew Scriptures: A Festschrift for Ehud Ben Zvi*, ed. Ian D. Wilson and Diana V. Edelman [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015], 151–65).

5. Such rituals/celebrations were either one-time events (see, e.g., C.L. Seow, *Myth, Drama, and the Politics of David's Dance*, HSM 44 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989]) or annual rites of commemoration (see, e.g., Daniel E. Fleming, *The Installation of Baal's High Priestess at Emar*, HSS 42 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992]).

6. David P. Wright, "Anatolia: Hittites," in *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*, ed. Sarah Iles Johnston (Cambridge, MA: Belknap of Harvard University Press, 2007), 193; Billie Jean Collins, *The Hittites and Their World*, Archaeology and Biblical Studies 7 (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 162–64.

kingdom,” states David Wright, “the king shored up the unity of the kingdom and engendered support for his rule.”⁷ Indeed, for the Hittite king, there was no real distinction between political and cultic concerns.⁸ More often than not, this was the case throughout the ANE world. With such things in mind, what broad cultural expectations might the Judeans have had with regard to a king’s clothing in a civic celebration? Second, we should consider the implications of David’s clothing within each narrative context: What potential meanings are at play in Samuel, in Chronicles, and in the interrelationship between the two? Drawing on research into social memory and “forgetting,” I will argue that Judean readers of these texts would partially warrant Michal’s distaste for David’s dressing-down while still maintaining a critical stance toward the queen.

Kingly clothing and rituals/ceremonies in the ancient Near East

I begin with a few comments on representations of kingly dress and kingly ritual and ceremony in the ANE. From “prehistory” to the Persian period, there are numerous representations, visual and written, of kings in ritual procession or pious activity. In such representations the kings are, of course, clothed.

Take the Uruk vase, for example, from the late fourth millennium in southern Mesopotamia. It depicts a human ruler, followed by a long line of human offerers, presenting the produce of the land to the goddess Inanna. The offerers, carrying baskets of various goods, are completely nude. The image of the ruler is, unfortunately, only partially preserved, but it is nonetheless clear that he wears an ornate garment in stark contrast with his naked servants. Inanna, too, wears a headdress and a robe with marked trim.⁹ In images from the Late Bronze Age, the Hittite king, mentioned above, appears in divine attire, either in the dress of the Sun-God or in battle gear of the warrior-gods.¹⁰ Later, in the Iron Age, representations of the Assyrian king—in both the imperial center and its periphery—display the king in full royal garb, including robe, necklace and/or bracelet with divine icons, priestly headdress, as well as standard kingly weapons and other accoutrements.¹¹

7. Wright, “Anatolia: Hittites,” 193.

8. Collins, *Hittites and Their World*, 157–58.

9. For a discussion of the vase, its imagery, and its narrative, see Zainab Bahrani, “Performativity and the Image: Narrative, Representation, and the Uruk Vase,” in *Leaving No Stones Unturned: Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Donald P. Hansen*, ed. Erica Ehrenberg (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 15–22. For more on the clothing of deities, see the contributions of Ehud Ben Zvi and Shawn Flynn to this volume.

10. Collins, *Hittites and Their World*, 97–98.

11. For discussions of Assyrian imperial iconography, its ideology, and its creation—at both center and periphery—see Ann Shafer, “Assyrian Royal Monuments on the Periphery: Ritual and the Making of Imperial Space,” in *Ancient Near Eastern Art in Context: Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter by Her Students*, ed. Jack Cheng and Marian H. Feldman (Leiden:

In depictions of the Assyrian king—whether he is violently engaging and crushing an enemy horde, receiving supplication from subjects, or approaching the divine in reverence and solitude—he appears in full and typical Assyrian royal dress.¹² Examining the Persian Empire and its era, we find similar depictions of the king. From Bisitun to Susa to Persepolis, the king appears in full regalia, whether receiving blessing from Ahuramazda, grappling with a beast, or sitting on his throne. Although there are important distinctions in the respective iconographic ideologies of Assyria and Persia, for example,¹³ throughout both empires the king was consistently portrayed as elaborately and fully clothed.¹⁴

Written texts depict the same sorts of imagery. Clothing (or lack of it) is a conspicuous marker of social standing and power. Nudity is dishonorable, a mark of shame and impoverishment. The poor have few clothes—the rich have lots. Similarly, the uncivilized and barbarous lack proper clothing or have none at all, while the civilized have clean and elegant attire. And the king, at the top of society, chosen by the gods to rule the peoples of the earth, has the most and the best.¹⁵

Brill, 2007), 133–59; also Irene J. Winter, “Art in Empire: The Royal Image and the Visual Dimensions of Assyrian Ideology,” in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki, September 7–11, 1995*, ed. S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), 359–81.

12. Notably, in Assyria, the king was an active participant in cultic duties; he had a definite priestly role. To be sure, all kings in the ANE had some connection to the cult, even if only as patron and ritual bystander (which was the case at Emar, for example; see Fleming, *Installation of Baal's High Priestess*, 99–102. On the pious king in general in Mesopotamia, see Caroline Waerzeggers, “The Pious King: Royal Patronage of Temples,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*, ed. Karen Radner and Eleanor Robson [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 725–51). But in Assyria the king had a remarkably close relationship to the cultus (see, e.g., Peter Machinist, “Kingship and Divinity in Imperial Assyria,” in *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion*, ed. Gary M. Beckman and Theodore J. Lewis [Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006], 156–59). This means that in depictions of Assyrian kingship in particular, priestly iconographic elements are regularly apparent (Ursula Magen, *Assyrische Königsdarstellungen—Apekte der Herrschaft: Eine Typologie*, *Baghdader Forschungen* 9 [Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1986], 65–69).

