

PART I

INTRODUCTION, SOURCES, AND HISTORICAL  
BACKGROUND

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Excerpt  
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## CHAPTER I

### An Introduction

“And the king said: ‘Divide the living child in two!’” (1 Kgs 3:25). With this startling judgment and its revealing consequences, King Solomon provoked the swift resolution of a dispute between two harlots over the identity of their children, and became immortalized as the model of a just and brilliant judge. This story in 1 Kings 3:16–27 is presented as the preeminent illustration of Solomon’s exceptional wisdom, which the Lord had just granted to him in a dream at Gibeon, reported immediately before this (1 Kgs 3:4–15). This account emphasizes that “I [the Lord] have given you a wise and understanding heart; so that there was none like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you” (1 Kgs 3:12 // 2 Chr 1:12). The biblical author/editor connects the stories with the conclusion: “And all Israel heard of the *king’s judgment*, and stood in awe of the king, because they saw *the wisdom of God* was in him to execute justice” (1 Kgs 3:28; see also 1 Kgs 5:9–14 [ET 4:29–34]).

Solomon’s wisdom is also highlighted by other biblical passages, for example: “The Lord exalted Solomon highly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him royal majesty such as no king *in Israel* had before him” (1 Chr 29:25). Nehemiah goes even further, affirming that “among the *many nations* there was no king like him” (Neh 13:26).<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Solomon’s reputation as a wise man, a prolific scholar and poet, was tremendously exalted in biblical works such as Proverbs, Qohelet, and the Song of Songs, and in postbiblical texts such as the *Wisdom of Solomon*,

<sup>1</sup> See also 2 Chr 1:1; and the praise of Solomon’s wisdom by the Queen of Sheba as described in 1 Kgs 10:3–9 (// 2 Chr 9:2–8).

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Figure 1 Solomon's Judgment, a detail of a window in the Katharinenkirche, Oppenheim. (Rhineland-Pfalz, Germany; private photography).

the *Testament of Solomon*, and the *Psalms of Solomon*, as well as in numerous rabbinic Midrashim,<sup>2</sup> in the New Testament (e.g., Matt 12:42 // Luke 11:31; see also Matt 6:28–30), and in various folktales. As a result, in Jewish and Christian cultures, as well as in Islam, Solomon has been seen as the wisest and greatest king of ancient Israel, and one of the most significant, familiar, and widely admired figures of ancient history. King Solomon's repute as the builder of the Temple in Jerusalem is also well known, and the descriptions of his judgment of the two harlots, as well as his visit from the Queen of Sheba, have become fixtures of Jewish and Christian literature, music, and art, including depictions on the walls of many old synagogues and churches.<sup>3</sup> Even in European

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Babylonian Talmud, *Berachot* 57b; *Song of Songs Rabbah* 1:1, 5–8, 11; and *Qohelet Rabbah* 1:2–3; 2:5.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, the fresco on the walls of the Synagogue at Dura-Europos; I. Kalimi, *The Retelling of Chronicles in Jewish Tradition and Literature: A Historical Journey* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), pp. 123–132; idem, *Das Chronikbuch und seine Chronik: Zur Entstehung und Rezeption eines biblischen Buches*, Fuldaer Studien 17 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2013), pp. 149–157. Cf. also the portrait of Solomon from the fourteenth-century mosaics of “David and Solomon” at the Basilica San Marco (St. Mark's Basilica), Venice, Italy: [www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/152207864](http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/152207864); and the King Solomon mosaic inside the Cathedral of Monreale, near Palermo, Sicily, Italy: <http://01varvara.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/01-anonymous-king-solomon-duomo-di-monreale-monreale-sicily-it.jpg> (both accessed Nov. 2, 2016). The judgment of the two harlots (1 Kgs 3:16–28) was especially popular in Europe. For example, it appears on a beautiful window of the Katharinenkirche, Oppenheim am Rhein (Germany). It also appears – together with other scenes from Solomon's life – in a series of frescos by Raphael at the Vatican (known as the Raphael Loggie; ca. 1519), which influenced Antoon Claeissens (Belgium, 1538–1613), and Nicolas Poussin (France, 1594–1665); for other examples, see the article on “Solomon” in F. Skolnik and M. Berenbaum (eds.), *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 2nd ed. (Detroit: Thomson Gale / Jerusalem: Keter, 2007), vol. 18, pp. 755–764, esp. pp. 761–762 (“in Art,” signed by

