

Stephen Finlan has set out anew on a well-traveled road, exploring the psychological patterns that have influenced our understanding of salvation, and offers a Christian understanding of salvation not centered on sacrifice, atonement, and what he considers to be “cruel doctrine” (190).

XIMENA DEBROECK

St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore

'And He Will Take Your Daughters...': Woman Story and the Ethical Evaluation of Monarchy in the David Narrative. By April D. Westbrook. London: Bloomsbury, 2015. xii + 269 pages. \$144.00.

doi: 10.1017/hor.2017.15

Westbrook reads stories featuring women within the books of Samuel to examine how they shape the characterization of David and the monarchy more generally. She introduces the study by observing the presence of many such “woman stories” in Samuel as distinct from Chronicles and notes that these stories do not support the widespread view of 1–2 Samuel as “political propaganda” because the involvement of women presents David and the monarchy as morally compromised. In chapter 2, she draws on prior research to highlight women as objects of male control and as characters who question the justice of powerful leaders, specifically their responsibility to protect the vulnerable from the powerful. The following eight chapters analyze the stories of Michal, Abigail, Rizpah, Bathsheba, Tamar, the woman of Tekoa, the ten concubines, and the wise woman of Abel. The brief conclusion argues that the presence of so many woman stories raising questions about the justice of David and by extension the monarchy is an intentional inclusion that consistently guides the reader toward an ethical evaluation of monarchy and its inability to render justice. Her discussion periodically notes how these woman stories complicate efforts to read 1–2 Samuel as propaganda or royal apologetic because they consistently present David in a negative light. She notes, for example, that although some scholars observe that David’s marriage to Nabal’s widow Abigail provides him with a powerful base near Hebron, the text never makes this explicit. It does explicitly present ethical questions about David’s willingness to slaughter whole populations, prevented only by the timely intervention of an intelligent woman. But can David’s subjects depend on an Abigail appearing whenever he feels bloodthirsty?

Westbrook makes a persuasive case that woman stories provide a significant and consistent critique of David and the monarchy as abusing power. In the case of Bathsheba, Westbrook’s case might have been presented in even stronger terms. She understands the stories of Bathsheba, Tamar, and the wise woman

of Tekoa as a triad of connected narratives. The juxtaposition of Bathsheba and Tamar is especially suggestive. The language of 2 Samuel 11:4 (“he lay with her”) indicates that David had sex with Bathsheba, but is entirely silent on whether Bathsheba consents. By contrast, Amnon clearly overpowers and rapes Tamar two chapters later (2 Sam 13:11–13). Westbrook rightly refutes suggestions that Bathsheba seduces David, but she does not fully develop the implications of this insight. The biblical text is ambiguous and might be reconstructed in several ways, but Westbrook avoids noting that one reasonable reading of the scene is that David rapes Bathsheba as Amnon rapes Tamar. Alternatively, perhaps Bathsheba offered no resistance to the king (in contrast to Tamar) and acquiesced to a sexual encounter that she did not think she could refuse. Westbrook favors the acquiescence reading, and never raises the possibility of rape, even though it would heighten her argument that the story presents David as failing to protect even the wife of his loyal subject. If Bathsheba can be abused and violated, who is safe?

With the specific focus on woman stories, Westbrook offers a convincing analysis of the moral failings of David and the monarchy. As a result, the still widespread reading of the Samuel narratives as royal propaganda designed to legitimate David’s rule (and therefore that of the Davidic dynasty) appears too simplistic. The literary and ethical analysis Westbrook offers complicates this popular picture and shows that the books of Samuel offer a more complex portrait of David and of kingship than some scholars are prepared to accept.

DAVID A. BOSWORTH

The Catholic University of America

The Original Bishops: Office and Order in the First Christian Communities. By Alistair C. Stewart. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014. xx + 394 pages. \$50.00.

doi: 10.1017/hor.2017.16

Alistair C. Stewart, Church of England team vicar of Upton-cum-Chalvey, Slough, England, and visiting scholar at Saran College in Salisbury, England, has delivered a deeply researched investigation of the roots of church polity with his long and detailed book, *The Original Bishops*. His is an impressive argument set to overthrow the view that early Christian communities were governed by a plurality of leaders.

Early on, Stewart defines his terms: the *episkopos* is primarily the chief economic officer of the local church, who is assisted by the *diakonoi*, and the term *presbyteros*, while it held many meanings, is to be carefully distinguished from *episkopos*.