13. Margaret Cool Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire*, *Acta Iranica* 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1979); Erica Ehrenberg, “Dieu et Mon Droit: Kingship in the Late Babylonian and Early Persian Times,” in *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*, ed. Nicole Brisch, *Oriental Institute Seminars* 4 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008), 103–31.

14. By “fully clothed” I do not necessarily mean fully *covered*. Kings are depicted sometimes with a bare shoulder or often with bare forearms and lower legs. What I mean is that kings are always dressed fully and appropriately for the setting.

15. Alicia J. Batten, “Clothing and Adornment,” *BTB* 40 (2010): 149–50.

Consider, for example, a piece of Assyrian mythology probably related to Assyrian coronation hymns. The text reads:

Ea began to speak, addressing Belet-ili:
 You are Belet-ili, lady of the great gods!
 It is you who have created *lullu-man*,
 now create a king, a man to be in control!
 Encircle the whole of his body with something fine.
 Finish perfectly his appearance, make his body beautiful!¹⁶

The text goes on to describe how the gods gave the king his crown, his throne, his weapons, his terrifying splendor, his beautiful countenance, and so on.¹⁷ These divine gifts prepare the king specifically for his role as divinely appointed warrior and subduer of all chaos.¹⁸ But they also serve to set the king apart in general, to emphasize his special, superhuman status vis-à-vis the rest of creation: his body is encircled with “something fine”—within creation his beauty and appearance are beyond compare. These lines in particular refer to the king’s body and to the magnificence of kingly appearance in general, not to his clothing per se. In the context of a civic ceremony such as a coronation rite or a ritual procession of divine artifacts or the sanctification of a new capital, however, the king’s clothing and accoutrements, which conspicuously marked his actual physical appearance, would be the representations of his special status and aura. What he carried on his body symbolized the mythic status of the kingly body itself. Clothing is wrapped up, so to speak, with identification—with gender, ethnicity, socioeconomics and politics, and so forth.¹⁹ At least in the case of Mesopotamian kings in the first millennium BCE, clothing not only identified kingship at the top of the socioeconomic and political hierarchies but also marked the interrelationship between royalty and the divine realm.²⁰ Given this sort of evidence, it is reasonable to argue that there was an expectation for the king to be clothed in exceptional style.²¹ His body and its clothing were set apart, recognizably different from that of common humanity.

16. COS 1.146 (pp. 1:476–77); Werner Mayer, “Ein Mythos von der Erschaffung des Menschen und des Königs,” *Orientalia* 56 (1987): 55–68.

17. Compare Assurbanipal’s coronation hymn (COS 1.142 [pp. 1:473–74]).

18. C.L. Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East: Military Violence in Light of Cosmology and History*, BZAW 407 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 24–26.

19. Batten, “Clothing and Adornment,” 148–49; Mary Harlow, “Dress and Identity: An Introduction,” in *Dress and Identity*, ed. Mary Harlow, BAR International Series 2356 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2012), 1–5.

20. A. Leo Oppenheim, “The Golden Garments of the Gods,” *JNES* 8 (1949): 172–93.

21. On patterns and decorations on kingly garments in this era, see Eleanor Guralnick, “Neo-Assyrian Patterned Fabrics,” *Iraq* 66 (2004): 221–32.

Interpreting David's (lack of) clothing

The above examples give us some idea as to expectations concerning kingly clothing in general, but what do we make of David's clothing (or lack of it) amid the Ark's procession into Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 15? What can we say about kingly clothing in such ritualistic or ceremonial contexts in ancient Israel and Judah? Scholars have offered a number of conjectural reconstructions of what sorts of ritual or ceremony the episode in 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 15 might reflect—be it an enthronement rite or festival, a reenactment of the divine warrior's mythic victory over chaos, an introduction of a deity into a new city, an annual parading of divine images, a kingly fertility rite, or some combination of several of these options.²² Unfortunately, though, there is little (if any) evidence that can help us understand the king's clothing in such contexts.

For instance, in a commonly cited work, C. L. Seow argues that the procession reflects the West Semitic divine warrior motif, and he illuminates some of the episode's apparent mythological background in its Levantine milieu. Regarding the king's specific actions and clothing, he suggests that David's whirling and prancing reflect animal-like cultic dancing evinced in the Levant and elsewhere in the ANE, and that David's scant clothing in 2 Samuel 6 is comparable to depictions of nude worshippers in ANE iconography.²³ David, however, is a king leading a cultic procession into his new capital; he is not a common cultic participant bringing regular offerings to a deity or performing special rites in a deity's sanctuary.²⁴ In the narrative, the king is subservient to the deity and worships him, to be sure. But comparing David's dancing with depictions of non-kingly worshippers fails to account for the king's prominent position in the social hierarchy. The worshippers on the Uruk vase, for example, are nude, but their king certainly is not.

