Plural Texts and Literary Criticism:
For Instance, 1 Samuel 17

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> Spring. . .
> Too long. . .
> Gongula. . .
> – Ezra Pound, "Papyrus"

The implications of textual criticism for literary criticism are vast. To take a modern example, when Ezra Pound translated a fragmentary text of a Sappho poem in "Papyrus,"[1] he showed that the textual lacunae themselves have an aesthetic effect—the sense of loss and longing in the surviving words is compounded by the loss of the remaining text. The textual condition is a part of the poem's literary effect. Moreover, the poem's relation to Sappho's fragmentary text sets into motion a historical dialogue between the ancient poet's works and the aesthetics of modernist poetry, which embraces the fragmentary, the archaic, and the esoteric. There are discursive and historical dimensions at play in this brief poem that create a powerful resonance. The poetry implicates history and philology, and the philological and historical allusions provide depth in the poetic discourse. This poem may serve as a perspicuous example of the implications of textual matters in literary discourse and literary criticism.

Textual criticism is itself a particular kind of close reading, which is relevant for literary criticism in all of its varieties. Where there are textual variants, scribal errors, unintelligible passages, and so on, a close literary reading ought to entail attention to such issues.[2] One can, of course, choose

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[1] In *Lustra of Ezra Pound* (London: Mathews, 1916) 57. For the Greek edition that Pound translated, see A. Fang, "A Note on Pound's 'Papyrus,'" *Modern Language Notes* 67 (1952) 188–190.

[2] See my remarks in R.S. Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1–11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 3–5; and more generally J.

to read only a "final" text—say, the Masoretic Text—and to accept (or even, in a modernist aesthetic, to savor) its textual flaws as part of its text. But this decision is difficult to sustain as part of a scholarly endeavor. It requires that one ignore the evidence from other texts and versions—which seems untruthful—or to maintain that the "canonization" of this text-type by the Pharisees and early Rabbis makes it sufficient or authoritative in academic research—which seems to be a religious apologetic. There is, additionally, the problem of identifying *which* Masoretic text or edition one chooses to read as the "final" text. As Orlinsky memorably observed, "There never was, and there never can be, a single fixed masoretic text of the Bible."[3] In any case, a preference for a single text as the focus for one's work is possible (and often taken) but is unrealistic—in the sense that it fails to engage with the reality of textual complexity and change.

For the modern scholar, textual criticism is a theoretically necessary part of the process or activity of close reading. It impacts in various ways the larger tasks of literary criticism. To put it another way, close reading of the biblical (or any) text is a multilayered activity, requiring various skills and competences. To ignore any of these layers is to reduce one's ability to read the text with insight and intelligence. Our goal should be to participate in this activity richly, not to oversimplify or to draw artificial boundaries among the multiple and intertwined paths of textual and literary understanding.

With these theoretical and methodological issues in mind, I wish to address a single text, 1 Samuel 17 (with particular attention to vv. 11–40), to illustrate the complex and fruitful engagement of textual and literary criticism. I will first explore the evidence for textual complexity, viz. the

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Barton, "Historical Criticism and Literary Interpretation: Is There Any Common Ground?" *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder* (ed. S.E. Porter, P. Joyce and D.E. Orton; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 3–15.

[3] H.M. Orlinsky, "The Masoretic Text: A Critical Evaluation," in C.D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Ktav, 1966) xviii.

existence of a plural text, then consider some of the implications for a literary criticism of plural texts, and finally engage in a close literary reading of a portion of the text(s).

How Many Texts?

1 Samuel 17 is a famous chapter in textual criticism. Wellhausen was the first to clearly articulate the view that the different versions of this chapter in MT and LXX[B] reflect different Hebrew editions of this chapter.[4] This position has been reinforced in the post-Qumran era of textual criticism by the work of McCarter, Lust, Tov, Barthélemy, Gooding, Rofé, Trebolle, van der Kooij, and others.[5] Since we now have Qumran texts that agree with

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[4] As J. Lust observes ("The Story of David and Goliath in Hebrew and in Greek," *ETL* 59 [1983] 5–7) Wellhausen "hesitated" on the issue of which is the earlier edition. In *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1871) 104–105, he argues that LXX[B] "corresponds to the original text" and MT is a later edition, a view that he reversed in *Der Composition des Hexateuchs und der historichen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (1889), but to which he returned in its third edition (1899). Among other early treatments, see particularly the lucid discussion of W. Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (2nd ed.; London: Black, 1892) 120–122, 431–433. Given the dates and their mutual admiration, it is likely that Robertson Smith's arguments played a role in Wellhausen's return to his earlier position.

