

REVIEW ESSAYS

***Kings Without Privilege:  
Graeme Auld's Interpretation of the  
Bible's Presentation of  
David and Moses***

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Fresh challenges to assumed paradigms are always exciting. Graeme Auld's felicitously-titled *Kings Without Privilege* offers such a revision,<sup>1</sup> and also serves as a forceful apologetic for Shakespeare's Hamlet dictum that "Men of few words are the best men." The book succinctly represents the accumulated findings of several papers previously delivered to the Society of Biblical Literature and Society for Old Testament Studies, results that have gradually appeared in journals such as *JSOT*, *TZ*, *VT*, and *ZAW*, along with the *Malamat Festschrift*, over the past few years.

Auld, now Professor of Hebrew Bible and Academic Dean of the Faculty of Divinity at New College, University of Edinburgh, submits a proposal that is both creatively simple yet profoundly significant for its potential implications. He argues on the basis of substantial textual support that predominant hypotheses about the relationship between Kings and Chronicles are flawed and require serious reconsideration. Auld challenges De Wette's conclusion about the derivative nature of Chronicles—furthered fourteen decades later by Martin Noth fifty years ago—in comparison with the supposed historically superior material contained within Samuel and Kings. Having unsettled the governing paradigm, Auld reintroduces a fresh proposal for assessing these distinct accounts with a return to the assumption prior to De Wette that both Chronicles and Samuel-Kings had drawn on a common source, a return which Auld supports with several punctilious exegeses of the so-called Deuteronomistic History's prevalent

1. A. Graeme Auld, *Kings Without Privilege: David and Moses in the Story of the Bible's Kings* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994) x + 203 pp.

Judean kings. Contrary to a parent-like analogy of the traditional dependency between Chronicles and Samuel-Kings, Auld instead portrays a construct that displays something much more like the rivalry or at least relationship of siblings.

A large bulk of this volume deals with the shared material connected with David and Solomon (chaps. 2-3), along with brief mention of the David traditions from Samuel. On the latter, Auld refers to a 1992 *JSOT* article co-authored with Craig Y. S. Ho which suggests that the proto-Masoretic version of the David/Goliath story has been modified to emphasize crucial character contrasts between David and Saul. With respect to the former and regarding the vision at Gibeon, Auld draws connections between several of the Kings pluses and earlier material in 1 Kings that is not present in Chronicles' substantially different version. Citing the work of Julio Trebolle-Barrera, Auld endorses the notion of granting equal hearing to ancient versions like the Lucianic Greek and Old Latin traditions of Samuel-Kings for comparison with present Chronicles. After covering several textual examples about the building of the temple and palace, Solomon's administration, and the transition from David to Solomon, which cumulatively bolster his main thesis and lead him to conclude that Kings was far less conservative but more inventive than Chronicles in handling its portrait of Solomon, Auld supplies a coherent reading of the common source, which he deems foundational to Kings and Chronicles, largely based upon the Revised Standard Version.

Subsequently, Auld deals with other Judean kings like Manasseh, Asa, Amon, Josiah, and Hezekiah (chaps. 4-5), arguing that shared material about them has been expanded in divergent directions by both Kings and Chronicles for various reasons. Regarding these supplements to his posited shorter common story which both books have implemented, Auld says, "The impression given as all these observations are gathered is that we are not dealing in these books so much with authorship or comprehensive edition as with piecemeal adjustments and contributions and spelling-out of implications" (p. 94). Chapter 5 presents Auld's rendition of the shared Kings/Chronicles text from Rehoboam to the collapse of Jerusalem, replete with critical notes on various issues.

The sixth chapter considers the role of Moses and David in the material covering Judean kings subsequent to Solomon. Here, Auld presents several interesting observations. Out of eighteen passages between Kings and Chronicles in which Moses appears, only three of them are common between the two books and suggest ideological antecedents from Deuteronomy. The Kings pluses about Moses also relate to Deuteronomy, although most of the Chronicles pluses are closer to Numbers in their attribution of priestly and sacrificial ordi-

nances to him. Perhaps later additions to the text are legitimated by an appeal to Moses' authority. Solomon is assessed positively within the common source and also by the Chronicler, yet *Kings* portrays Solomon differently as one who displeased Yahweh—not just at the end of his life, suggests Auld, but everywhere throughout. This negative picture is said to stem from a different compositional hand.

The final section rehearses the broad arguments of the book offered thus far and then explores the role of Deuteronomy and Jeremiah in relation to the so-called Deuteronomistic History. First, Auld reviews two tenets that stem from his claim of recovering the cardinal source of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles: the common text displays a clear literary structure and narrative coherence (Solomon is an ideal king in the common story and in Chronicles, but nuanced and faulty in Kings), also the language of Kings' and Chronicles' extra material derives from the shared common source, and their subsequent pluses suggest differing reutilizations of these shared terms.