In a more recent contribution, Bruce Rosenstock compares the episode in 2 Samuel 6 to Greek fertility rituals. His work perhaps sheds some light on the issue of David's self-exposure and Michal's response, especially with regard to ideological expectations in the overarching narrative. "In the case of this particular enthronement ritual," writes Rosenstock,

22. E.g., J.R. Porter, "The Interpretation of 2 Samuel VI and Psalm CXXXII," *JTS* 5 (1954): 161–73; Patrick D. Miller and J.J.M. Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the "Ark Narrative" of 1 Samuel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); McCarter, *II Samuel*, 180–82; Seow, *Politics of David's Dance*; Allan Rosengren Petersen, *The Royal God: Enthronement Festivals in Ancient Israel and Ugarit?* JSOTSup 259 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998); Gary N. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, AB 12A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 629–33; Bruce Rosenstock, "David's Play: Fertility Rituals and the Glory of God in 2 Samuel 6," *JSOT* 31 (2006): 63–80.

23. Seow, *Politics of David's Dance*, 104–18.

24. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 180–82; Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 629–30.

expectations about the “proper” behavior of the king were overturned. ... In effect, Michal and David have exchanged ritual roles. David seems to have been expected to play the serious role of victorious king and Michal was to enact the role of a “player” who engaged in jesting mockery. David, however, assumed the role of jesting “player,” while Michal was cast in the role of serious disparager of the king’s performance.²⁵

Assuming that the procession into Jerusalem has to do with fertility ritual, he goes on to argue that David (and thus the story) is deliberately mocking any theological association between the king, the deity, and procreative success: the story points out Michal’s “theological mistake” and thus critiques the “pan-Mediterranean veneration of divine/royal phallic power.”²⁶

It is not self-evident, however, that the activities in this episode necessarily have to do with securing “procreative fecundity,” as Rosenstock assumes, so we cannot take for granted that David was actively exposing himself as he danced, in some kind of fertility rite, with the purpose of mocking “phallic power” with a carnivalesque gesture.²⁷ Rosenstock’s argument places much weight on YHWH’s blessing of Obed-edom’s house and all his belongings (2 Sam 6:11–12; cf. 1 Chr 13:14; 26:5). This blessing functions as a major catalyst in 2 Samuel’s version of the narrative: David decides to reinitiate the Ark’s procession to Jerusalem when he hears of it, presumably because he wants the same sort of blessing for Jerusalem and his own household there.²⁸ The blessing may indeed imply fecundity in part: the narrator’s comment concerning Michal’s lack of children suggests as much (2 Sam 6:23),²⁹ so does the account of Obed-edom’s posterity

25. Rosenstock, “David’s Play,” 73.

26. *Ibid.*, 74, 78.

27. *Ibid.*, 65. See McCarter, *II Samuel*, 188–89, who emphasizes that the procession does not reflect a sacred marriage rite or some other sexually charged event; rather, it reflects the entry of a god into its capital city.

28. This detail plays a lesser role in Chronicles’ account, in which the story of the Ark’s transfer includes notices concerning David’s palace, his wives and children, his routing of the Philistines, and his activities in Jerusalem to prepare for the Ark’s arrival (see 1 Chr 14:1–15:24). As “the Chronicler” is wont to do, in this case he has “repositioned material from his *Vorlage* of Samuel, recontextualized it, overwritten certain parts, furnished rubrics, introduced material from a variety of biblical psalms, and added new material” (Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 589). Knoppers argues that, in this instance, Chronicles’ presentation of the material relies upon the Zion-centered perspective of Ps 132 (*I Chronicles 10–29*, 590–91).

29. The statement in 2 Sam 6:23 is clear with regard to Michal’s lack of progeny, but it gives no explicit reason for this lack. The syntax of the statement leaves the connection between it and the preceding narrative ambiguous. Some English translations are misleading here, reading a causal conjunction between vv. 22 and 23 (e.g., KJV, NJPS), but nothing in the Hebrew requires such a reading (Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* [New York: Basic Books, 1981], 125–26).

in 1 Chr 26:4–8. In other words, having children is one leitmotif in the passage. Successful procreation, however, is certainly not the only thing implied here in 2 Sam 6, nor is it even the most obvious within the context of Judean discourse on these matters. In a number of texts, a blessed household refers first and foremost to material possessions (e.g., Gen 30:30; 39:5; Job 1:10), and in any case the statement in 2 Sam 6:12 mentions outright that the blessing has to do with Obed-edom's household *and all his belongings*. Rosenstock's analysis, in addition, relies heavily upon Seow's, which has its own difficulties interpreting David's meager clothing and bodily exposure, as mentioned above. To be clear, I agree with Rosenstock that this narrative is concerned with ideological expectations for the glory of the king and his deity (more below), but I do not think that the procession and David's exposure has entirely or even mainly to do with fecundity or ritualistic "phallic display." Drawing analogies between David's dancing during the Ark's procession and ancient Mediterranean fertility rites is, therefore, something of a misstep and in the end helps little in our attempt to understand David's clothing in this episode and its potential import for the Judean readership.

In any case, I argue, the ancient Judean readers of 2 Samuel 6 would have understood David's clothing before the Ark and Michal—his wearing nothing but a skimpy linen ephod and exposing himself in the midst of civic celebration—as somewhat out of the ordinary. The fine linen robes worn by David and his attendants in 1 Chronicles 15 represent something closer to the convention for kingly clothing. David's clothing in 2 Samuel 6 was, with regard to ANE norms, abnormal for a king, despite attempts to argue otherwise. Wearing non-kingly garments—especially garments that might expose oneself during the civic celebration of a deity entering his chosen city—was not standard practice for a ruler in the Persian era or earlier. The king's garments were supposed to set him apart, to mark his divinely chosen and even sacred body, not to reveal his commonness. The question now becomes: What might this abnormality have signified in the context of Persian-period Judah, and what did Persian-period readers make of the abnormality in light of the narrative variant in 1 Chronicles?