and American court contexts, Solomon has taken an important position among the great figures of the ancient world. For example, in Amsterdam's seventeenth-century town hall, as well as in those of many other Dutch and Belgian cities, the image of Solomon's judgment was painted directly behind the judges' bench.<sup>4</sup> Solomon also appears alongside Moses, Hammurabi, Solon, and other ancient lawgivers in the South Wall Frieze of the United States Supreme Court Building (completed in 1935).<sup>5</sup>

Yet, for all this glorious reputation and collective familiarity, the story of Solomon is not straightforwardly told. There are essential differences between the portraits of Solomon that were presented by the early and late Israelite historiographers, by later Jewish, Christian, and Muslim writers, and by modern historians. The *main* purpose of this volume is, first and foremost, to explore the differences between the early and late biblical historiographies, that is, in the books of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles, particularly regarding the birth, rise, and reign of Solomon.

## I. STATE OF RESEARCH

In recent years, a number of volumes have been published on various aspects of King Solomon's life and legacy, particularly on his historicity.<sup>6</sup> These studies are discussed at the appropriate places in the following chapters. However, none of them offers a sustained

Ed.), and pp. 762–763 (“in Music,” B. Bayer). As examples for Solomon in music, it is worth mentioning the successful opera from 1875 by the Jewish musician, Carl Goldmark (1830–1915), *Die Königen von Saba* (*The Queen of Sheba*); Paul Heyse's *Die Weisheit Solomons* (*The Wisdom of Solomon*; 1886); and James B. Alexander's *King Solomon* (1899). For further musical works on Solomon and bibliographical references, see M. Stern, *Bible & Music: Influences of the Old Testament on Western Music* (Jersey City: Ktav, 2011), pp. 232–233, 249–258 (on texts from Samuel-Kings), and 481–483 (on texts from Chronicles). There are also many musical works based on the biblical books Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs, which are ascribed to Solomon.

<sup>4</sup> See K. Fremantle, “The Open *Vierschaar* of Amsterdam's Seventeenth-Century Town Hall as a Setting for the City's Justice,” *Oud Holland* 77 (1962), pp. 206–234, esp. pp. 211, 215, and 227.

<sup>5</sup> See “Courtroom Friezes: South and North Walls: Information Sheet” (Office of the Curator, Supreme Court of the United States, May 8, 2003: [www.supremecourt.gov/about/northandsouthwalls.pdf](http://www.supremecourt.gov/about/northandsouthwalls.pdf) (accessed September 15, 2015)).

<sup>6</sup> See for example, L. K. Handy (ed.), *The Age of Solomon: Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium*, Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 11 (Leiden:

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examination and comparison of the literary and historiographical portrayals of Solomon in Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, while setting these in the context of broader parallels within the Hebrew Bible and the history of the ancient Near East.<sup>7</sup> For example, Thilo Rudnig has analyzed the redaction history of the Succession Narrative in Samuel-Kings (particularly 2 Sam 7, 11–19 and 1 Kgs 1–2), but does not offer a comparison with Chronicles and has little to say about the sophisticated literary and theological shaping of this material, or its ancient Near Eastern parallels.<sup>8</sup> Pekka Särkiö offers a similar kind of analysis of 1 Kings 3–5 and 9–11, again with little attention paid to the comparison with Chronicles.<sup>9</sup>

