



# Collective Violence and Memory in the Ancient Mediterranean

*Edited by*

Sonja Ammann, Helge Bezold, Stephen Germany  
and Julia Rhyder

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# Contents

- Preface VII  
List of Figures IX  
Abbreviations XI  
Notes on Contributors XV
- 1 Introduction 1  
*Sonja Ammann*
- 2 The Ruins of Jericho (Joshua 6) and the Memorialization of  
Violence 21  
*Angelika Berlejung*
- 3 Memorializing Saul's Wars in Samuel and Chronicles 56  
*Stephen Germany*
- 4 Fighting Annihilation: The Justification of Collective Violence in the  
Book of Esther and in Its Cultural Context 71  
*Helge Bezold*
- 5 Hellenizing Hanukkah: The Commemoration of Military Victory in the  
Books of the Maccabees 92  
*Julia Rhyder*
- 6 Memories of Violence in the Material Imagery of Karkamiš and Sam'al:  
The Motifs of Severed Heads and the Enemy Under Chariot Horses 110  
*Izak Cornelius*
- 7 Israel's Violence in Egypt's Cultural Memory 128  
*Antonio Loprieno*
- 8 Real Fights and Burlesque Parody: The Depiction of Violence in the  
Inaros Cycle 144  
*Damien Agut-Labordère*
- 9 Material Responses to Collective Violence in Classical Greece 159  
*Nathan T. Arrington*

- 10 Remembering and Forgetting the Sack of Athens 189  
*David C. Yates*
- 11 The Darkest Hour (?): Military Defeats during the Second Punic War in  
Roman Memory Culture 231  
*Simon Lentzsch*
- 12 Rebellious Narratives, Repeat Engagements, and Roman  
Historiography 250  
*Jessica H. Clark*
- Index of Modern Authors 269  
Index of Geographical Names 271  
Index of Ancient Sources 273  
Index of Subjects 281

# Memorializing Saul's Wars in Samuel and Chronicles

*Stephen Germany*

## Abstract

This essay proposes that, within the biblical books of Samuel and Chronicles, there are two distinct narrative modes of memorializing the leadership of Israel's first king, Saul, in war. Whereas 1 Sam 31 and 2 Sam 21 negotiate the remembrance of Saul through their depiction of geographical space, 2 Sam 1 depicts a textualized memorialization of Saul's heroism performed by David. These two modes, one spatial and one verbal, can be regarded as two different types of sites of memory that are expressed in narrative form in the biblical text. They also serve distinct rhetorical functions. The spatial mode participates in a broader discourse on Israelite identity—specifically, the status of Transjordan and the identification of its population as insiders or outsiders—while the poetic-performative mode contributes to an idealized depiction of another king of Israel: David.

## Keywords

Saul – book of Samuel – book of Chronicles – Transjordan

Anyone who reads the book of Samuel from beginning to end could rightly ask why it is not instead called the “book of Saul and David,” because these two figures—Israel's first two kings—occupy far more space in the narrative than the figure of Samuel does.<sup>1</sup> What is more, the biblical “biographies” of Saul and David are developed in more detail than those of any other Israelite or Judahite king, together occupying nearly as much space as the history of all of Israel and

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<sup>1</sup> The present essay was written as part of the Swiss National Science Foundation project “Transforming Memories of Collective Violence in the Hebrew Bible” (project number 181219).

Judah's subsequent kings combined.<sup>2</sup> This fact alone already points to the special place of Saul and David within the larger history of kingship in Israel set forth in the combined books of Samuel and Kings. Moreover, the rich literary style of the stories, including ample dialogue and glimpses into the characters' inner thoughts, contrasts with the shorter and less dramatized depictions of Israel's and Judah's subsequent kings. This raises a question: Could much of what is found in the stories about Saul and David in the book of Samuel better be understood as historical fiction written by Israelite and Judahite scribes living in later times, who used the figures of Saul and David to reflect on issues of their own day? This view has been increasingly adopted by specialists on the book of Samuel, who tend to regard the major redactional shaping of the book as beginning no earlier than the eighth century BCE—that is, roughly two centuries after Saul and David are reported to have reigned.<sup>3</sup>