David's (lack of) clothing and Michal's disgust

Thus far I have argued that, in the ANE, there was a general expectation that kingly clothing was exceptional and noteworthy. It stood out and marked the king's sociopolitical, economic, and even theological status, his position as a divinely chosen ruler of his people and even the world.

Given this expectation, and given the lack of good evidence suggesting otherwise, it is probable that David's priestly but scanty undergarment in 2 Samuel 6 would have stood out to readers as something out of the ordinary, as something not becoming of a king. Typically, kings did not dress down for rituals or ceremonies like the procession recounted in this text. In any case, nudity in general is associated with shame in Judean literature, Genesis 2–3 being the

famous exemplar.³⁰ It is, for the most part, unbecoming for anyone to go about naked, given humanity's post-Edenic state of existence, let alone the king. Take, for example, Saul's naked prophesying (1 Sam 19:24)—the only other instance of an under- or undressed king in the Judean literature. The people regard this activity as unusual for their ruler: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" they ask. Although the text does not comment directly on Saul's removal of his clothing and his nudity in relation to the ecstatic utterances, it does point to the uncommonness of such actions for someone in his position. Learning of Saul's naked prophesying, the people are taken by surprise.³¹ Also notice that Isaiah's three-year nakedness (Isa 20:2–4), though commanded by YHWH, is an act meant to signify the coming defeat and humiliation of the Egyptians. Generally, nudity is marked as out-of-the-ordinary and even shameful. What, then, can we say about David's (non-)clothing and Michal's responses to it, in 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 15, respectively, within Judean discourse in the early Second Temple era? And what might the discursive interrelationship of these texts tell us about Judean remembering of kingship?

It is important to reemphasize that this entire issue, the (in)appropriateness of David's clothing in relation to his behavior, is a product of Michal's reaction to the procession. The narrator offers no expositional comments on the issue of David's dance and clothing in particular, which "opens the gates to multiple interpretations" of Michal's response.³² In 2 Samuel 6 we read, simply, that Michal despised David for his dancing (6:16) and that, while dancing, David exposed himself in a way Michal considered to be dishonorable (6:20).

As Rosenstock's analysis evinces, it is not uncommon to regard Michal as theologically "mistaken" or somehow in the wrong on this issue. To wit: Antony Campbell comments that 2 Sam 6:16 "brings out Michal's self-imposed exclusion" and argues that Michal has (impiously) kept herself from "the inauguration of

30. Dietmar Neufeld, "The Rhetoric of Body, Clothing and Identity in the Vita and Genesis," *Scriptura* 90 (2005): 679–84.

31. Cf. 1 Sam 10:9–13. In that story, too, Saul prophesies ecstatically and the people respond by asking, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" But in that instance, there is no mention of nakedness. The story in 1 Samuel 10—even though it is notably ambivalent about Saul himself and the function of kingship in general—presents Saul's prophetic activity positively, as a sign of YHWH's spirit coming upon Israel's first king. In 1 Samuel 19, to the contrary, Saul's prophetic activity—and the nudity that goes along with it—is a negative sign, pointing to the removal of YHWH's favor. Saul's moment of naked ecstasy foils his attempt to seize David, the one whom YHWH has chosen to replace the failed king Saul. For more on Saul with regard to clothing, see Sean Cook's contribution to this volume.

32. Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 123. He comments further, "The biblical writer knows as well as any psychologically minded modern that one's emotional reaction to an immediate stimulus can have a complicated prehistory; and by suppressing any causal explanation in his initial statement of Michal's scorn, he beautifully suggests the 'overdetermined' nature of her contemptuous ire, how it bears the weight of everything that has not been said but obliquely intimated about the relation between Michal and David."

a momentous new epoch in the story of Israel.³³ In other words, according to Campbell's reading, David righteously guides and takes part in the festivities, blessing the people in YHWH's name (6:18), while the embittered Michal opts out. In such a reading, Michal's perspective reflects misunderstanding or ignorance or denial concerning these matters, and David's reflects proper understanding and knowledge: David is right—Michal is wrong.³⁴ A closer examination of the discourse, however, reveals that in the case of David's dancing and clothing and bodily exposure, the division between who is "right" and who is "wrong" is not so clear.

There is, without question, a strongly political aspect to the narrative in 2 Samuel 6. Michal's family, at least, does not come off well. Notice that Michal is identified throughout the passage as "the daughter of Saul" (vv. 16, 20, 23). In the passage's closing statement, in v. 23, this genealogical detail is clearly emphasized: the actual subject of the clause is ילד ("child"), but the clause begins with the prepositional phrase למיכל בת שאול ("as for Michal daughter of Saul"), making it quite clear that Saul's household—and thus any potential future Saulide claim to the throne—is at stake here.³⁵ The war between David's and Saul's houses is over, David has completely taken over the kingship, he has also taken Jerusalem and made it his capital, and now he is ushering YHWH's Ark into the city. It is a triumphant moment for Davidic rule indeed.

