while often quite original and insightful, suffer from a lack of recourse to ancient versions, not even the LXX. Nevertheless, his work was very influential on the translations of the Jewish Publication Society of 1917 and 1962-82.

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Hans-Peter Mathys

Ehud

1. Son of Bilhan

1 Chronicles 7 : 10 mentions Ehud (MT *ʾĒhûd*), son of Bilhan, as one of Benjamin's descendants. The different versions of Benjamin's genealogy in the first chapters of Chronicles differ in most details. This may be the result of genealogies recorded at different times, but confusions were also caused by textual corruption. 1 Chronicles 7 : 6–12 may be displaced from chapter 8. Ehud, son of Bilhan, is not mentioned elsewhere in the HB/OT; a connection with Ehud son of Gera cannot be established.

2. Son of Gera

Ehud (Heb. *ʾĒhûd*), son of Gera from the tribe of Benjamin, is the second savior (Heb. *môšîaʿ*) or judge in the book of Judges. According to Judg 3 : 15–4 : 1, he saved Israel from Moab by killing the Moabite king Eglon and by leading Israel in battle against the Moabites. After the king dismissed his servants, Ehud, pretending to have a message from God, thrust a sword into the king's belly. The killing is often portrayed in art. Ehud from Benjamin is also mentioned in 1 Chr 7–8, but the connection to the judge is unclear. 1 Chronicles 8 : 3 may be an intentional attempt to connect the genealogy with the judge (*ʾĂbîhûd* emended to *ʾăbî ʾĒhûd*; see "Gera, Father of Ehud").

   According to the sages, Ehud was a great scholar. His sword with two edges (lit. two mouths, *shenei feyot*; Judg 3 : 16) signified his Torah learning (cf. Ps 149 : 6) which earned him benefits in both this world and the next (*Tan* Wayeḥi 14).

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Juha Pakkala

See also →Eglon (Person); →Ehud and Eglon, Story of

Ehud and Eglon, Story of

I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

The story of Ehud and Eglon (Judg 3 : 12–30) is the first savior/deliverer-story in the book of Judges. It opens the portion that scholars call "the Book of Saviors" (Judg 3–12*), a source that was brought to the South following the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE and underwent Dtr (and Judaean) editing.

   The Dtr reworking of the original story of Ehud resulted in the addition of verses 12–15* and 27–30 in one or several stages (Becker; Neef). According to the Dtr framework, the Israelites committed evil acts in the eyes of YHWH, who placed them in the hands of a Moabite king. When the Israelites returned to YHWH, he sent them Ehud as a savior who led them to defeat the Moabites.

   The original story in vv. 15a, 16–26 probably did not speak about Israelites and YHWH. Rather, it tells of the murder of Eglon the Moabite king by Ehud the Benjaminite. This story, perhaps originally intended as an "ethnic joke" (so Handy), may be dated no earlier than the 8th century BCE, since the localization of the story reflects the political and territorial situation of the 8th or 7th century BCE (Naʾaman; Gaß). The story is often understood as Benjaminite mockery against the Moabites, with no theological or ethical import. It opposes Ehud and Eglon.

   Ehud, whose name can be understood as deriving from the Hebrew *hwd*, "glory, fame", is not presented as "left handed", as most translations have it, but rather as one with a "hindered right arm," a pun on the fact that he is a Benjaminite (etymologically meaning, "a son of the right"). This epithet highlights a special training (see Judg 20 : 16) that allows him to kill the Moabite king with a two-edged dagger.

   Ehud's victim, Eglon, bears a name with unknown etymology (according to Knauf it was the name of a town in Gilead, today ʿAjlûn). Most commentators argue that for a Benjaminite or Israelite audience, the name was understood as meaning "little bull", or "calf", and that the joke of the story is about a fatted calf prepared for slaughter by Ehud (Alter; Gross). The pejorative translation of *bārîʾ* (v. 17) as "fat" has recently been challenged by Sasson (see also Neef), who translates it as "imposing".

   However, the suggestion that Ehud's dagger was swallowed by Eglon's belly, "the fat closing over the blade" (v. 22), fosters the traditional understanding that Eglon was indeed a very fat man. In order to assassinate Eglon to whom he has to pay a heavy tribute, Ehud uses a lie, pretending to have a

secret message for the king, which prompts Eglon to send his servants away (v. 19). Ehud then presents this message as a divine word (*dĕbar ʾĕlōhîm*, v. 20) and the king respectfully rises from his throne. The rabbinic tradition interprets this behavior positively (*RutR* 2.9: "Because he stood for God, he became father of Ruth").