This general observation has important implications for the topic of this study—namely, the literary memorialization of Saul's wars with two of Israel's neighbors, the Ammonites and the Philistines. Just as for the book of Samuel as a whole, it cannot be assumed that the narratives about Saul's wars stem from the time of Saul himself; rather, because we lack evidence to the contrary, we should assume that the stories about these wars, as well as their narrativized memorialization, are literary constructions reflecting the symbolic universe and the rhetorical aims of later scribes. The same applies to the parallel accounts of these stories in the book of Chronicles, which largely presuppose the narratives in the book of Samuel and recast them in line with the aims of their Persian- or Hellenistic-period author(s).

Within the biblical texts in the books of Samuel and Chronicles that memorialize Saul's wars with the Ammonites and Philistines, I will propose that there are two distinct narrative modes of memorializing Saul's leadership in war, namely, a spatial mode and a poetic-performative mode. Whereas 1Sam 31 and 2Sam 21 negotiate the remembrance of Saul through their depiction of geographical space, 2Sam 1 depicts a textualized memorialization of Saul's heroism performed by David. These two modes can be regarded as two different types of "sites of memory" that are expressed in narrative form in the biblical text.<sup>4</sup> They

2 The narratives about Saul and David in 1Sam 9:1–1Kgs 2:11 span 1,391 verses, while the narrative history of the monarchy from Solomon to Zedekiah in 1Kgs 2:12–2Kgs 25:30 spans 1,427 verses.

3 See, e.g., Dietrich, *Samuel, Teilband 1*, 6.

4 On "sites of memory," see Nora, *Les lieux*, as well as the discussion of modified versions of this concept in Erll, *Memory*, 22–27.

also serve distinct rhetorical functions, whereby the spatial mode participates in a broader discourse on Israelite identity—namely, the status of Transjordan and the identification of its population as insiders or outsiders—and the poetic-performative mode contributes to creating an idealized memory of another king of Israel: David.

## 1 Prelude: Saul's Victory over the Ammonites (1 Samuel 11)

Before turning to the first case study of the narrativized memorialization of Saul in 1Sam 31 and its parallel in 1Chr 10, it is necessary first to consider the story of Saul's debut as a military leader in 1Sam 11. In this narrative, Saul rescues the city of Jabesh-gilead in the eastern Jordan Valley from an imminent attack by the Ammonites, one of Israel's neighbors to the east of the Jordan. According to the Hebrew Masoretic Text, this aggression begins when Nahash, king of the Ammonites, besieges Jabesh-gilead and threatens to gouge out the right eye of all of the town's inhabitants, with the intention of bringing disgrace "upon all Israel" (v. 2).<sup>5</sup> When Saul hears of the Jabeshites' plight, he invokes all Israel to join in battle to rescue them.<sup>6</sup> The battle itself, in which Saul and his troops defeat the Ammonites in their camp, is recounted very tersely, occupying only one verse in the entire chapter: "The next day Saul put the people in three companies. At the morning watch they came into the camp and cut down the Ammonites until the heat of the day; and those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together" (1Sam 11:11). The upshot of Saul's victory, however, is significant: "So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before Yhwh in Gilgal" (1Sam 11:15). In this respect, the book of Samuel depicts the institution of kingship in Israel as born out of two

5 The wording of this passage suggests that the text's author regards Jabesh-gilead as part of Israel rather than as a non-Israelite city; for this view, see also Campbell, *1 Samuel*, 116. There is a long plus prior to 1Sam 11 in the Qumran manuscript 4QSamuel<sup>a</sup>. While earlier scholarship often regarded this plus as part of the original narrative, there is a growing consensus in more recent scholarship that it is a late addition to the text; see Kratz, "Nahash," with reference to further literature.

6 In 1Sam 11:10, the inhabitants of Jabesh further agree to submit to Saul's authority provided that he delivers them from Nahash. The wording of this verse could imply, in contrast to v. 2b, that the Jabeshites were not previously part of Israel. Contrary to the view that the Jabeshites' non-Israelite status is original to the narrative and their Israelite status is secondary (Edelman, "Saul's Rescue," 202–205), the reverse seems more likely, with v. 10 possibly being a later addition, especially considering that the Jabeshites' commitment to "come out to you" lacks a fulfillment report in the verses that follow.

instances of collective violence: the threat of violence against the city of Jabesh-gilead and Saul's response to that threat through a military attack against the Ammonites.