[5] See P.K. McCarter, Jr., *I Samuel* (AB 8; Garden City: Doubleday, 1980) 284–309; Lust, "David and Goliath," 5–25; D. Barthélemy, D. W. Gooding, J. Lust, and E. Tov, *The Story of David and Goliath: Textual and Literary Criticism* (OBO 73; Fribourg: Éditions universitaires, 1986); S. Pisano, *Additions or Omissions in the Books of Samuel: The Significant Pluses and Minuses in the Massoretic, LXX and Qumran Texts* (OBO 57; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1984) 78–86; A. Rofé, "The Battle of David and Goliath: Folklore, Theology, Eschatology," *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel* (ed. J. Neusner, B.A. Levine, and E.S. Frerichs; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) 117–151; J. Trebolle, "The Story of David and Goliath (1 Sam 17–18): Textual Variants and Literary Composition," *BIOSCS* 23 (1990) 16–30; A. van der Kooij, "The Story of David and Goliath: The Early History of Its Text," *ETL* 68 (1992) 118–131; E. Tov, "The Composition of 1 Samuel 16–18 in Light of the Septuagint," in idem, *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 333–362 (a revised version of his 1986 essay). See also the survey of other recent treatments in A.G. Auld, "The Story of David and Goliath: A Test Case for Synchrony *plus*

LXX[B] readings (against MT) in various portions of Samuel,[6] and studies have determined that the translation technique of the LXX[B] in this chapter is reliably literal,[7] virtually all scholars agree that the LXX[B] of 1 Samuel 17 represents a Hebrew edition that differs in some key respects from the edition preserved in MT.

I will refer to the Hebrew edition represented by LXX[B] as proto-G (see below for the retroverted Hebrew text of 1 Sam 17:11, 32–37), and will refer to the MT edition simply as M. The extent of these two editions is as follows:

> proto-G edition: 17:1–11, 32–40, 42–48a, 49, 51–54[8]
>
> M edition: the proto-G edition plus vv. 12–31, 41, 48b, 50, 55–58

The extra verses in the M edition, which comprise a doublet of the story of David and Goliath, I will call the "plus" story. I use this term in a descriptive, relational sense, irrespective of whether it is judged to a part of the earlier or later edition.

There remains some argument over whether the proto-G edition represents the earlier edition (with M representing a second expanded edition; so, e.g., McCarter, Lust, Tov, Trebolle) or whether proto-G is a later abbreviation (with M representing the earlier and fuller edition; so, e.g., Barthélemy, Gooding, Pisano, Rofé, van der Kooij). To my mind the better arguments are in favor of proto-G as the earlier edition. In particular, the

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Diachrony," in *David und Saul im Widerstreit: Diachronie und Synchronie im Wettstreit. Beiträge zur Auslegung des ersten Samuelbuches* (ed. W. Dietrich; OBO 206; Fribourg: Éditions universitaires, 2004) 118–128.

[6] Lust ("David and Goliath," 10) suggests that "the agreement between 4QSam[a] and the LXX 1 Sam in general, and between the Qumranic and LXX versions of 1 Sam 17,4 in particular, plead in favor of the possibility that 4QSam[a] offered the shorter text of 1 Sam 17–18." This is a plausible inference, but, as he observes, other possibilities can be entertained.

[7] See Lust, "David and Goliath," 12–13; and especially Tov, "Composition," 341–350.

[8] These verses in the proto-G edition have a number of variants relative to M, which are listed in Tov, "Composition," 357–362.

proto-G edition has a well-formed and continuous narrative,[9] whereas the M edition has various sorts of internal frictions and inconsistencies that indicate a composite text in which two stories have been edited together.[10] It is logically possible that the editor of the proto-G edition deliberately "unscrambled the omelet," that is, disengaged the two stories in the manner of a modern source or redaction critic, and suppressed one doublet, but this type of activity is unparalleled elsewhere in the LXX. (Usually ancient editorial practice was agglutinative, not subtractive.) It is more plausible to assume that the proto-G edition preserves the literary stage before the two doublets of David and Goliath were combined.[11]

While I prefer this model for the textual history of 1 Samuel 17, the literary implications are analogous for the model in which proto-G is a second edition. Rofé has argued that "[t]he original written material was so variegated and, once assembled [in the M edition], produced such noticeable contradictions, it became imperative to reconcile them," thus providing a motive for the proto-G edition, which was a harmonized and abridged version.[12] The task of reading a text that exists in multiple editions has the same complexity no matter which model one prefers. Yet the reading will be different in some respects, since the intertextual relationship—what we may call, with some anachronism, inner-biblical interpretation—will have some different implications.