Unfortunately, the story is obscure in regard to the circumstances that followed the murder of Eglon. This is due to two *hapax legomena* at the end of v. 22 and the beginning of v. 23. Some understand v. 22 to mean that feces came out of Eglon after he was killed. Others suggest that the dagger came out of the king's anus (for an overview see Sasson). The idea that Ehud then escaped through the latrines does not fit with any archaeological evidence, since latrines are never installed at the top of a building. Also anachronistic is the assumption that the "throne" on which Eglon was sitting when he received Ehud was in fact the latrines, and that Ehud would then have escaped through the latrines. A more plausible solution is that Eglon was in his private room, and that his servants' belief that he was relieving himself can be explained by the use of a chamber pot, already attested in Mari (Sasson). The "murder in the toilet" scenario should therefore be abandoned.

One intrepretation portrays the encounter between Ehud and Eglon as a homosexual relationship, since the expression "Ehud came to him" (v. 20) may be understood in a sexual way. In order to have privacy, Ehud would have offered Eglon a homosexual tryst (Miller). This view seems remote from the literal meaning of the text. The most plausible scenario is that after the murder, Ehud locked out the servants by manipulating a tumbler lock placed on the inside of the chamber that could also be opened from the outside (for a reconstruction of such a lock see Sasson). In its present Dtr context, the story transforms Ehud into a Yahwistic hero; in the original story there was no concern about Yahwism. Ehud and Eglon are both Elohists, and Ehud does not hesitate to invent a word of God in order to accomplish his project. This obvious lie has intrigued rabbis as well as Church fathers (see Sasson; Gross; Gaß), but it was not a problem for the 8th-century BCE author.

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Thomas Römer

II. Judaism and Christianity

Josephus (*Ant.* 5.185–97) describes the situation after the death of Keniaz (HB: Othniel the son of Kenaz) as one in which the people suffered from poor government and did not pay homage to God or obey God's laws. His Ehud is called Judes, a daring man with a strong left hand. Josephus has him cultivating Eglon with frequent presents, which later help him gain ready access to the king in his inner chambers. Judes smites the king in the heart, not the belly; no mention is made of the king's corpulence or of his insides pouring out, giving the story a more respectful tone.

In the ancient versions, the OG and the Vg., Ehud is ambidextrous, "using either hand as the right hand." John Cassian (ca. 360–ca. 435) learns a lesson from this about attaining moral perfection by subordinating the "unfortunate" (left hand) to the "fortunate" (right hand). Everyone has two sides, and with effort and skill a person can turn both hands into right hands and thereby attain perfection of virtue (*Conference of Abbot Theodore*, ch. 10).

The rabbis were troubled by the seeming fact that Ehud had used treachery and deceit to kill Eglon. They explained Ehud's words to Eglon to mean that the message from God was that God had told Ehud to take his dagger and stick it into Eglon's belly (*BerRab* 99 : 3).

Geoffrey of Monmouth (ca. 1100–1155), may have had the story of Ehud and Eglon in mind when he described the death of Constantine, king of the Britons, in his pseudo-historical *History of the Kings of Britain* (1136): "A certain Pict that was Constantine's vassal came to him, and feigning that he did desire to hold secret converse with him, when all had gone apart, slew him with a knife in a springwood thicket" (6.5; see Fowler: 202).

The Question of Regicide. During and after the Reformation, the morality of regicide was a much discussed issue. The poet and scholar John Milton (1604–1678), relied on the Latin commentary on Judges by Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562) to argue that Ehud's action provides scriptural justification for the occasional need to depose a ruler (Milton 1649: 27). It is no coincidence that his tract was begun during Charles I's trial and completed soon after his execution. According to Milton, Ehud acted against a tyrant on just principles, as circumstances dictated. Ehud did not receive orders from God; rather, the Israelites cried out to God, "and we

too have cried; the Lord raised up a deliverer for them, and for us too" (Milton 1651: 399–402).

In contrast, the Calvinist Joseph Hall (1574–1656) observed that God's justice can use one sin (Moab's ambition) to punish another (Israel's idolatry) and God has countless instruments of judgment (Hall: 107–8). But Hall is reluctant to apply this lesson to contemporary politics, arguing that "it is no more possible for our modern butchers of princes to show they are employed by God than to escape the revenge of God."