## 2 Saul's Death in Battle against the Philistines (1 Samuel 31//1 Chronicles 10)

Saul's rescue of Jabesh-gilead in 1 Sam 11 forms the background to the first case of narrativized memorialization to be discussed here—namely, the aftermath of Saul's death in battle against the Philistines as recounted in 1 Sam 31 and in a parallel account in 1 Chr 10. In both versions of the story, the Israelites retreat from the Philistines in battle, with many Israelites dying on Mount Gilboa. In the process of the retreat, the Philistines kill three of Saul's sons, and a Philistine archer also strikes Saul with an arrow, mortally wounding him. Seeing that he will not survive, Saul falls upon his sword in order to hasten his death. The next day, the Philistines find the bodies of Saul and his sons on Mount Gilboa, cut off Saul's head, and take Saul's armor as a trophy of their victory.<sup>7</sup> Following this, the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead reappear on the scene for the first time since Saul's rescue of their city in 1 Sam 11. Having heard of Saul's death, the Jabeshites bring the bodies of Saul and his sons to their city, bury them under a prominent tree, and fast for seven days, thus paying their final respects to the figure who had saved them in a time of need.

The two versions of the story of Saul's death in 1 Sam 31 and 1 Chr 10 contain several important differences in detail, which indicates that the memorialization of Saul's death was a topic of particular interest, and perhaps also dispute, among different biblical authors.<sup>8</sup> Some of the most significant differences between the two versions of the story relate to the treatment of Saul's body both by the Philistines and by the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead. In 1 Sam

7 See also Nathan T. Arrington's essay in this volume, where he notes that the removal of armor from the battlefield and its dedication in sanctuaries was common in Greek culture. On the motif of decapitation in battle in ancient Near Eastern culture, see Dolce, "Losing One's Head" in the Ancient Near East.

8 Another version of the story is found in the Greek text of 1 Sam 31 in Codex Vaticanus, which does not refer to the Philistines' beheading of Saul's corpse. Here, when the Philistines find Saul's body, they simply turn it over (καὶ ἀποστρέφουσιν αὐτόν), apparently in order to identify Saul and/or in order to facilitate the removal of his armor. For further discussion, see Hunziker-Rodewald, "Wo nur ist Sauls Kopf geblieben?," 281–283 and Bezzel, "Chronistisch beeinflusste Korrekturen," 195.

31, after the Philistines decapitate Saul's body and bring his armor to the temple of Astarte (Heb. בית עשתרת) as a trophy, they hang his body on the wall of the city of Beth-shan in the western Jordan Valley.<sup>9</sup> Following these events, the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead come to Beth-shan, take down the bodies of Saul and his sons, bring them to Jabesh, cremate them, and inter their bones under "the terebinth in Jabesh" (1Sam 31:11–13).<sup>10</sup> Notably, the reference to "the terebinth in Jabesh" (with the definite article) in verse 13 indicates that a specific and well-known site is in view here. This could suggest that this detail serves either to reinforce an existing tradition associating "the terebinth in Jabesh" with Saul's burial place (perhaps including the practice of visiting the site) or to create such a tradition and practice for the first time.

The version of Saul's death in battle in Chronicles begins in the same way as its parallel in 1Sam 31, yet the two versions diverge at the point where the Philistines find Saul's body. Unlike in 1Sam 31, where the Philistines hang Saul's body on the wall of Beth-shan, 1Chr 10 does not mention the fate of Saul's body or indeed the city of Beth-shan but states that the Philistines took Saul's *head* and put it on display in the temple of their god, Dagon. In line with this depiction of the Philistines' treatment of Saul's mortal remains, 1Chr 10 says nothing about the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead taking down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth-shan; rather, the reader has to assume that the inhabitants of Jabesh took Saul's body directly from the battlefield. In addition, 1Chr 10 says nothing about the inhabitants of Jabesh burning the bodies of Saul and his sons prior to burying their bones, as is the case in 1Sam 31.