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[9] Lust ("David and Goliath," 18) comments on the balanced structure of the narrative sequence, in which Goliath's scenes (his approach, his equipment, his taunt) are neatly countered by David's (his answer to the taunt, his equipment, and his approach). See further McCarter's discussion of the story's literary coherence (*1 Samuel*, 295–298).

[10] Barthélemy, Rofé, and van der Kooij grant this latter point; whereas Gooding (*David and Goliath*, 75) and Pisano (*Additions*, 84) argue that 1 Samuel 17 in MT has no internal contradictions or inconsistencies.

[11] See the fuller argument along these lines by Tov, *David and Goliath*, 134–135.

[12] Rofé, "Battle," 121. Rofé further argues (ibid., 128–31) that the M edition as a whole shows signs of LBH language and syntax. However, in my view his best examples (viz. those most immune to the habits of scribal modernization)—e.g., the temporal clauses in vv. 55, 57, which in CBH should begin with ויהי—are from the "plus" story, and therefore arguably cohere with the model advocated here.

The redactional seams in the M edition are indicators of the compositional history and narrative frictions of the composite text. I will consider briefly four texts that are most plausibly to be understood as redactional (and are so taken by many scholars)—in vv. 15, 16, 31, and 50—to gauge these editorial and literary effects. These texts (which are lacking in proto-G) attempt to harmonize the abrupt transitions in the longer (M) text, as in the following:

ודוד הלך ושב מעל שאול לרעות את צאן אביו בית לחם
Now David was going back and forth from Saul to shepherd his father's flocks in Bethlehem. (v. 15)

This verse places David *both* in Saul's entourage (as in the previous chapter [16:21–23], and presumed in 17:32 of the proto-G story) and in Bethlehem with his father's flocks (as in 17:12–14 of the "plus" story). While this verse lessens the cognitive dissonance between David's distinctive roles in the two stories, it also carries the burden of supposing that royal service and shepherding were part-time jobs, which strains credulity. Nonetheless, it illustrates the task of a redactor to reduce dissonance, even if he is unable to eliminate it entirely.

The following line is also most plausibly understood as redactional:

ויגש הפלשתי השכם והערב ויתיצב ארבעים יום
The Philistine drew near morning and evening and took his stand for forty days. (v. 16)

In this verse the temporal scene of the story is expanded from the single day that it is in the proto-G story—Goliath shames Israel "this day" (היום הזה) in v. 10, a phrase repeated by David in vv. 36 (proto-G only) and 46. The story takes place on a single day in the proto-G story, and so the redactor has expanded Goliath's challenge to a formulaic forty days in order to allow time for David to be sent by his father to check on his brothers and to learn from others the king's (previous) offer of reward. This adjusts the distinctive temporal horizons of the two stories.

The last full redactional sentence in chapter 17 repeats the strategy of the first:

וישמעו הדברים אשר דבר דוד ויגדו לפני שאול ויקחהו
The words that David had said were overheard, and they told (them) to Saul,
and he took him. (v. 31)

This verse takes David from the battlefront to Saul's company, so that the proto-G story can resume (in v. 32) with "David said to Saul." But the "plus" story resumes in v. 41 with David still at the battlefront, with Goliath approaching, and at the end of the "plus" story Saul has still not met David (v. 55–56). In sum, the redactional line smoothes over the awkward transition between the two stories, but we can see that the "plus" story originally lacks this transition and in fact precludes it by Saul's lack of acquaintance with David in the end. As before, the redactor solves the local problem of a transition between stories, but the distinctive plots of the two stories still remain visible.

The final redactional supplement in chapter 17 consists of only two words—מן הפלשתי ("from the Philistine")—inserted into David's killing of Goliath in the "plus" story:

ויחזק דוד מן הפלשתי בקלע ובאבן ויך את הפלשתי וימיתהו
David was stronger than the Philistine with the sling and rock, and he smote
the Philistine and killed him. (v. 50)

By adding "from the Philistine" to this verse, the redactor changed the punctual killing of Goliath in the "plus" story to a summary statement. But this addition yields an awkward and unique syntactic sequence, "stronger than X with Y." As commentators have noted,[13] the verse reads more naturally as a punctual sequence of actions without "from the Philistine," with the first verb in the Hiphil stem (note the common construction of Hiphil חזק followed by ב, meaning "seized"):[14]

ויחזק דוד בקלע ובאבן ויך את הפלשתי וימיתהו
David seized the sling and stone, and he smote the Philistine and killed him.