The French philosopher Voltaire was particularly critical of those who would use the example of Ehud as an excuse "to betray, to unseat, and to massacre so many sovereigns" (Voltaire 1858: 16). He also discusses Ehud in his *Philosophical Dictionary* under "Fanaticism." He sees fanaticism as an extreme form of superstition, just as delirium is an extreme form of fever. He asserts that anyone who supports his madness with murder is a fanatic and lumps Ehud with other zealots, such as Judith who slew Holofernes (Jdt 13 : 10) and Samuel who chopped up Agag (1 Sam 15 : 33), as examples in the minds of religious zealots through the ages, further asserting that these "miserable men cannot see that these examples which were respectable in antiquity are abominable in the present; they borrow their frenzies from the very religion that condemns them" (Voltaire 1962: 267–68).

The problem of theodicy also comes up frequently, as it does elsewhere in Judges, "where God summons 'enemies' to oppress the Israelites and then has them slaughtered, apparently for doing their job" (Gunn: 46). The consensus among the faithful users of the text, such as the Presbyterian minister and exegete, Matthew Henry (1662–1714) and the educator Esther Hewlett (19th cent.), was that while Ehud may have been justified to do what he did and his action was approved by God, "this act and similar ones form no precedents for imitation" (Hewlett: 17).

Ehud's treachery was also a problem for some, who, while affirming the need to eliminate tyrants, could not justify the treacherous means taken. Many, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, argue from cultural or historical relativity, claiming that it would not be proper to judge Ehud's actions by the standards of modern times. Some, such as John Kitto, associate Ehud with an "Oriental" culture still present in modern times, claiming that his deed can only be excused by "the fact that the notions of the East have always been and are now, far more lax on this point than those which Christian civilization has produced in Europe" (Kitto: 197–98). Going even farther than Kitto, Thomas E. Miller argues for the necessity to distinguish between what the text says happened and what actually happened. For him, as in the case of Abraham and Isaac, it is inconceivable that God would "sanction,

much less inspire, the acts of treachery and regicide associated with the name of Ehud" (Miller: 33–44).

Eglon's Gesture of Respect for God. Eglon's rising to hear God's message was much noted by the rabbis. When Ehud told him that he had a message from God for him, Eglon rose from his seat (Judg 3 : 20). God said to Eglon,

> You honored me by standing up from your throne, I swear that I will arrange it so that your daughter will have a son who will sit on my throne; this is Ruth the Moabite, from whom Solomon descended (*TanB Wayeḥi* 14; cf. *RutRab* 2 : 9).

Both of Eglon's daughters, Orpah and Ruth, married Israelites, Mahlon and Chilion; Ruth later married Boaz from which union Solomon descended.

The sages learnt from Eglon's rising to receive God's message, that at the end of the trial of a blasphemer, the judges should rise, for if Eglon rose when he heard an attribute of the divine name, how much more so should an Israelite rise when he hears the Tetragrammaton (*bSan* 60a). According to another midrash, God used Eglon's example as a reproach to the Israelites, who were constantly annoying him with their transgressions and backsliding (*TanB Shelaḥ* 9; cf. Mal 1 : 11).

Eglon's rising to receive God's word intrigued English Puritans. The heathen king's reverence for God is a reproach to the faithful who are sometimes lax in their devotion, or even fall asleep during sermons. For Matthew Henry, for example, Eglon "shames the irreverence of many who are called Christians." Nevertheless, Eglon is no paragon of virtue. His extreme fatness is due to his indulgence in luxury and excess. His name means "calf" and "he fell like a fatted calf, by the knife, an acceptable sacrifice to divine justice" (Henry: 89).

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Barry Dov Walfish

III. General Reception

Most interpreters have considered the depiction of Eglon's death as derisive, guided by the malodorously detailed depiction of his slaying. Ehud's slaying of Eglon appears in the medieval *Mirror of Human Salvation* as early as the 14th century, paired with Christ's conquest of the devil (see below "IV.

Visual Arts"; also Gunn: 36–37). This single example of mythological, often termed "typological," style of interpretation reminds us that every tale about the triumph of hero over beast or sub-human villain functions as a mini-cosmology. Postmodern interpreters cannot help but see another example here of a foreigner in Judges being depicted as the subhuman other, like the Midianites who swarm as locusts in the Gideon narrative (Judg 6 : 5; Kim).