The question of which of these two versions is earlier and which is later is debated. Following the more classic approach of regarding the Chronicles version as a reinterpretation of the version in Samuel, some scholars have

9 Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.105 mentions that there was a temple to Astarte in Ashkelon; see Campbell, *1Samuel*, 288. The reference to the temple of Astarte in 1Sam 31:10 thus has a plausible Persian period background, even if this does not rule out other possible dates for this reading.

10 Kaiser, "Der historische und biblische König Saul," 542 n. 94 notes the discrepancy between 1Sam 31:10, where only Saul's body is pinned to the wall, and v. 12, where the Jabeshites take down the bodies of Saul *and his sons*. According to Wright, *David*, 67 n. 1, the reference to Saul's sons in v. 12 suggests that vv. 11–13 are a later addition. As for cremation, several scholars have noted that the burning of the bones of Saul and his sons is not a typical Israelite practice and thus serves to mark the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead as non-Israelite, in contrast to the depiction in 1Sam 11; see, e.g., Brooks, *Saul and the Monarchy*, 92 and Wright, *David*, 66–68. For a more critical approach to the possibility that the practice of cremation is a marker of non-Israelite identity, see McKenzie, *Chronicles's Use*, 59–60 and Bezzel, "Chronistisch beeinflusste Korrekturen," 199.

argued that Chronicles omitted the reference to the Jabeshites removing Saul's body from Beth-shan in order to downplay the Gileadites' heroism.<sup>11</sup> A number of other scholars, however, have called this approach into question and argued that 1Chr 10 preserves an earlier, shorter version of the story.<sup>12</sup> Scholars who follow this line of interpretation consider that the earlier form of the narrative preserved in 1Chr 10 reflects a more positive attitude toward both Saul and the inhabitants of Jabesh, while the hanging of Saul's body on the wall of Beth-shan in 1Sam 31 serves to denigrate the figure of Saul, and the burning of his bones serves to mark the inhabitants of Jabesh as non-Israelites.<sup>13</sup> Considering that the original story of Saul's rescue of Jabesh-gilead in 1Sam 11 seems to have depicted Jabesh-gilead as part of Israel, I tend to favor the view that the material unique to 1Sam 31 belongs to a later revision of the story by scribes who sought to mark the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead as non-Israelites.<sup>14</sup> The narrative description of the Jabeshites' memorialization of Saul specific to 1Sam 31 thus does more than simply provide a new image of the events surrounding Saul's death; rather, it participates in a wider discourse on whether or not the inhabitants of Transjordan can be identified as members of Israel. If it is correct that these details were not yet present in the version of Samuel known by the author(s) of Chronicles, then this would suggest a late Persian or Hellenistic historical context for the more geographically restrictive stance taken in 1Sam 31:11–13.

11 E.g., Wright, *David*, 75. If, however, it is correct that the earliest version of Saul's rescue of Jabesh-gilead in 1Sam 11 depicted Jabesh-gilead as part of Israel and was only later reworked in 1Sam 11:10 to imply that Jabesh was *not* part of Israel, then it is possible that the *Vorlage* of 1Chr 10 imagined the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead as Israelite, while later revisions to 1Sam 31 sought to depict them as non-Israelite through their practice of cremation.

12 Cf. Ho, "Conjectures and Refutations," 96–97; Hunziker-Rodewald, "Wo nur ist Sauls Kopf geblieben?," 296 n. 64; Knoppers, *1Chronicles 10–29*, 526; (tentatively) Doak, "Fate and Power," 201 n. 1; and Doak, *Heroic Bodies*, 165.

13 For Ho, "Conjectures and Refutations," 95 and Adam, *Saul und David*, 87, the burning of Saul's body is a further sign of disrespect; Adam compares it with the defilement of the corpse of Ptolemy IV Philopator by burning in 204 BCE (see Polyb., *Hist.* 15.25). On the other hand, Edelman, *King Saul*, 295; Kuberski, "La crémation," 200; and Dietrich, *Samuel, Teilband 3*, 193 interpret the burning of Saul's body as a sign of respect.