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[13] See McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 302, who observes that LXX[L] lacks these two words in its version of the "plus" story. On the importance of the proto-Lucianic readings for the textual history of the M edition, see Trebolle, "David and Goliath," 26–30.

[14] BDB, 305a.

This sentence would have been the climax of the "plus" story. But the (or a) redactor adjusted it so that it serves as a summary to David's killing of Goliath in vv. 49 and 51 (both of which are from the proto-G story). The redactor eliminated the dissonance of David killing Goliath twice, but left a residue of awkward syntax as the price.

The literary effects of these redactional texts clarify the outlines and characteristics of the two doublets in the longer (M) edition. These transitional verses have historical and discursive effects—they bind the two stories together in an intelligible sequence, and because these transitions are imperfect they have frictional effects in the composite narrative. This literary condition illuminates the editorial and textual history of the two editions. In the most plausible model for this textual history, the proto-G edition is the earlier work, and the M edition represents a second, expanded phase of textual production. The redactional passages indicate some of these discursive and historical dimensions. (This is so no matter which model of textual history one prefers.) In sum, the text-critical and literary analyses of these matters are intricately interrelated, each layer having decisive implications for the other. In 1 Samuel 17 the stories and texts are plural, and the act of reading a plural biblical text is accordingly a delicate task.

Reading a Plural Text

Having explored the arguments for plural texts in 1 Samuel 17, a key question arises when turning to a sustained literary reading of the text(s)—how does one read a plural text? This is a literary and hermeneutical question, not a text-critical question as such. But it is a question that, in this instance, textual criticism raises for literary criticism.

If one grants that the biblical text is plural, as in the case of 1 Samuel 17, then the task of reading becomes irremediably plural as well. It seems to me that we are obliged to adopt a strategy of plural reading that I would describe as dialectical or dialogical. This strategy involves two phases. In One, we attend to each textual discourse individually (viz. each story,

edition, and editorial layer), since each has its own inner constituency as a work of writing. In the other, we address how each discourse is implicated with each other in the larger work as a whole. As I have already indicated, each of the two stories of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17 has its own discursive autonomy, its own voice, poetics, and intentionality. Moreover, each edition of 1 Samuel 17 has its own distinctive textual and literary conditions. In the textual space of the expanded edition, the two stories are necessarily in dialogue with each other, as they comprise a continuous textual discourse. We need to read each narrative, text, and edition in its own right, *and* to read them in their interpretive and intertextual relations with each other. This second phase is important whether the later discourse(s) are intentionally interpreting or revising the earlier ones (in which case we can speak of inner-biblical interpretation, as in the case of the redactional transitions in the M edition) or whether the similar texts are independent works (which is arguably the situation of the two doublets).[15]

This strategy of reading acknowledges both the internal plurality of the biblical text in its textual and literary history *and* in the complex discourse of its final form(s). This strategy is not strictly historicist, nor strictly synchronic (or "new critical"), nor "canonical," but attempts to do justice to the (theoretically unavoidable) interrelations among the historical and discursive dimensions of the biblical text. In this way it respects and attends to the "dynamic synchrony" of the biblical text.[16]

In a recent article on textual editions of the Hebrew Bible, Emanuel Tov asks a pertinent and related question concerning which text(s) to read: "On

[15] On the distinction between interpretation (which implies a hermeneutical stance toward a prior text) and intertextuality (which implies a relationship due not to influence or allusion, but to coexistence within a culture or within an act of reading), see, e.g., C. Guillen, *The Challenge of Comparative Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) 244–260; R. Alter, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age* (New York: Norton, 1996) 111–116.

[16] Roman Jakobson describes language as a "dynamic synchrony," complicating the Saussurean distinction between the diachronic and synchronic states of language; see his *Main Trends in the Science of Language* (New York: Harper, 1974) 22–23.

whose edition, or whose Bible, will scholars focus their exegetical activity?"[17] In order to make the textual situation and my literary reading clear, I will present an edition of the proto-G text of 1 Sam 17:11, 32–37. This text is not available in current critical editions, which are diplomatic editions featuring a manuscript of M with an apparatus of variants. These diplomatic editions (viz. *BHS*, *BHQ*, and *HUB*) are not designed to indicate the plurality of the biblical text in instances like 1 Samuel 17. So one must do the text-critical work of establishing the different editions before one can begin to read it in a manner that responds adequately to its textual plurality.