Auld then lays out six stratigraphic layers of material that comprise the Solomon account: (1) material of the common text both in Greek and Hebrew that also occupies the same position within that text, (2) material of the common text that occurs in different positions between the LXX and Masoretic text, (3) Kings pluses that are in the same order in the LXX and Masoretic text, (4) Kings pluses that occupy different places in the LXX and Masoretic text, (5) material found only in the Masoretic text of Kings, and (6) revisions that were brought both to the LXX and Masoretic text, according to recent work by Trebolle-Barrera. From these layers Auld seeks to dissociate the hand of Deuteronomists. It is difficult, however, to accept without question the variable positioning of textual material as a criterion for evidence of separate strata reflecting compositional provenance (cf. pp. 31, 150-52). Rejecting a Deuteronomistic contribution to strata 1, 2, 5, and 6, Auld reads layers 3–4 as giving evidence of having authors akin to the Deuteronomists. Interestingly, Auld connects the strata 1-2 material of Solomon's prayer, the vision reports, and the oracle of Nathan with the Royal Psalms rather than with Deuteronomy and also highlights the prominent role of prophetic figures in Kings' extra material—less mentioned in the Chronicler's shorter text. After listing several comparative points between Kings and Jeremiah (the Israel story as negative example for Judah, common prophecy and divine-word interests, shared language such as in the mutual blaming of Manasseh, etc.), Auld suggests that Jeremiah or at least his book has influenced the composition of the books of Kings, instead of the reversed influence from Kings to Jeremiah.

*Kings Without Privilege* represents a thorough revision of an old problem, the conclusion of which embodies a return to a prior solution.

As the artist paints beyond prescribed boundaries, so Auld engineers a bold reassessment of the so-called Deuteronomistic corpus and its relation to Chronicles, which bypasses present paradigmatic norms for discussion. It is unfortunate, however, that the printer has done the author of such a work the disservice of preserving unnecessary corrigenda of various sorts (e.g., p. 5, "have have," "irreconcilable," "Deuteronomisite," "common"; p. 6, "Chroncles"; p. 7, "spproach," "In" for "I"; p. 8, "recognition"; p. 12, "firsts"; p. 13, "characer"; p. 17 column 2 line 2 omits "did"; p. 19 left column, verses 1-3 should be 11-13, "noone"; p. 21, "almost almost"; p. 34, "him it," "had had"; p. 35, "though" for "through"; p. 50, "brickkilns"; p. 59 n. ")"; p. 76 right column line 13, omit "and"; p. 79 n. 4, "possibility"; p. 84 n., "repentence"; p. 109 n. 4, "does LXX does"; p. 111 n., "god"; p. 112, "chronicles"; p. 113, replace "sabbath. to" with "sabbath, and came to"; p. 119 n. 4, "Preistly"; p. 128, "in in"; p. 137 n., "Kings"; p. 149, "god's"; p. 158 n., "Jerooboam's"; p. 159 last line, ', ; frequent appearance of vertical quotation marks), albeit at least partially salvageable for illustrative purposes in a discussion of texts and their respective transmissions through variant witnesses. Errata aside, this volume benefits not only for the enormity of its thesis but also for its more practical features like the presentation of Hebrew and Greek words via English transliteration and adherence to both Hebrew and English versification, resulting in increased accessibility for a broader audience.

Professor Auld contributes to four main areas and invites further reflection in others that follow from his work. *First*, he contributes to the Deuteronomistic debate. If pluses observed in Samuel-Kings betray several levels of development from a text common to Samuel-Kings and Chronicles, then notions of sequential or hierarchical Deuteronomists (such as Dtr 1/Dtr 2, or Dtr H, Dtr P and Dtr N) are called into question and need to be significantly revised. Maybe Solomon's prayer is not the great Deuteronomistic speech that scholars have assumed it to be. *Second*, the thesis of this book invokes a reassessment of Deuteronomy in relation to the books of Kings and also invites the contributive role of Jeremiah to the table-talk. *Second*, Auld augments Chronicles studies, particularly by dispensing with the need for questions about the Chronicler's motives for omissions of material only found in the Samuel-Kings corpus, should his model of independent supplementation of a common inherited text be accepted. *Third*, Auld draws implications about the use of language for historical arguments (such as the now-contested assumptions of Chronicles as bearer of late biblical Hebrew) and the role of textual variants for understanding differences in synoptically extant editions. Issues of redaction and textual development, of composition, are not unrelated. *Fourth*, Auld's observations impinge on the general topic of

inner-biblical interpretation—here, two Old Testament streams of tradition are held to rely on a common stock in order to promote unique perspectives towards individually intended ends.

Respondents to Professor Auld, while acknowledging the validity of his general call for modular reassessment, will no doubt wish to probe further into the nature and origin of the large Kings' plus material. Maybe it can be demonstrated that this material was not composed latterly during the Persian period and in as freeform a manner as Auld supposes. At least this should be examined. Perhaps consideration of something like a modified synoptic Q-hypothesis is in order to determine whether another literary or pre-literary tradition now unknown can be discerned. Seemingly, other sources are not disallowed by him (p. 148). The question of their extent and influence as compared to subsequent inventive rewriting is what needs to be discussed. However these matters are treated, it will be interesting to read the formal substantial responses to Auld's fresh yet sometimes provocative thesis, as they come in.