E. J. Brill, 1997); M. Pietsch, “Dieser ist der Sproß Davids...”: *Studien zur Rezeptionsgeschichte der Nathanverbeißung im alttestamentlichen, zwischentestamentlichen und neutestamentlichen Schrifttum*, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 100 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2003); R. Lux (ed.), *Ideales Königtum: Studien zu David und Salomo*, Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte 16 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2005); P. S. F. van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative: An Inquiry into the Relationship between MT 1 Kgs. 2–11 and LXX 3 Reg. 2–11*, *Vetus Testamentum Supplement* 104 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2005); I. Finkelstein and N. A. Silberman, *David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible’s Sacred Kings and the Roots of the Western Tradition* (New York: Free Press, 2006); T. A. Rudnig,  *Davids Thron: Redaktionskritische Studien zur Geschichte von der Thronnachfolge Davids*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 358 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2006); W. Oswald, *Nathan der Prophet: Eine Untersuchung zu 2. Samuel 7 und 12 und 1. Könige 1*, *Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten Testaments* 94 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2008); P. James and P. G. van der Veen (eds.), *Solomon and Shishak: Current Perspectives from Archaeology, Epigraphy, History and Chronology Proceedings of the Third BICANE Colloquium Held at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge 26–27 March 2011*, BAR International Series 2732 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2015); Y. Garfinkel and M. Mumcuoglu, *Solomon’s Temple and Palace: New Archaeological Discoveries* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Koren, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> For a full discussion of these sources, see Chapter Two. Though in the Hebrew canon Samuel and Kings are presented as separate books, it is debated to what extent their origins are distinct from one another (see also Chapter Ten, note 57). Nonetheless, this volume will regularly refer to them as “Samuel-Kings” as a complex that presents the early biblical historiography, in contrast to the later biblical historiography in the book of Chronicles. This term of convenience should not be taken to mean that Samuel and Kings are necessarily fully unified.

<sup>8</sup> See Rudnig, *Davids Thron: Redaktionskritische Studien zur Geschichte von der Thronnachfolge Davids*. For detailed critiques of Rudnig’s study, see Chapters Five, §III, 1, and Ten, §III, 1.

<sup>9</sup> See P. Särkiö, *Die Weisheit und Macht Salomos in der israelitischen Historiographie: Eine Traditions- und redaktionskritische Untersuchung über 1 Kön 3–5 und 9–11*, *Schriften der Finnischen Exegetischen Gesellschaft* 60 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994). Incidentally, it turns out that the parts of Solomon’s life that I focus on are precisely those Särkiö skipped.

Andrew Knapp has compared the stories of David's and Solomon's rise to kingship in Samuel-Kings with the royal apologies found elsewhere in the ancient Near East, but he overlooks some key aspects of that comparison regarding 2 Samuel 11–12, and also does not compare these portrayals with the very different account in Chronicles.<sup>10</sup>

A number of studies also focus on Solomon's later reception in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic literature, which falls beyond the scope of this monograph, but they say relatively less about how he is portrayed in the biblical texts themselves.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, several popular or semipopular books have been published on King Solomon and his father, David.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, they mainly just paraphrase or selectively revise the biblical accounts, without sufficient interaction with the critical scholarship, and only occasionally engage in any detailed comparisons between the books of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See A. Knapp, *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East*, Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Series 4 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), see Chapter Six.

<sup>11</sup> For example, P. A. Torijano, *Solomon the Esoteric King: From King to Magus, Development of a Tradition*, Supplements to the *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 73 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002), includes only one brief chapter on the entire Hebrew Bible (pp. 8–25); G. Sasson, "In the Footsteps of the Tradition about Solomon the Magician in the Literature of the Sages," *JSIJ* 6 (2007), pp. 37–53. Similarly, of the essays in J. Verheyden (ed.), *The Figure of Solomon in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Tradition: King, Sage and Architect*, Themes in Biblical Narrative 16 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2013), the only ones that focus on the biblical accounts are I. Kalimi, "The Rise of Solomon in the Ancient Israelite Historiography," pp. 7–44, P. Särkiö, "Solomon in History and Tradition," pp. 45–56, and W. Zwickel, "Der Tempel Salomos im Kontext der Ikonographie und der archäologischen Funde," pp. 57–84 (see Chapter Four, §II, 1 and Chapter Thirteen). The other essays consider the portrayals of Solomon in later literature, such as Josephus, the New Testament, Rabbinic Literature, and Islamic sources.