A new text-critical project, the Oxford Hebrew Bible, will address this problem by constructing a critical text of each edition of each book of the Hebrew Bible, placing parallel editions in parallel columns. This edition will make the textual situation of multiple editions explicit and available, thereby allowing the reader to engage in a reading that attends to this aspect of the plural texts. The OHB will provide a textual resource that will facilitate dialectical or dialogical reading, as the plural texts face each other on the page. In other words, this textual edition has literary implications—as does every textual edition.

Text and Resonance

I turn now to a presentation and literary reading of one portion of the multiple text(s) of 1 Samuel 17, focusing on vv. 11, 32–37, from the proto-G edition (v. 11 is the last verse of the previous section, and provides a backdrop to vv. 32–37). I will then situate this portion in dialogue with the "plus" story in the M edition, attending to the literary and semantic effects of their propinquity in the expanded text.

I should note that the sample critical edition that follows does not claim to reproduce in all details the original text, but is an attempt to provide a text

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[17] E. Tov, "Hebrew Scripture Editions: Philosophy and Praxis," in *From 4QMMT to Resurrection: Mélanges qumraniens en hommage à Émile Puech* (ed. F. García Martinez, A. Steudel, and E. Tigchelaar; Leiden: Brill, 2006) 307.

that is a (necessarily imperfect) approximation of the textual archetype.[18] That is, it aims to provide the most plausible set of readings, adjudicating the evidence for scribal error and change, given the best evidence and arguments available. As such it is provisional, as all our efforts must be.[19]

1 Sam 17:11, 32–37 (Edition A = proto-G)

11 וַיִּשְׁמַע שָׁאוּל וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי הָאֵלֶּה וַיֵּחַתּוּ וַיִּֽרְאוּ מְאֹֽד׃ פ

32 וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־שָׁאוּל אַל־יִפֹּל לֵב־אָדֹנִי עָלָיו עַבְדְּךָ יֵלֵךְ וְנִלְחַם עִם־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי הַזֶּֽה׃

33 וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל אֶל־דָּוִד לֹא תוּכַל לָלֶכֶת אֶל־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי הַזֶּה לְהִלָּחֵם עִמּוֹ כִּי־נַעַר אַתָּה וְהוּא אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה מִנְּעֻרָֽיו׃ ס 34 וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־שָׁאוּל רֹעֶה הָיָה עַבְדְּךָ לְאָבִיו בַּצֹּאן וּבָא הָאֲרִי וְאֶת־הַדּוֹב וְנָשָׂא שֶׂה מֵהָעֵֽדֶר׃ 35 וְיָצָאתִי אַחֲרָיו וְהִכִּתִיו וְהִצַּלְתִּי מִפִּיו וַיָּקָם עָלַי וְהֶחֱזַקְתִּי בִּזְקָנוֹ וְהִכִּתִיו וַהֲמִיתִֽיו׃ 36 גַּם אֶת הדוב גם את הארי הִכָּה עַבְדֶּךָ וְהָיָה הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי הֶעָרֵל כְּאַחַד מֵהֶם הֲלֹא אלך והכתיו והסרתי היום חרפה מעל ישראל כי מי הערל הזה כִּי חֵרֵף מַעַרְכֹת אֱלֹהִים חַיִּֽים׃ ס 37 ° יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הִצִּלַנִי מִיַּד הָאֲרִי וּמִיַּד הַדֹּב הוּא יַצִּילֵנִי מִיַּד הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי הַזֶּה ° וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל אֶל־דָּוִד לֵךְ וַֽיהֹוָה יִהְיֶה עִמָּֽךְ׃

32 אל[*G (κυρίου μου) אֲדֹנִי G (ἡ) (> M) (exegetical/stylistic plus) ‖ נא + [אל *G (δὴ) (> M) (exegetical/stylistic plus) ‖ 33 ני/מ M (> G) ‖ הפלשתי [+ הַזֶּה M (graphic confusion אָדָם [34 וְהַדּוֹב] וְאֶת *G (καὶ ἡ ἄρκος) (harmonization vv. 32, 37) ‖ הפלשתי הזה] *G (καὶ ἡ ἄρκος) (harmonization vv. 32, 37) ‖ 35 את הדוב] G? (καὶ εἰ ἐπανίστατο) וַיָּקָם M (anticipation v. 36 וְקָם הַדּוֹב M (near-dittography בְּזְקָנוֹ] יו/*G (τοῦ φάρυγγος αὐτοῦ) בִּגְרֹנוֹ M (graphic confusion, and cf. 2 Sam 20:9–10) ‖ 36 את הדוב גם את הארי] *G (καὶ τὴν ἄρκον... καὶ τὸν λέοντα) אֶת הָאֲרִי גַּם הַדּוֹב M (harmonization with