14 There is no doubt that 1Chr 10:13–14 represent a Chronistic interpretation of Saul's death on Mount Gilboa as a punishment for Saul's earlier sins; so Zalewski, "Purpose," 456. It does not, however, necessarily follow from this that the present wording of 1Sam 31 "presents Saul with honour," as Zalewski suggests.

### 3 David's Lament over Saul (2 Samuel 1)

Immediately following the notice of the Jabeshites' honoring of Saul's mortal remains in the last chapter of 1 Samuel, the opening chapter of 2 Samuel describes David's reaction to Saul's death.<sup>15</sup> Upon learning of Saul's death, David expresses his grief by tearing his clothes, mourning for Saul and his son Jonathan (2 Sam 1:12), and uttering a song of lament over Saul and Jonathan that refers specifically to their death in battle (cf. 1 Sam 31:1–6).<sup>16</sup> The song clearly depicts both Saul and Jonathan in a heroic light, without any hint of a critique of Saul. Here, the fact that David orders that this song be taught to the people of Judah reflects a poetic-performative memorialization of Saul within the world of the narrative. In contrast to the Jabeshites' memorialization of Saul through his burial, which is spatially fixed and thus may have been difficult to reactivate by certain readers of the book of Samuel through cultural practices—for example, for readers in the diaspora, for whom a journey to visit Saul's burial site would not have been practical—David's poetic memorialization of Saul can be reenacted by the text's readers regardless of their location.<sup>17</sup> On a rhetorical level, David's memorialization of course does more than simply eulogize the figure of Saul. It also serves to reinforce the depiction of David's treatment of Saul, even after Saul's death, as irreproachable and thus marks David as setting the standard both for how Israel's kings should act and how they should be remembered.<sup>18</sup>

### 4 The Transferal of Saul's Bones (2 Samuel 21:12–14)

A further episode related to the memorialization of Saul appears in 2 Sam 21:12–14, which narrates David's transferal of Saul's bones from Jabesh-gilead

15 The received form of 2 Sam 1:1–16 contains an alternative version of Saul's death in battle, although this need not detain us here because it is not directly related to the memorialization of Saul in the world of the text. For a succinct overview of the main divergences between the account of Saul's death in 1 Sam 31 and in 2 Sam 1:1–16, see Bezzel, "Numerous Deaths," 327. On the literary relationship between the two accounts, cf. the divergent views of Fischer, *Von Hebron nach Jerusalem*, 18–23; Adam, *Saul und David*, 83, 89; and Dietrich, *Samuel, Teilband 3*, 214–215.

16 For a review of scholarship on David's lament in 2 Sam 1:19–27, see Dietrich, *Samuel, Teilband 3*, 258–259. On the comparison of laments for fallen warriors in Greek literature with the David stories, see already Gordon, "Homer and Bible," 90 and Isser, *Sword*, 28.

17 On the refiguration of literary memories in the world of the reader, see Erll, *Memory*, 155.

18 Cf. Smith, *Poetic Heroes*, 275: "Many modern commentators would—and arguably should—see ideological reasons for finding such a poem on David's lips."

to the land of Benjamin west of the Jordan. This passage comes at the end of a story that opens with a notice of a long-running famine in the land during David's reign.<sup>19</sup> In response to the famine, David inquires of Yhwh, who discloses that there is bloodguilt on Saul and his descendants because Saul killed the Gibeonites, the inhabitants of one of the towns in Saul's home region of Benjamin (2 Sam 21:1), an act that is mentioned nowhere else in the Bible. Seeing that he needs to bring the famine to an end, David asks the Gibeonites how he can clear Saul's bloodguilt, and the Gibeonites ask David to hand over seven of Saul's descendants to be executed, to which David agrees (vv. 2–9).<sup>20</sup>

Following the enactment of this execution, 2 Sam 21:12–14 reports rather abruptly that David went and took the bones of Saul and Jonathan from the people of Jabesh-gilead—who had, according to this text, *stolen* them from Beth-shan—and buried them in the land of Benjamin, in the tomb of Saul's father, Kish. This passage does not have a direct bearing on the story about Saul's bloodguilt in verses 1–11 and is most likely a later addition to that episode.<sup>21</sup> In terms of subject matter, these particular verses connect back to a short notice about David being informed of Saul's burial in Jabesh earlier in the book, in 2 Sam 2.<sup>22</sup> Yet, whereas there David praises the Jabeshites' action