The motifs and structure of the story may have left a largely unappreciated impact on the genre of adventure storytelling. Baruch Halpern has noted the story's kinship to later popular tales, such as "the locked-room mystery" (Halpern: 75, n. 68) and suggested seeing Ehud as a kind of Iron Age James Bond (ibid: 43). Even if Ehud does not directly influence these later mystery and spy narratives, he remains their distant, ancient kin, cohort of other ancient and classical labyrinthine adventures, and unacknowledged ancestor of every solo assassin who must make his or her way in and out of a heart of darkness.

Eglon's humiliating death came to represent the just deserts of corrupt, gluttonous, royal living (Hill: 32). In "The Apostates" (1701), poet John Tutchin satirizes the English monarch as "Him who of Eglon is deputed K" (Tutchin: 9). Jakob Hermann Schiff's drama *Simson und Delila* (1877) designates Eglon as the deceased father of Delila, queen of the Philistines, and when she announces her victory over Samson, she declares, "In this hour you will all see that Eglon's blood flows in my veins!" (Schiff: 106). But revenge gives way to love, and Delila tragically dies with Samson at the end of the play.

Ehud also appears in more prosaic cultural contexts as a symbol of left-handedness and manly virtue. There was an early 20th-century fraternal organization for southpaws called "The Excellent Order of the Knights and Ladies of Ehud." One of the familiar motifs of the story is the "dagger of Ehud," which appears as a symbol in the advanced degrees of Freemasonry. In Lydia Howard Sigourney's "The Man of Uz," the dagger symbolizes the danger and treachery of human desire:

[M]an, walking ignorantly among shadows,
Himself a shadow, not like Adam our father in
     Paradise,
Rightly naming all things, but calling evil,
     good, and good, evil,
Blindly blaming the discipline that might bless
     him everlastingly,
And embracing desires, that in their bosom hide
     the dagger of Ehud. (79)

Ehud has made an amazing comeback in the last hundred years. It started in Palestine where the appeal of martial and frontier-era biblical heroes, those hardy proto-Zionists who gave as good as they got, led to names from Judges – Ehud, Gideon, Barak, Jael – reentering the Jewish onomasticon. A thousand Ehuds now live in the Land of Israel.

Larger cultural factors have made the story appealing. Ehud, Jephthah, Samson, and Jael could easily be cast in a Leone or Peckinpah revisionist Western (Christianson). The rising tide of literary approaches to the Bible has brought the story of Ehud and Eglon to the surface of modern scholarship. It is a gem of a story, a miniature jewel of construction and characterization (Alter: 37–41; Sternberg: 331–37; Mobley: 86-93; Amit; Brettler: 79–90).

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Gregory Mobley

IV. Visual Arts

Freestanding portrayals of Judg 3 : 1–24 are rare, but the encounter between Ehud and Eglon does appear in illuminated manuscripts. An early depiction of Ehud and Eglon is found in the mid-13th-century book of French miniatures at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (MS M.638 fol. 12r). The top half of the page is divided in two. To the right, a crouching Ehud is shown plunging his dagger into a seated Eglon who slumps to the left as his intestines pour out. At the top of the composition, Ehud emerges from a window near the roof of the palace, his left hand clutching a dagger, and sounds the horn in his right hand to rally the Israelites to fight the Moabites. The large scene at the left of the frame shows the battle of the Israelites against the Moabites, with the Israelites storming the king's palace. The bottom half of the composition portrays the battle of Barak and Deborah against Sisera and the Ammonites.

In the Middle Ages, Ehud was often understood as a type of Christ and was portrayed as such pictorially. An example is in the *Mirror of Human Salvation*, which depicts a series of NT events alongside

their OT prefigurations. In one series, an image of Ehud piercing Eglon's belly sits to the right of images of Samson and Benaiah slaying lions. To the far left is a picture of Christ conquering the devil. Eglon, thus, represents the devil (see *Le miroir de l'humaine salvation,* Hunterian Museum Library, Glasgow, MS 60, fol. 42r). In the picture, interestingly, Eglon is sitting and is not particularly corpulent, while Ehud wields the dagger with his right hand. The same holds true for a German woodcut in a *Mirror* printed in Speyer in 1481, in which Ehud uses his right hand to plunge a very long sword into the belly of a very thin Eglon (Gunn: 37, 2.1a). It seems that many artists were either ignorant of the details of the text or were not interested in them. But some did get it right e.g., the artist of the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, Darmstadt, Hessische Landesbibliothek, Ms.2505, fol. 55r, who depicts a somewhat feminized Ehud stabbing a portly Eglon with his left hand (*see* →plate 3b).