The exchange between Michal and David (vv. 20–23) highlights this political transition, to be sure, but it also subtly raises a number of other issues in the discourse, issues that would have complicated the readership's understandings of David's behavior and clothing and Michal's reactions to them. Michal, בת שאול, acknowledges David's kingship outright, referring to him as מלך ישראל, but she does so in the midst of a thickly sarcastic remark: "How the king of Israel is honored [כבוד Niph.] today!—the one who has exposed himself today in the sight of his servants' maids, as one of the riffraff [הרקים] might ³⁶ expose himself!" This statement, while acknowledging David's rule, pulls no punches when it comes to David's behavior

33. Antony F. Campbell, *2 Samuel*, FOTL 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 67.

34. Ellen White, "Michal the Misinterpreted," *JSOT* 31 (2007): 451–64. See also David J.A. Clines, "Michal Observed: An Introduction to Reading Her Story," in *Telling Queen Michal's Story: An Experiment in Comparative Interpretation*, ed. David J.A. Clines and Tamara C. Eshkenazi, *JSOTSup* 119 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 54–57, who surveys the common interpretation that Michal's "religious sensibilities are the inferior of David's" (54).

35. E.g., Seow, *Politics of David's Dance*, 130–31; Ina Willi-Plein, "Michal und die Anfänge des Königtums in Israel," in *Congress Volume: Cambridge 1995*, ed. J.A. Emerton (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 416–17; Campbell, *2 Samuel*, 67; A. Graeme Auld, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 415; and Joel Baden, *The Historical David: The Real Life of an Invented Hero* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013), 190.

36. Literally "the empty ones" (from the Hebrew adjective ריק), implying persons that are unprincipled or lacking in character (cf. Judg 9:4; 11:3; 2 Chr 13:7). LXX has τῶν ὀρχουμένων ("the dancers").

and his skimpy clothing. To expose oneself—that is, not to give proper attention to one's dress—is unbecoming for a king. David's response, though, "goes for the political and theological jugular," as Campbell puts it,³⁷ by pointing out that YHWH chose him over Michal's father Saul—David will, therefore, dance before YHWH as he pleases. Furthermore, in direct response to Michal's sarcastic comment, David declares that he will demean himself even more, thus receiving honor (כבוד Niph.) from the aforementioned maids.³⁸ The narrator rounds off the exchange with the statement, "As for Michal daughter of Saul, she had no child to the day of her death."

There are several things going on in this exchange between the king and queen. First, clearly the exchange aims to emphasize the downfall of Saul's line and the rise of David's. As I said above, there is no question about this: the passage has an anti-Saul/pro-David perspective on Israel's kingship. It is David, not Saul, who is king of Israel, who has brought the Ark to its proper resting place in Jerusalem, and whose household will continue. Second, the passage indeed makes a sexual-political statement using clothing, but one that inevitably becomes, within the larger narrative in Samuel-Kings, something of an ironic presaging of David's future troubles with women—his affair with Bathsheba, his impotency with Abishag, and so on.³⁹ David's reversal of Michal's sarcastic critique stands out as an ironic affirmation of his own failures later in his life. In the immediate context it may appear that David has indeed won the political and theological day, but a bird's-eye view of David's story in the book of Samuel (and 1 Kgs 1–2) reveals a reading that questions David's apparent success in the exchange with Michal.⁴⁰ Third, although it is tempting to read the narrator's closing comment as proof that Michal was in the wrong, the comment itself is ambiguous. Being childless is shameful, to be sure (just like being naked), but there is no indication as to the reason for this lifelong shame.⁴¹ Is it a divine punishment brought upon Michal because of her so-called

37. Campbell, *2 Samuel*, 67.

38. This is not the only exchange, in the book of Samuel, that includes a reference to David receiving honor. The priest Ahimelech, trying to defend his support of David, tells Saul that David has received more honor than any other servant in the king's household (1 Sam 22:14). Saul, of course, does not buy Ahimelech's defense, and proceeds to have the priest (and all the inhabitants of Nob) executed. Thus, before becoming king, David receives honor from someone that the king (Saul) sees as a threat to his power, and then Saul's own daughter sarcastically honors David, who is now king, for exposing himself to these maids, whom Michal perhaps sees as a threat to her marriage. See also 1 Sam 15:30 and 2 Sam 10:3, which refer to Saul and his *failure* to receive honor.

39. Frank Crüsemann, "Zwei alttestamentliche Witze: I Sam 21:11–15 und II Sam 6:16 20–23 als Beispiele einer biblischen Gattung," *ZAW* 92 (1980): 223–27; McCarter, *II Samuel*, 188.

40. E.g., John Van Seters, *The Biblical Saga of King David* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 279, observes that David's boastful reference to his divine election in 2 Sam 6:21–22 then makes his humble prayer in 7:18–29 seem strongly hypocritical.

41. Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 415.

“theological mistake,” her “misconstruing” of David’s dancing and self-exposure?⁴² Or is it simply because of David’s own sexual rejection of her, his personal choice because of his distaste for her criticisms?⁴³ There is no clear answer.⁴⁴ It is certain that the discontinuation of Saul’s line is the major issue here—that is what the text wants to emphasize—but precisely how Michal and David’s argument over his dancing and revealing attire plays into this remains uncertain.