19 While many earlier commentators assumed that the story in 2 Sam 21:1–10 (11) was originally located prior to 2 Sam 9 and was later moved to the so-called appendix at the end of the book of Samuel (2 Sam 21–24), scholars have more recently tended to regard it as having been placed in its present literary context from the outset; see, e.g., Van Seters, "David and the Gibeonites," 537; Hutzli, "L'exécution," 89–90; and Edenburg, "11 Samuel 21:1–14 and 11 Sam 23,1–7," 169.

20 Within 2 Sam 21:1–11, vv. 2b–3aα and v. 7 are widely regarded as later additions; see, e.g., Hentschel, "Die Hinrichtung," 104–105 and Edenburg, "11 Sam 21,1–14 and 11 Sam 23,1–7," 168, 173–174, with reference to further literature. In contrast, Van Seters, "David and the Gibeonites," 539 n. 14 argues that v. 2 is essential to the narrative, while Lee-Sak, "Polemical Propaganda," 126 does the same for v. 7.

21 Thus also Lee-Sak, "Polemical Propaganda," 126; against Bezzel, "Chronistisch beeinflusste Korrekturen," 202, who considers that relocating the bones of Saul and Jonathan was the original solution to the crisis and that the theme of the Gibeonites in 2 Sam 21:1\*, 2–11 is a later expansion. Hentschel, "Die Hinrichtung," 105–107; Dietrich and Münger, "Die Herrschaft," 45; Chavel, "Compositry and Creativity," 50–51; and Darshan, "Reinterment," 643 treat vv. 1–11 and 12–14 as originally independent traditions, thus sidestepping the issue.

22 Because 2 Sam 2:4b–7 presupposes 2 Sam 1, 2 Sam 21:12–14 also postdates 2 Sam 1; thus also Bezzel, "Chronistisch beeinflusste Korrekturen," 203. Dietrich and Münger, "Die Herrschaft," 44 plausibly interpret David's message to the inhabitants of Jabesh as a claim to David's rule over Transjordan from the very beginning of his reign.

and thus implicitly accepts Saul's place of burial, here David's action suggests that Jabesh-gilead is an unacceptable final resting place for Saul's bones.<sup>23</sup> The depiction of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead as "stealing" (גנבו) Saul's bones from Beth-shan also implies that it was not their prerogative to perform the final rites on Saul's mortal remains, which could suggest that the Jabeshites are imagined here as non-Israelites who deprived Israel of the ability to pay its final respects to Saul. In this sense, 2Sam 21:12–14 can be regarded as a later revision of 2Sam 2 that relocates a Transjordanian site of memory associated with Saul to the west of the Jordan and calls into question the Jabeshites' identity as Israelites. In other words, the author of these verses sought to advance a more Cisjordan-only view of Israelite identity.<sup>24</sup>

Although 2Sam 21:12–14 is likely a later supplement to the preceding narrative about Saul's bloodguilt, a comparison of these verses with extrabiblical sources reveals that their placement there is far from arbitrary.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, several Greek narratives describe how, in response to a crisis that befalls a city (such as war or famine), an oracle instructs the city's leaders to bring the bones of a past hero to the city, which results in a resolution of the crisis.<sup>26</sup> I will mention just one of these examples here.<sup>27</sup> In Herodotus's *History*, the Lacedaemonians inquire of the oracle at Delphi for advice in overcoming their repeated defeats at the hands of the Tegeans, whereupon they are instructed to bring the bones of Orestes, the son of the legendary king Agamemnon, from Tegea to Lacedaemonia. Herodotus goes on to recount how a certain Lichas discovers the grave of Orestes in the city of Tegea, persuades the owner of the property to let him settle there, then digs up the bones and brings

23 On this discrepancy, cf. Van Seters, "David and the Gibeonites," 542 and Darshan, "Reinterment," 640.

24 Cf. Wright, *David*, 79, who likewise notes that the authors of 2Sam 21:12–14 used the memory of Saul's rescue of Jabesh-gilead "for an originally unintended purpose, namely to cast aspersions on Jabesh-gilead—and, by extension, on the communities throughout the Gilead and Transjordan."