[19] In the critical text, a raised circlet indicates variant readings (and an apparatus entry) where the text does not differ from the copy-text (L). A raised squarelet indicates variant readings (and an apparatus entry) where the critical text differs from the copy-text. Non-MT readings are not vocalized or accented. On the format and other sigla, see the references in the previous note. The major text-critical issues in these verses are discussed more fully in McCarter, *I Samuel*, 287–288.

sequence of v. 34, parablepsis of הַזֶּה + [הערל ‖ (את² M (> G)
*הפלשתי הזה) ‖ הֲלֹא אֵלֵךְ וְהִכֵּתִי וַהֲסִרֹתִי הַיּוֹם חֶרְפָּה (harmonization vv. 32, 33, 37
מֵעַל יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי מִי הֶעָרֵל הַזֶּה G (οὐχὶ πορεύσομαι καὶ πατάξω αὐτὸν καὶ ἀφελῶ
σήμερον ὄνειδος ἐξ Ισραηλ; διότι τίς ὁ ἀπερίτμητος οὗτος] > M
(homoioteleuton 37 ‖ (הערל הזה ... הערל הזה init] + וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד M (> G)
(explication) ‖ הערל + [*הפלשתי G (τοῦ ἀπεριτμήτου) (> M)
(harmonization v. 36 ‖ הפלשתי הערל) ‖ ויהיה יהיה M [*ויהוה יהוה G (καὶ ἔσται
κύριος) (graphic confusions ו/י)

Translation

Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, and they were terrified and greatly afraid. And David said to Saul, "Let not my lord's heart fall within him. Let your servant go and do battle with this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "You are unable to go to the Philistine to do battle with him, for you are a boy, but he has been a man of war from his youth." And David said to Saul, "Your servant was a shepherd for his father among the sheep, and whenever a lion or a bear would come and take a lamb from the flock, I would go after it and kill it and rescue (it) from his mouth. And when it would rise up against me I would grab it by its neck and strike it and kill it. The bear and the lion your servant killed, and the uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them. Shall I not go and strike him, and turn aside this day the shame from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised one who has shamed the battle-lines of the living God. Yahweh, who rescued me from the hand of the lion and the hand of the bear, he shall rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and may Yahweh be with you."

This portion is a dramatic turning point of the story, wherein David convinces Saul to send him in single combat against the Philistine champion. This is an issue of national survival for the Israelites, and equally an issue of the survival of Saul's kingship. Into this challenge for army, nation, and king steps an unarmed youth, on whom Israel's fate hinges.

With the skill of a politician and the courage of warrior, David promises to rescue his people from the doom promised by mighty Goliath. The verb for "rescue" (נצל in various forms) appropriately resonates in David's speech. The modality of this act changes from a focus on David as the rescuer (v. 35) to a focus on Yahweh as the rescuer (v. 37, twice). In this change of focus we see a doubled level of causality in David's evocation of his past. As a brave shepherd, he has the skill to rescue sheep from lions and bears, and by analogy and extension he has the skill to rescue the people of Israel from the predation of Goliath. But the shift of focus identifies a higher power at work, so that David the rescuer is re-presented as the one rescued by Yahweh in the past, and so he will be once more. In this shift of focus from human to divine agency, David represents himself as both a savior and a beneficiary of divine favor, a champion who is championed by Yahweh. In the rhetoric of his speech, David is both rescuer and chosen one, a focal point of both human and divine events.