At this point, it is worth emphasizing the multivocality of Michal throughout her story in the book of Samuel, as well as the multivocality of David throughout the entire corpus of Judean literature.⁴⁵ In other words, the literature has no single way of speaking about these figures and their import in Israel’s remembered past. The figures of Michal and David, and their roles in the narrative’s plot, are irreducible to any one potential statement in the discourse. Michal is partly responsible for David’s kingship (she saves David’s life, and her marriage to David helps justify his claim to Israel’s throne), and yet she is also a potential threat to it (since she is Saul’s daughter).⁴⁶ The literature’s opinion of David and the import of Davidic kingship in Judah’s/Israel’s ongoing history are unclear, too. Some prophetic texts, for example, envision a future in which a kind of superhuman Davidic kingship is central (e.g., Isa 11:1–5), while others transfer Davidic glory to the people as a collective (e.g., Isa 55:3–5; Zech 12:7–8) or fail to mention anything about David at all (Isa 2:2–4; Mic 4:1–5; Ezek 44–48). Moreover, as I mentioned above, in the book of Samuel itself (and in 1 Kgs 1–2) David’s house takes a turn for the worse as David struggles to control his family and his kingdom.⁴⁷ Many scholars comment on a marked change in David’s fortune after his affair with Bathsheba and the

42. E.g., Baden, *Historical David*, 190, states, “The Bible implies that this was divine punishment for Michal’s behavior,” before going on to argue that what *really* happened (note the subtitle of Baden’s book) was that David refused to have children with her for political reasons to ensure the discontinuation of Saul’s line.

43. Marti J. Steussy, *David: Biblical Portraits of Power* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 74, points out that MT 2 Sam 21:8–9 states that Michal did have sons from another marriage, five of them, whom David hands over to the Gibeonites to be impaled. Thus, in addition to denying Michal children with himself, David enabled the death of her other offspring.

44. Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 125–26.

45. Clines, “Michal Observed”; Athalya Brenner, “Michal and David: Love between Enemies?” in *The Fate of King David: The Past and Present of a Biblical Icon*, ed. Tod Linafelt, Claudia V. Camp and Timothy Beal, LHBOTS 500 (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 260–70.

46. Willi-Plein, “Michal und die Anfänge des Königtums.”

47. Of course, this is mitigated in the balance of the book of Kings, where David stands as the righteous benchmark for kingship. Alison L. Joseph, “Who Is like David? Was David like David? Good Kings in the Book of Kings,” *CBQ* 77 (2015): 20–41, argues therefore that David himself (as represented in the book of Samuel) does not measure up to the Davidic standard of the book of Kings.

subsequent murder of Uriah. The point at which David's fortunes begin to change, however, is blurry. Jacob Wright, for instance, has recently argued that already in 2 Sam 8, well before the Bathsheba episode, David's megalomania and selfish interests are apparent—the king is concerned with making a name for himself rather than for YHWH.⁴⁸ Robert Polzin, too, draws attention to the links between Eli's fall/Samuel's rise and Saul's fall/David's rise in 1 Samuel, which, he argues, establishes a framework for the glorious rise and tragic fall of Davidic kingship in Israel, which ultimately ends in exile.⁴⁹ Within this framework, Polzin suggests that Michal's critique of David and her subsequent childlessness are actually representations of ideals—Michal, in Polzin's reading, signifies the position of the Deuteronomist: critical of kingship in general and thus hoping for a non-kingly, non-dynastic future, that is, a future like Michal's. All this to say, in postmonarchic Judah, the jury was probably still out on David and Michal.⁵⁰

Considering this multivocality, then, we should not rush to conclude that Michal's reaction to David's behavior and state of (un)dress in 2 Samuel 6 is necessarily “wrong” or “mistaken,” from the perspective of Judean readers in the Persian era and later. We cannot assume that, for the literati, David was “right” about his dancing and related uncovering simply because he was David and his house continued while Saul's did not. I repeat: the absolute end of Saulide kingship

48. Jacob L. Wright, *David, King of Israel, and Caleb in Biblical Memory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 89–91.

49. Robert Polzin “A Multivoiced Look at the Michal Narratives,” in *Telling Queen Michal's Story: An Experiment in Comparative Interpretation*, ed. David J.A. Clines and Tamara C. Eshkenazi, JSOTSup 119 (Sheffield: JSOT), 261–69.

50. The jury was still out on Saul as well. Despite Saul's failed kingship, his obvious loss of YHWH's favor, there would have been some underlying sympathy for him among the Judean literati. The book of Samuel contains different voices concerning Saul, as it does concerning David and Michal, voices which speak to the long and complicated history of the book's composition, but which also speak to the mind-sets of those who received and maintained the book in antiquity (David Jobling, *1 Samuel*, Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1998], 19). Note, e.g., a trend toward heroicization of Saul in texts like 1 Sam 11 and 2 Sam 21:10–14 (Brian R. Doak, “The Fate and Power of Heroic Bones and the Politics of Bone Transfer in Ancient Israel and Greece,” *HTR* 106 [2013]: 201–16). There is also the book of Esther and its redemption of Saul's failure to eradicate the Amalekites. Later Jewish literature, too, offers a variety of opinions about Israel's failed first king: Rabbinic texts generally praise him, Pseudo-Philo criticizes him, and Josephus, devoting much attention to him, provides something of a middle ground (Louis H. Feldman, “Josephus' View of Saul,” in *Saul in Story and Tradition*, ed. Carl S. Ehrlich and Marsha C. White, FAT 47 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006], 214–44; Hanna Liss, “The Innocent King: Saul in Rabbinic Exegesis,” in *Saul in Story and Tradition*, 245–60; Joachim Vette, “Samuel's ‘Farewell Speech’: Theme and Variation in 1 Samuel 12, Josephus, and Pseudo-Philo,” in *Literary Constructions of Identity in the Ancient World*, ed. Hanna Liss and Manfred Oeming [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010], 325–39).

is certain in the text, but the (in)appropriateness of David's action and his clothing in the narrative are open to debate. Moreover, given the general sociocultural expectation for kingly clothing in an ANE milieu, outlined above, I would even suggest that the discourse in ancient Judah leaned toward *David* being in the "wrong" on this issue, at least when it came to his clothing and his related bodily exposure.