Early modern depictions of the scene are also for the most part indifferent to the story's details, taking little notice of Eglon's corpulence, his rising to receive the message, the dagger swallowed up in the folds of Eglon's fat and the scatological explanation for his need for privacy (Gunn: 42). By the 18th century, the portrayals become more faithful to the text. In an engraving for Pieter Mortier's Great Dutch Bible by Jan Goeree (*Historie*), a wall divides the scene, depicting Ehud inside the king's chamber dispatching the standing king with his dagger, while outside the room, two attendants wait, apparently unaware of what is happening inside.

Gerard Hoet (1648–1733) depicts the murder's aftermath. A crowd of dismayed, wildly gesticulating courtiers swarm around Eglon's body as he lies on his stomach with the dagger protruding from his side (see *Figures de la Bible*).

In the 19th century, Orientalist style comes to the fore, as artists become aware of travelers' and archaeologists' reports from the Middle East and North Africa and attempt to make their renditions more faithful to the local native culture. *Scripture History* by Ebenezer Miller (1828) intended for "the improvement of youth", portrays Ehud and Eglon dressed as Turkish pashas complete with turbans. Ehud grasps Eglon's neck with his right arm as he prepares to stab him with the dagger in his left hand. In the scene in *Cassell's Illustrated Family Bible* (1870), a simply clad Ehud presents his gifts to the enthroned Eglon who resembles one of the Assyrian kings recently discovered in Nineveh. The pre-Raphaelite artist, Ford Madox Brown, depicts in a wood engraving for *Dalziel's Bible Gallery* (1881) Ehud pointing heavenward with his right hand as he grasps with his left hand the dagger strapped to his right thigh. Eglon follows the pointing finger and seems ready to stand up as he grasps the arm of his chair with his right hand. The scene evokes

the Orient in its décor and the flowing robes of Ehud and Eglon. Similarly, the image of the fallen Eglon and the fleeing Ehud by James Tissot (Jewish Museum, New York) is highly evocative of the Levant of the 19th century.

In recent illustrated Bibles, Ehud and Eglon appear only occasionally. In the *Oxford Illustrated Old Testament*, Edward Bawden portrays a portly standing Eglon looking upward, almost expressing surprise, as Ehud plunges the dagger into his belly.

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Barry Dov Walfish

Eichendorff, Joseph von

A member of the second wave of German Romanticism, Joseph von Eichendorff (1788–1857) shared the religious seriousness of earlier figures such as Novalis. Unlike the early Romantics, who hoped to create a syncretistic new mythology and perhaps even a new Bible through the medium of literature, Eichendorff remained true to the orthodox Catholicism of his youth. The literary landscapes contained both in his prose writings as well as in lyrical poems like "Die Flucht der Heiligen Familie" (1841, The Flight of the Holy Family) share affinities with the allegorical canvases of his contemporaries Caspar David Friedrich and Philipp Otto Runge. But (human) nature for Eichendorff also contains within it the potential for stagnancy and even self-destruction if regarded as a self-sufficient principle.

It is within this context that Eichendorff makes sparing but effective use of biblical quotations and allusions in his novels and shorter prose narratives. In *Das Schloß Dürande* (1837, Castle Durande), for example, the hunter Renald seeks justice in Paris, shortly before the outbreak of the French Revolution, for what he believes to be the abduction of his sister Gabriele by the son of the Count, his Lord. The Parisian authorities, however, send him "von Pontius zu Pilatus, und jeder wusch seine Hand in Unschuld" (from Pontius to Pilate, and each one washed his hands in innocence). Tempted to take revenge, he begins to pray but cannot bring himself to say: "Vergib uns unsere Schuld, als wir vergeben unseren Schuldnern" (Forgive us our debt, as we forgive our debtors; Matt 6 : 12). Only at the end of the story, after he has led a band of revolutionaries to sack the castle, does he learn that there was no such abduction and that the count and Gabriele, who perish in the melee, had planned to marry; Renald then sets the castle on fire and perishes in the ruins. By contrast, the title character of Eichendorff's most popular story, *Aus dem Leben eines Tau-*