In this speech, skillfully woven, David offers himself to Saul as the one who will defeat Goliath—who is equally the ethnic other (the Philistine) and ritual-covenantal other (the uncircumcised). There is an implicit tension between David's role here and Saul's putative role as the mighty and divinely chosen warrior-king. In theory, the king should crush the enemy (e.g. Ps 2:9), and in practice Saul has shown himself to be a mighty warrior and rescuer (1 Samuel 11). But here it is David, a mere youth, who will stand up for Israel against the enemy. The king is as passive as his subjects: "Saul and all Israel … were terrified and greatly afraid." As Robert Alter observes, "Saul, as the man head and shoulders taller than all the people, might be thought to be the one Israelite fighter who stands a chance against Goliath. Instead, he leads his own troops in fearfulness: the stage is set for his displacement by David."[20]

It is against this background that David speaks to Saul, the humble servant addressing his royal master: "Let not my lord's heart fall within him. Let your servant go and do battle with this Philistine." The

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[20] R. Alter, *The David Story* (New York: Norton, 1999) 103.

relationship of lord and servant is foregrounded in David's first words in the story, setting the stage for a fateful reversal of roles. David's speech shows him to be the rightful leader and lord, in contrast to the terrified king. These words and their implication provide implicit legitimacy—both on the human and divine level—for his ascent to kingship. Since the servant will go out to battle while the king remains behind, the servant becomes the legitimate lord, in terms of the moral and social code of kingship.[21] Hence David's first words to Saul, diplomatic and deferential as they are, set into motion the change of roles that is their mutual fate—the servant will become the king, and the king will lose his lordly status.

This dramatic implication of David's words emerges strongly in the movement from vv. 11 to 32 in the proto-G story. That is, the sense of David's words, "Let not my lord's heart fall within him" expresses David's perception of Saul's interior condition that is narrated in the preceding verse. The movement from Saul's silent terror to David's public words of consolation and courage sets the two men in vivid contrast. Unlike David—but like the other Israelites—Saul is terrified and immobile in the wake of Goliath's challenge. Saul is rhetorically eclipsed by David.

Saul's implicit demotion in this text is next signaled by the irony in his reply to David: "You are unable to go to the Philistine to do battle with him, for you are a boy, but he has been a man of war from his youth." Goliath has indeed been a warrior from his youth, but so, we presume, has Saul. In other words, the contrast between David and Goliath also implicates the contrast between David (a boy) and Saul (a warrior-king and tallest of the Israelites). Once again there is implicit criticism of Saul, who is (or ought to be) the warrior-king of the Israelites.[22] After David's following speech, this

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[21] Compare the later fraught moment when David, as king, fails to go out to battle: "at the time when kings go out (to battle) ... but David dwelled in Jerusalem" (2 Sam 11:1); see M. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) 193–196.

[22] It is revealing to compare the behavior of Menelaus, king of Sparta, who takes up the challenge when Paris "strode forth, challenging all the Argive best / to fight him face-to-face in mortal combat" (*Iliad* 3.19–20, trans. R. Fagles).

deprecation of Saul continues in the same vein, in the semi-burlesque scene where David cannot move wearing Saul's armor, which ironically echoes the description of Goliath's massive armor. Saul and Goliath are the men of great armor and weaponry, but David will fight in the place of the well-armed king. This relationship neatly reverses the previous roles of the two men, for it was David who was Saul's נשא כלים ("arms bearer") in 16:21, but now it is Saul who dresses David in the royal armor and arms.

The thematic links between these two successive scenes are highlighted by Saul's words, לא תוכל ללכת ("You are unable to go [to the Philistine]"), which are recalled in David's reply to Saul when he tries to move in Saul's armor, לא אוכל ללכת ("I am unable to go," v. 39). The king's attempt to make David his functional double by wearing his battle gear (cf. Jonathan giving his garments and weapons to David in 18:4)[23] fails, and David will face the enemy in his own guise, armored only by courage and faith. Once again, the brave youth transcends the frightened—but well-armed—king.

Saul's words at the end of David's long speech give his approval in terms that reverse his initial objection—instead of "You are unable to go," he now says, "Go (לך), and may Yahweh be with you." The repetition of the verb הלך ("to go") highlights various modulations in the dialogue between Saul and David.[24] As for Saul's blessing—"may Yahweh be with you"—there is further irony, for Yahweh will indeed be with David (as David had earlier predicted), and moreover Yahweh will stay with him, much to Saul's eventual distress.

In this brief passage, the ostensible conflict is between David, the shepherd and potential champion, and Goliath, the enemy who has challenged and shamed the Israelites. David will remove that shame and

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[23] Note Lust's argument ("David and Goliath," 8–9, 10–11) that the proto-G edition included 18:1b,3–4.