Here it is informative to turn to Chronicles and its contribution to the discussion. As I mentioned at the outset, Chronicles' version of the narrative differs in its recounting of David's clothing. First Chronicles 15:27 states that during the procession, David was "wrapped in a robe of fine linen," as were all the other cultic functionaries, and it adds, seemingly as an afterthought, that also "upon David was a linen ephod." Chronicles' version differs, too, in its recounting of Michal. First Chronicles 15:29, just like 2 Sam 6:16, relates how Michal was watching out the window, how she saw David's dancing and playing about, and how she despised him for it.⁵¹ The account in Chronicles, however, does not relate anything about the sardonic exchange between the king and queen. Instead, it recounts his appointing of Levitical servants and the psalms they sang in praise of YHWH (16:4–43), saying nothing more about Michal.

Much could be, and has been, said about the similarities and differences between the book of Samuel's and Chronicles' versions of the Ark procession.⁵² But here I want to focus only on the issue of David's clothing and Michal. The fact that Chronicles makes a point of mentioning David's "robe of fine linen," a point not made in Samuel, and that Samuel, unlike Chronicles, includes a tension-filled exchange between David and Michal concerning indecent exposure, is a conspicuous difference in the versions. What, though, might this tell us about Judean understandings of kingly clothing?

It is possible, even probable, that Chronicles' version attempts to cover up David's wardrobe mishap, so to speak. In this way, it lends sympathy to Michal's own understanding of the situation in 2 Samuel 6. Chronicles' perspective seems to be in line with Michal's in 2 Samuel 6, that is, a king should be properly clothed at such an event.⁵³ However, Chronicles also shows no favor toward Michal—she

51. On Michal "at the window," see Nehama Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window: Biblical Tales of Oppression and Escape* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 35–41, who comments that Michal's "two window scenes [1 Sam 19:11–12 and 2 Sam 6:16] ... mark her transformation from power to powerlessness" (35).

52. See, e.g., Knoppers' extensive discussion (*I Chronicles* 10–29, 578–661).

53. See Clines, "Michal Observed," 59, who argues that Michal believes David is not acting like a proper king; also Ora Horn Prouser, "Suited to the Throne: The Symbolic Use of Clothing in the David and Saul Narratives," *JSOT* 71 (1996): 27–37, who shows how, in the narrative of Saul's fall and David's rise, Saul continually loses clothing (or pieces of clothing) while David gains it, thus symbolizing David's accession to the throne. In 2 Sam 6, then, David's self-exposure, his lack of proper clothing, might symbolize his lack of kingliness in this situation.

appears only once in the book, and in this instance she is represented as despising David for his celebratory dancing. In Chronicles' account of the Ark's procession, there is no hint that David's behavior is questionable. It is, to the contrary, exceptionally remarkable. He conducts extensive preparations to prepare the people and Jerusalem for the Ark's arrival, he appoints proper cultic personnel to tend to it after its installation, and he thus paves the way for the completion of cultic centralization in Jerusalem under Solomon.⁵⁴ Michal, then, stands out as the lone critic, unduly despising the king and his (fully clothed) celebrations. It seems that Chronicles wants its readers to forget David's skimpily clothed display, which Michal points out in 2 Samuel 6 and which apparently does not follow kingly conventions, but also wants the readership to remember Michal as misguided in her disgust with David. In Chronicles, the king's dancing, in and of itself, is acceptable and even preferable, especially since Saul, and obviously his daughter too, had little regard for the Ark (1 Chr 13:3).⁵⁵

At the same time, the book of Samuel, which Judean literati also undoubtedly read and reread and contemplated (Chronicles did not replace or override it), presents Michal's critique ambiguously, perhaps even sympathetically, as part of a narrative that is more expressly critical of David and his kingship. Did the postmonarchic readership—those responsible for the maintenance and promulgation of this literature, including the books of Samuel and Chronicles—want to have its cake and eat it too?

Recent developments in cognitive psychology research offer some insights that may help us address this question. According to the work of Charles Stone and William Hirst, a particular narrative detail is more likely to be forgotten if only the detail itself is bracketed, and not its immediate narrative context; the detail is less likely to be forgotten, however, if its immediate narrative context is bracketed too.⁵⁶ For example, when I assign ancient texts to my students, I ask them to read the texts closely before class, and then I often review and paraphrase the narratives in class before we discuss them. If I were to assign the standard version of *Gilgamesh*, for instance, and then, while paraphrasing it in class, if I were to omit Gilgamesh and Enkidu's battle with Humbaba from my paraphrase, the students would, in our subsequent discussion, be more likely to *forget* that portion of the narrative, according to Stone and Hirst's research. However, if I were not to paraphrase the story at all, and simply let the students recall the text themselves, they would be more likely to *remember* the battle with Humbaba (i.e., assuming they had actually done their homework!).

54. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 659; Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*, trans. Anna Barber (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 367–68.

55. Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 308.

56. Charles B. Stone and William Hirst, "(Induced) Forgetting to Form a Collective Memory," *Memory Studies* 7 (2014): 314–27.