<sup>12</sup> See A. Kunz-Lübcke, *Salomo: Von der Weisheit eines Frauenliebhabers*, Biblische Gestalten 8 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2004); A. Schick, *Irrt die Bibel? Auf der Suche nach König David und Salomo: Mythos oder Wahrheit?* (Hammerbrücke: Jota, 2004); W. Brueggemann, *Solomon: Israel's Ironic Icon of Human Achievement*, Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005); S. Weitzman, *Solomon: The Lure of Wisdom* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); J. Baden, *The Historical David: The Real Life of an Invented Hero* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013), and J. L. Wright, *David, King of Israel, and Caleb in Biblical Memory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014). For other discussions of Solomon and his reign, see Chapter Three.

<sup>13</sup> But see, for example, Kunz-Lübcke, *Salomo*, pp. 151–156, Brueggemann, *Solomon*, pp. 160–180, and Wright, *David, King of Israel*, pp. 148–166.

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Further, while commentaries on the book of Chronicles do compare the picture of Solomon in Samuel-Kings with that in Chronicles, they do so only briefly and in regard to particular passages.<sup>14</sup> As is appropriate to the genre of a commentary, their comparisons are neither systematic nor comprehensive, and many of the specific texts and issues focused on in this volume have not received sufficient attention, if any. This monograph therefore offers not only new and original observations regarding individual details of the text, but also a deep analysis and coherent synthesis of the images of Solomon in the early and late biblical historiographies.

## II. PURPOSE

The *main* purpose of this volume is not to reconstruct “the historical Solomon” and his period, but rather to analyze and compare the biblical accounts of Solomon. These accounts in the early and late biblical historiographies are the only surviving ancient Israelite historical writings concerning this king and his time. These writings have been composed in differing ages and circumstances. They reflect dissimilar historical and theological approaches, and use different styles, literary techniques, and methods. The volume attempts, therefore, to reveal the uniqueness of each portrayal of “Solomon” through a close reading of these histories

<sup>14</sup> For instance, among the more recent commentaries, Sara Japhet has a section in her introduction regarding the Chronicler’s use of sources, which includes a single paragraph on those regarding Solomon (S. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library [Louisville: Westminster / John Knox, 1993], pp. 14–23, esp. pp. 16–17). She also begins each chapter of the commentary with a short section on the “Structure, Sources and Form” of the text, but these summaries do little more than list the parallels, omissions, and additions between Samuel-Kings and Chronicles, with brief discussions (e.g., pp. 522–524 regarding 2 Chronicles 1). Hugh Williamson devotes even less space to the issue, including three pages in his introduction on Chronicles’ sources as a whole, but only discussing this issue here and there in the course of the commentary; for instance, he includes one page on Chronicles’ use of Kings regarding Solomon (H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, New Century Bible Commentary [Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans / London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982], pp. 21–23, 192–193). Compare also, for example, R. B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word Books, 1987); S. L. McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004); R. W. Klein, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012). John Jarick goes so far as to “set aside” the comparison of Chronicles with Samuel-Kings, which he describes as “its rival” (J. Jarick, *2 Chronicles*, Readings: A New Biblical Commentary [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007], p. 2).



in view of their own theological, ideological, and didactic concepts, as well as their literary features and compositional methods, and the supposed times, places, and conditions of their writing. The goal is to elucidate how Solomon's birth, naming, early life, ascension, and Temple building are depicted in each of these accounts, as well as how he himself is described and characterized.

A systematic investigation of Solomon's narratives in Samuel-Kings and Chronicles can only be undertaken on the basis of such a detailed analysis of each text on its own, as well as a close comparison between them. Such a comparison makes bold the distinctiveness of each, revealing two incompatible and irreconcilable portraits (or, if you wish, "masks") of King Solomon, particularly regarding his birth, rise, and building of the Temple. Each presents the image of Solomon that its author desired to present for contemporary and subsequent audiences.