[24] The stylized repetition of הלך ("to go") in this dialogue is noted by R. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History. Part Two: 1 Samuel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989) 170.

will replace it with victory and honor.[25] But, as I have tried to show, there is a good deal in this passage that also addresses the implicit conflict between David, the future king, and Saul, the current king. In the rhetoric and thematics of this encounter, David is exalted and Saul is subtly shamed. This is a dimension of the literary politics of this story, which sets up David—a youth of undistinguished lineage—as the rightful successor to the reigning king. In other words, there is a subtle element of royal apology coursing between the lines of David's and Saul's exchange. This is a literary and political effect, a confluence of representational discourse and power, exercised in a story that exalts the future king.

In the portion of the "plus" story that has been editorially inserted between vv. 11 and 32 in the M edition, David's character as a youth and shepherd is treated in more detail, and his family relationships are highlighted. In the composite text, this supplement serves to deepen the portrait of David that is only briefly drawn in David's speech to Saul in the proto-G story. In the "plus" story David's tense relationship with his brothers is a focal issue. As the youngest son, he is sent out to check on his older brothers, a task guaranteed to raise their ire (cf. Joseph in Genesis 37). David's older brother Eliab reliably berates him: "Why have you come down? ... I know your impudence and your evil heart—you have come down to see the battle!" (v. 28). But what the brother claims to "know" serves only to expose his own cowardice, for David will take up the challenge and win the battle, while his soldier brother is the one who watches it as a mere spectator. In the "plus" story it is Eliab who is cut down to size, as his younger brother becomes the champion, whereas in the proto-G story it is Saul who is implicitly shamed by David's courage and success. In other words, the "plus" story has a family setting for David's success, along the lines of the familiar motif of "the ascent of the youngest," whereas the proto-G story has a royal setting, presaging David's rise to kingship over Saul's house. This difference in contexts colors each story

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[25] On the dynamics of honor and shame in this episode, see the apt discussion of M.K. George, "Constructing Identity in 1 Samuel 17," *BibInt* 7 (1999) 398–399.

differently, and creates a double context—of domestic *and* royal houses—in the combined text of the M edition.[26]

There are many other consequences of the interleaving of the two stories in Edition B, including the redactional supplements discussed above. For instance, in the composite text Saul is a curious figure, who knows David at one moment (as in vv. 32–37, above) and doesn't recognize him at a later moment (in vv. 55–58, from the "plus" story). His erratic behavior in this regard may seem an incipient sign of his mental distress and decline, particularly when David is on his mind.[27] In the stories considered separately, Saul is perfectly lucid, if subtly diminished in the proto-G story. But in the combined text of the M edition, Saul seems to be incipiently unstable, an intertextual effect that suits the larger thematic movement of the story of David's rise and Saul's fall. This character flaw is greatly elaborated in midrashic interpretation. In this respect the disorientation created by the juxtaposition of the two stories in the M edition of 1 Samuel 17 has literary resonance that complements the explicit thematics of subsequent stories. In other words, the intertextuality of the expanded edition sets new meanings into play.

Conclusions

The relationships between textual criticism and literary criticism are complex and rich. Both modes of criticism belong to the activity of close reading, which for any ancient text is a blend of the hermeneutical and the philological. The reality of plural texts and multiple editions raises many

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[26] This may add additional support to the argument that the M edition is the later of the two editions, after the political issue of David's rise was no longer a problem. In the proto-G edition this is a matter of literary *and* political importance, whereas the "plus" story evinces a more folkloric and politically innocent manner. In the "plus" story David receives the king's daughter's hand in marriage after defeating the mighty adversary, a well-known folkloric motif. Saul is a relatively minor character—he enters the story after David's triumph.

[27] Polzin (*Samuel*, 162) considers the possibility that "Saul's questions about David … might be seen as indicative of something like a beginning loss of memory on Saul's part or even the gradual onset of madness."

questions and challenges for the literary criticism of the Hebrew Bible, of which I have only indicated a few. I have used the example of 1 Samuel 17 as a test-case for the interaction of textual and literary criticism, but I have only touched the surface even for this text. Many philological, textual, and literary issues remain to be explored thoroughly for this fascinating plural text.

My goal is to stimulate further reflection on the theoretical, methodological, and practical issues concerning textual and literary criticism, and to encourage others to incorporate these concerns into their practice. Although the terms "lower criticism" (viz. textual criticism) and "higher criticism" (viz. literary criticism) are no longer widely used, the legacy of this categorical separation of critical activities remains pervasive and is, to my mind, a separation to be resisted. The critical task is plural, and biblical scholarship needs to embrace the plurality of its practices and the plurality of its central text.[28]

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[28] My thanks to the readers from *Textus* for their helpful suggestions and criticisms.