This sort of research raises interesting questions about what details an ancient reader might have bracketed or forgotten while reading or discussing the book of Samuel or Chronicles. We know, for example, that reading Chronicles would certainly not induce “forgetting” of Michal. She is clearly present in the account, as is her disgust at David’s dancing, amid many of the same details that appear also in Samuel. This case is unlike, say, the case of Bathsheba, who does not show up at all in Chronicles’ account of the David and Solomon narrative. In the case of Chronicles’ bracketing of the Bathsheba affair, reading the book’s historiography might actually induce forgetting of Bathsheba all together: Chronicles tells of Uriah, Nathan, Joab and the siege of Rabbah, and of course David and Solomon—most of the major elements surrounding the Bathsheba episode—but Bathsheba herself goes unmentioned.⁵⁷ Stone and Hirst’s work suggests that in this case, Bathsheba would indeed be forgotten.⁵⁸

With Michal, Chronicles would certainly contribute to the remembering of the queen herself and her critical stance toward David, but it would perhaps, at the same time, induce the forgetting of specific details of her criticism. It would, thus, encourage its readership to forget that Michal herself had possibly been correct about David’s lack of clothing and his bodily exposure. But the book simultaneously would have reinforced her position that a king should indeed be fully clothed, in a robe of fine linen no less, in the context of a civic celebration such as the Ark’s procession. In this way, the book effectively supported Michal’s conclusion

57. She does, however, show up in Chronicles’ genealogies, but with a different name: Bathshua, “daughter of error” (1 Chr 3:5). While the historiographical narrative in Chronicles perhaps induced forgetting of Bathsheba, the genealogies perhaps “subtly denigrated” her (Sara M. Koenig, *Isn’t This Bathsheba? A Study in Characterization*, PTMS 177 [Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011], 43–44).

58. Of course, the problem is, Stone and Hirst’s research involves single conversations between individuals and how groups remember details from single occurrences of news reports and public events—instances in which someone/thing did not and could not provide a reminder of forgotten details. Their research does not address the ongoing rereading and comparison of written texts. The literati in Judah must have had constant access to a library of these texts, which enabled them to read, reread, repeatedly compare and consider similarities and differences in the various narratives, in ways that are not analogue to the situations and contexts that present-day social psychologists have analyzed thus far. The literati would have read Samuel and Chronicles time and again, thus limiting the possibility of ever really “forgetting” Bathsheba and her import in David’s story in that social context—instead, reading Chronicles gave the literati license to deemphasize the import of Bathsheba in the monarchic past. Perspectives from cognitive psychology are nonetheless beginning to offer some helpful heuristics for approaching these questions, providing new ways to think about the socio-mnemonic relationship between these ancient books. And in the case of Bathsheba, for instance, the work of Stone and Hirst provides one way of understanding how the Judeans might have successfully bracketed or “forgotten” her during the act of reading Chronicles.

about David's inappropriate clothing but, by removing her actual comments about bodily exposure from the equation, it encouraged a negative memory of the queen in general. Related to this issue, of course, is David's behavior in the first place. By bracketing any mention of David's revealing display, his scant clothing and the "glory" it provided him—in addition to bracketing Bathsheba and the fallout from that episode—reading Chronicles would have successfully induced forgetting of the entire sexual-politic that features so prominently in the book of Samuel.

We may apply the same sort of thinking in the other direction to the book of Samuel's account. The version in Samuel does not mention anything about a "robe of fine linen" and of course the discourse there prominently features the sexual-politic and David's struggles in the latter part of his reign. Thus, the act of reading this account would have induced "forgetting" of knowledge concerning these matters known from Chronicles' version. The Chronicles account, then, did not necessarily "whitewash" David or excuse him, as it were, from what appears to have been a kingly impropriety. It made one statement—Samuel made another—in a multivocal discourse about the king, his actions, and his clothing in the past. When it came to kingship, Judean discourse was thoroughly multivocal: it presented a variety of claims about kingship in the past, about kingship's ongoing viability as a concept for thinking about the postmonarchic present, and about the potential for a return of Israelite kingship in the future.⁵⁹ The Judean literati of the early Second Temple era had Chronicles but they had Samuel too. Each text contributed to the Judean remembering of kingship, and the various voices in each text balanced each other and played off each other. Moreover, as in this particular case, the texts induced the "forgetting" of details in support of particular ideological and historiographical statements about the successes and failures of the Israelite/Judahite monarchy.

At stake here, then, is an ideology of kingly and divine glory, as Rosenstock argues, and clothing appears to be a foundational element of that ideology. The ideological debate, however, did not center itself on the effectiveness of phallic power or the appropriateness of David's lack of clothing and his bodily display—in fact, there seems to be little question that, for the Judeans, it was inappropriate for a king to march into a city, his deity in tow, wearing nothing but a skimpy undergarment. The question of clothing, then, in 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 15, would have been, simply: What exactly was David wearing?⁶⁰

59. Ian D. Wilson, *Kingship and Memory in Ancient Judah* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

60. My thanks go to everyone who participated in the PNWSBL Hebrew Bible Research Group on Clothing. It was an outstanding group that produced keen research and fruitful discussions. Special thanks go to Sara Koenig and Tony Finitsis for their detailed and constructive feedback on earlier versions of this particular chapter and to my research assistant Dariya Veenstra, who helped prepare the manuscript for publication.