25 On the comparison of the biblical motif of bone transferal with ancient Greek literature, see Chavel, "Compositry and Creativity," 37 n. 34; Darshan, "Reinterment"; Doak, "Heroic Bones," 206–215; and Doak, *Heroic Bodies*, 170–182.

26 See, e.g., McCauley, "Transfer," 225–239; McCauley, "Heroes and Power," esp. 96; Doak, "Heroic Bones," 206; Doak, *Heroic Bodies*, 170–171; and Darshan, "Reinterment," 643.

27 McCauley, "Heroes and Power," 96 with n. 40 lists thirteen examples of the transferal of a dead figure's bones in Greek literature. She further notes that several Greek stories of the transferal of bones have to do with territorial claims (95); the same could be said of 2Sam 21:12–14, yet here the focus is on a *negative* territorial claim: the transferal of Saul's bones seems to *deprive* Gilead of a claim to be Israelite.

them to Sparta. As a result, Herodotus claims that from that time forward the Lacedaemonians were able to gain the upper hand against the Tegeans in battle.<sup>28</sup>

The connection in Herodotus's account of Orestes between transferring a hero's bones to one's own city or region and the resolution of a crisis (such as repeated military losses or pestilence) is a striking commonality between this and other Greek texts and 2 Sam 21:12–14.<sup>29</sup> What is more, the transferal of Saul's bones in this passage fits well with new developments in Greek hero cults during the Hellenistic period, particularly the privatization of hero cults—that is, their association with individual families in addition to their association with cities.<sup>30</sup> This development fits well with a detail mentioned in 2 Sam 21:14—namely, that Saul's bones were buried *in the tomb of his father Kish* (note the contrast with their prior burial “under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh” in 1 Sam 31:13). This could reflect a process of privatization similar to that which has been observed in hero cults elsewhere in the Hellenistic world.<sup>31</sup> Alternatively, it is possible that the description of the reburial of Saul's bones “in the tomb of his father Kish” serves primarily to align the fate of Saul's mortal remains with that of later Israelite and Judahite kings, who are repeatedly described as “lying down with their fathers” (וַיִּשְׁכַּב ... עִם אֲבֹתָיו).<sup>32</sup>

With regard to the two modes of narrative memorialization of Saul that I have proposed here, 2 Sam 21:12–14, like 1 Sam 31, reflects a spatial memorialization of Saul in narrative form, but it has now been shifted from Transjordan to the region of Benjamin in Cisjordan. While it remains a matter of speculation whether this geographical shift reflects the existence of (or the desire to establish) an actual “tomb of Kish” or “tomb of Saul” in the world of the readers, on a textual level it is clear that David's relocation of Saul's mortal remains serves to decommission Jabesh-gilead in Transjordan as a legitimate site of memory—even if purely fictive—associated with Saul.<sup>33</sup>

28 Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.67–68.

29 Darshan, “Reinterment,” 644.

30 Hughes, “Hero Cult,” 168–169 and Lenzo and Nihan, “Introduction,” 8–9.

31 Based on the intertextual connections reflected in 2 Sam 21:12–14, a date of composition in the Hellenistic period is quite plausible. Considering that these verses reflect the idea that the bodies of Saul and Jonathan were “hung” (תָּלַי/אֲתָלִיָּה) in Beth-shan, and if the Philistines' display of the bodies of Saul and his sons in Beth-shan is a late addition to 1 Sam 31:12 that was not yet present in the text of Samuel used by the author of 1 Chr 10 (see above), then 2 Sam 21:12–14 is probably no earlier than the book of Chronicles (cf. Wright, *David*, 78), which dates to the late Persian or early Hellenistic period.

32 1 Kgs 2:10 et *passim*; this phrase occurs twenty-seven times in the so-called annalistic notices in the book of Kings.