This analysis also highlights the differing approaches that the early and late biblical historiographers took to their sources, and undermines recent challenges to the conclusion that Samuel-Kings served as the literary basis for Chronicles. For example, A. Graeme Auld has attempted to demolish the consensus that the core source of Chronicles is Samuel-Kings, which therefore has preferred historical status over Chronicles.<sup>15</sup> However, this approach is overly simplistic, dismissing the results of two centuries of diachronic research. It has therefore been sharply criticized from different viewpoints by a number of scholars, and should be absolutely rejected.<sup>16</sup> By contrast, this volume supports the well-established and widely accepted view in biblical-historical scholarship that the books of

<sup>15</sup> See his book, A. G. Auld, *Kings without Privilege: David and Moses in the Story of the Bible's Kings* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994). Based on Auld's thesis, Raymond F. Person has recently argued that "the Deuteronomistic history and the book of Chronicles are Persian-period historiographies produced by two competing scribal guilds, the Deuteronomistic school and the Chronistic school, but that these historiographies are nevertheless based on the same broader tradition, including a common exilic source" (*The Deuteronomistic History and the Book of Chronicles: Scribal Works in an Oral World*, Ancient Israel and Its Literature 6 [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010], p. 163).

<sup>16</sup> See the detailed discussion and bibliography by I. Kalimi, "Kings with Privilege: The Core Source(s) of the Parallel Texts between the Deuteronomistic and Chronistic Histories," *RB* 119 (2012), pp. 498–517; for a slightly revised German version, see "Die Quelle(n) der Textparallelen zwischen Samuel-Könige und Chronik," in U. Becker and H. Bezzel (eds.), *Rereading the Relecture? The Question of (Post)chronistic Influence in the Latest Redactions of the Books of Samuel*, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament* 2/66 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), pp. 11–30. See also Chapter Three, and Chapter Thirteen, §V.

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Samuel-Kings were composed sometime earlier than the book of Chronicles, and that they form the Chronicler's primary *Vorlage* (the German technical term refers to a text's primary source) for the parallel texts.<sup>17</sup> It demonstrates that the Chronicler frequently rewrote the material concerning Solomon found in Samuel-Kings, while showing that the author(s)/editor(s) of the latter were generally much more careful to present their sources with minimal interference.

In previous publications, I have examined in great detail the various methods used by the Chronicler to rewrite and reuse his sources in Samuel-Kings and elsewhere. In this volume, I show how those methods are employed in a sustained manner in a particular case, by investigating on a deep level how Solomon is portrayed in each of these works, both on their own *and* in comparison and contrast with one another. That is, a comparison must always begin with a proper investigation of each text independently – in its own historical and literary settings – but ultimately, neither one of these particular texts can be fully understood on its own. It is only through the comparison of what each has included, excluded, or altered that we see the full breadth of their literary and historiographical methods, as well as their unique theological concerns and emphases. This is also the only reasonable basis for any conclusion regarding the historical reliability of the respective accounts.

In order to be appropriately understood, the descriptions of these biblical books must be read against their own historical backgrounds. In other words, one cannot properly analyze the literary and theological methods of Samuel-Kings, nor fully understand how Chronicles has reworked its *Vorlage*, if one assumes that the entire story of Solomon's kingdom is fictional. As seen in subsequent chapters, much that is said concerning Solomon in Samuel-Kings makes best sense as a response to presumed events in Solomon's life. This is particularly true where the narrator strives to put a positive spin on the more problematic actions attributed to Solomon and his father David – such as David's affair with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11–12, and Solomon's usurpation of the throne in 1 Kings 1–2. This apologetic function of the biblical accounts of Solomon can be best understood against the historical background of his period, as

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed history of research on the relationship between Samuel-Kings and Chronicles, see I. Kalimi, *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005; reprinted 2012), pp. 2–11; idem, "Kings with Privilege," pp. 499–505.