33 For other Israelite and Judahite kings, if the place of burial is mentioned at all, it is usually

## 5 Synthesis

Before concluding, I would like to distill the main observations gathered from these three cases of memorializing Saul's wars, focusing particularly on the narrative modes of memorializing Saul, the overall attitude toward Saul, and the depiction of Jabesh-gilead in each respective text. Each of the three texts discussed above takes the story of Saul's defeat of the Ammonites and the rescue of Jabesh-gilead in 1Sam 11 as its starting point. This is Saul's debut as a military leader, the point at which his authority as king is also confirmed. In this narrative, Jabesh-gilead seems to be regarded as part of Israel.

The first case of the narrativized spatial memorialization of Saul's wars is found in 1Sam 31 and 1Chr 10, where Saul is mortally wounded in battle against the Philistines. An earlier version of this story, which underlies both 1Sam 31 and 1Chr 10, portrayed the Jabeshites' act of burying Saul as a sign of respect and most likely treated Jabesh-gilead as a legitimate site of Israelite memory. This story seems to have been reworked in the received Hebrew text of 1Sam 31, which now depicts the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead as cremating Saul's body prior to burying it, thus marking the town of Jabesh-gilead as culturally distinct from Israel.

The second passage dealing with the memorialization of Saul's wars, 2Sam 1, focuses on David's reaction to Saul's death. Among other acts of mourning, David expresses his grief by uttering a song of lament over Saul and Jonathan. Significantly, he also orders that this song be taught to the people of Judah, such that here the site of memory is not a physical space, as is the case with Saul's grave in Jabesh-gilead, but rather a textual artifact with a performative dimension. Of course, the book of Samuel is itself a textual site of memory, which gives David's lament a meta-quality, with one instance of textual memorialization nested within another.

Lastly, 2Sam 21:12–14 constitutes a second case of spatial memorialization in narrative form. In contrast to 1Sam 31, these verses depict the Jabeshites in an unequivocally negative light, describing them as having stolen the bones of Saul and Jonathan from Beth-shan. Yet not only are the people of Jabesh maligned, but the site of Jabesh-gilead itself is also treated as an unacceptable

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no more specific than the name of the city, such as Tirzah, Samaria, or Jerusalem. (For Judahite kings, the burial site is almost always specified as the "city of David," which presumably referred to a specific part of Jerusalem.) A notable exception is Manasseh, who is described as being buried "in the garden of his house, in the garden of Uzza" (2Kgs 21:18), although this probably has to do with the sinful king Manasseh being (literarily) barred from burial in the city of David.

final resting place for Saul's bones. This passage, whose relatively late date of composition can be surmised on both internal and external grounds, shows how the memorialization of the figure of Saul continued to be a productive literary device that later biblical authors used to debate other issues that concerned them—in this case, the status of Transjordan within the idealized conception of Israelite identity.

## 6 Conclusion

In concluding, I would like to offer three final reflections on the narrativized memorialization of Saul's wars in Samuel and Chronicles. Firstly, it is notable that, while the memorialization of Saul remains closely linked to Saul's role as a military leader in 1 Sam 31 and 2 Sam 1, in the third text, 2 Sam 21:12–14, Saul's wars have in fact faded into the background. Here the process of memorializing Saul serves not to promote collective memories about the beginnings of kingship in Israel *per se* but to consolidate a specifically Cisjordanian landscape of memory. Secondly, the case of 2 Sam 21:12–14 shows with particular clarity the constructed nature of the process of memorialization, whereby new ways of remembering Saul are actively cultivated by drawing on existing narrative patterns and cultural practices that circulated in the Mediterranean world during the second half of the first millennium BCE—in this case, the transfer of a hero's bones in response to a crisis and perhaps also the trend toward privatizing the hero cult. Finally, developments in the modes of memorializing the figure of Saul in Samuel and Chronicles do not follow a simple linear trajectory over time. Rather, the spatial and poetic-performative modes of narrativized memorialization continued to be cultivated alongside each other over the gradual literary development of these texts. In this process, each mode served specific rhetorical purposes. While the spatial mode was closely linked with a discourse on the insider/outsider status of certain groups living in Transjordan within an idealized concept of Israel, the poetic-performative mode contributed to the image of Saul's successor, David, as a model of how to mourn for Israel's royal heroes.

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